

## Turtles need our help!!

In the Mediterranean waters a problem is unfolding for most of its inhabitants – the turtles. These majestic creatures are facing a threat: plastic pollution. “Every year thousands of specimens are trapped in floating nets until they die. They often ingest plastic bags believing they are jellyfish,” reported Ecomarine Malta.



A green sea turtle eating a jellyfish that looks like a plastic bag

Credit: <https://oceanographic.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/26205716/green-sea-turtle-moon-jellyfish-Boca-Raton-Florida-960x680.ina>

Research has shown that if turtles eat a piece of plastic the chance of dying is 25%, they stop breathing and can't eat anything else. If this persists the population of turtles will become extinct.

Scientists have discovered that half of the turtles have eaten plastic! In



A sea turtle eating a plastic bag that looks like a jelly fish

Credit: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/what-do-sea-turtles-eat-unfortunately-plastic-bags>

Brazil it is as high as 90% for young turtles. This means that out of 10 young turtles 9 would have eaten plastic. Turtles also very often end up trapped inside ghost nets which are old nets that used to be used for fishing. Additionally, sometimes turtles eat a fish on a fishing hook and then get caught themselves.

Another solution is to make sure that fishing materials don't end up in the ocean so that we avoid getting trapped. You can help by cleaning the beaches and disposing trash properly. This would help us avoid eating

plastic. Simple changes in fishing techniques can also make a significant difference. Fishers can minimize the risk to turtles by removing caught fish from hooks to reduce the likelihood of turtle entanglement.

The Mediterranean turtles remind us of the importance to take care of all habitats in our oceans. Their struggle is fueled by human negligence and disregard for marine ecosystems. Yet, it also presents an opportunity to us all to ensure a brighter, safer future for the marine animals.



A turtle entangled in a ghost net, an abandoned fishing net  
Credit: <https://planetalingo.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Screenshot-2022-08-17-at-22.55.19-1520x820.png>

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