

# What can you do?

If you accumulate plastic waste – whether on land or water – make sure you dispose of it in appropriate bins and recycling facilities.

Never throw it into the ocean, rivers or waterways where it can harm marine life.

And remember, plastic dumped on land can be blown long distances or carried along waterways where it eventually ends up in the ocean.

Our marine and aquatic environments are magical places, so keep them that way by being more responsible with plastic.



# Keep the sea plastic free.

For more information please visit [www.deh.gov.au/plasticdebris](http://www.deh.gov.au/plasticdebris)

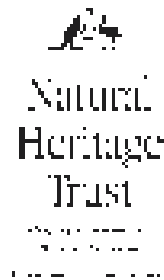


Photo: courtesy of Melbourne Zoo

Cover photo: Dr Col Limpus



# Bin it.

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# ○ Every year more than 6 million tonnes of rubbish is dumped into the world's oceans.

Much of this rubbish is plastic waste such as bags, bottles, synthetic ropes and fishing nets, which are discarded by ships at sea, by fishermen, coastal communities, particularly large urban communities and holidaymakers.

While plastic products can benefit the environment and consumers, when not properly disposed, plastic waste can be harmful and even deadly to marine life.

Turtles, whales and sea birds can mistake it for food or get entangled in it, causing painful injuries.

## The plastic problem ○

In every square mile of ocean it is estimated that there are over 46,000 pieces of plastic.

The plastic originates from both land and marine activities and includes plastic bags, abandoned fishing nets and lines and other solid waste such as polystyrene packaging material.

Of all the marine debris washed, dumped or blown into the ocean, more than 70 per cent is plastic.

Photo: Frank Park / ANTphoto.com.au

## ○ The threat to wildlife

A wide array of marine creatures, including threatened species such as Green Turtles, Loggerhead Turtles, Blue Whales and Humpback Whales, albatrosses and petrels, may be severely injured and even die after ingesting and becoming entangled with plastic waste.

Fishing line, fragments of trawl netting, and synthetic ropes can cut into their skin, leading to infection or the slow and painful amputation of flippers, tails or flukes.

Seabirds caught in marine debris may also be prevented from moving quickly through the water, reducing their ability to catch prey and avoid predators. They can also suffer constricted circulation, asphyxiation and death.

Seabirds are also known to eat polystyrene balls and plastic buoys after confusing them with sea eggs or crustaceans, leading to fatal consequences.

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