

ISLANDS OF PLASTIC AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE PLANET

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Plastic islands are, as their name suggests, huge areas of the ocean where large amounts of non-biodegradable waste, such as garbage and fishing gear, accumulate. The main cause of this phenomenon is the sea currents and the winds, which carry the garbage, accumulating it and grouping it together to form plastic islands.

But if there is one thing for sure, it is that the origin of this phenomenon lies in the irresponsible actions of human beings: not recycling, illegal dumping of waste (especially in countries with a higher level of industrialization), not taking care of the beaches, the pollution of the rivers (which ends up in the seas and oceans), the boats... These islands are formed as a consequence of the marine currents and the oceanic gyres, which drag and accumulate garbage. The wind, the force of the waves, the sun... they disintegrate all this waste, and this is how microplastics are created. These small pieces of plastic collect on the surface and on the seabed, harming marine life at high levels.

The first plastic island was discovered in 1997 in the Pacific Ocean by Charles Moore (oceanographer and ship captain), although this phenomenon had already been predicted since 1988 in studies by [The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#). From this moment on, this problem has only grown; Currently, there are a total of 5 documented plastic islands, in addition to other smaller ones scattered throughout our oceans (several have been discovered in the Mediterranean Sea).



Source: www.anellides.com

While we are not able to see directly the consequences of this problem, they worry humanity due to their seriousness. Plastic islands directly affect the entire planet: contaminating ocean water, damaging flora and fauna and, following the food chain, harming human beings; causing the risk of extinction of many species, due to the ingestion of plastic, for example; making fishing difficult and causing a lack of food in some fishing communities.

Luckily, this problem has solutions, which mainly consist of reducing the production of plastics and their collection. Among these solutions are the ban on the consumption of single-use plastics in Europe, as well as the creation of different waste cleaning projects. Notable are [The Ocean Cleanup](#) (a project that consists of collecting garbage from the island in the Pacific) and [Gravity Wave](#) (Spanish initiative that collects and transforms fishing nets in the Mediterranean Sea), among others.

In addition to those mentioned, all the inhabitants of the planet can easily collaborate by reducing the use of plastic products, recycling, reusing or not polluting the beaches. It remains in our hands to take care of our planet, of our home.

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There are no comments yet.