

Pacific Conversation: Pacific Ocean or Plastic Ocean?



SPREP

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme

In June this year, the Pacific islands are amplifying their voice at the United Nations Ocean Conference at the UN Headquarters in New York, focusing on **Sustainable Development Goal 14 – Life Below Water**. This Pacific Conversation raises awareness about Plastics and Marine Pollution, providing you with more information to help make a difference in our region.

Plastic in our Ocean

Did you know about a third of ship waste is just dumped at sea? That's like saying one of every three bags of rubbish is just tossed overboard. But throwing it 'away' doesn't make it go away, especially if it's plastic. A hundred years ago, plastics barely existed. Today, most marine debris is plastic. This emerging threat hurts wildlife, changes ecosystems, and can hurt us as well. Plastics have been found in the guts of fish that we eat. Plastics have been found in phytoplankton, which produce almost half of the oxygen we breathe. Plastic is everywhere.

Plastic pollutes

Plastic hurts us, marine species and ocean health

1. 50% of birds and marine mammal species have eaten plastic
2. After 10 days, fish exposed to polystyrene have lower activity rates and don't survive as well
3. Plastic can choke, starve, or entangle marine animals
4. The national fish consumption in Pacific islands is three to four times the global average
5. Fish makes up 50–90% of animal protein consumed by Pacific island people

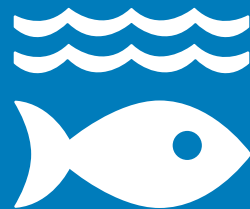
Help save our Pacific Ocean

Big plastics break down into tiny microplastics, but they don't go away

1. 85% of Pacific land-based litter is plastic
2. 37% of the waste dumped overboard by purse-seine vessels in the Pacific Ocean is plastic
3. Globally, 6–12 million tonnes of plastic enters the ocean each year

What can we do locally?

- Buy less plastic
- Check your personal care products: if it has polyethylene, that's plastic
- Say no to straws and plastic bags. Take your own cup and bag
- Pack your lunch in washable containers



GOAL
14 **LIFE**
BELOW WATER

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

Join the Pacific Conversation

#SaveOurOcean

#4PacIslands



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*A resilient Pacific environment sustaining
our livelihoods and natural heritage in
harmony with our cultures.*