Marine Plastic Pollution: An NGO Perspective

Kimberly A. Warner
The Science of Microplastics in the World Ocean
Woods Hole, MA October 2019
• Founded in 2001
• World’s largest advocacy organization focused solely on ocean conservation
• Protected more than 4.5 million square miles of sensitive ocean habitat
• Banned shark fin import and export in Canada
• Banned offshore oil drilling in Belize Mesoamerica reef
Exponential rise of plastic pollution in ocean sediments mirrors soaring global plastic production

Plastiglomerates from Hawaii

Greenhouse Gases Emitted From Environmental Plastic

Source: Royer et al. 2018 PLOS ONE

See also Zheng and Suh 2019, Nature Climate Change
Nearly 700 Marine Species Are Affected by Plastic Pollution*

* Gall & Thompson 2015
Microplastic now found in humans

MP intake estimates from:
Cox et al., 2019  Env. Sci. Tech
Hernandez et al., 2019 Env. Sci. Tech
The world produces more than 400 million tons of plastics every year.
Global plastic production projected to increase four-fold by 2050
Cumulative Plastic Waste Generation and Disposal

Market no longer favors recycling

As Costs Skyrocket, More U.S. Cities Stop Recycling

With China no longer accepting used plastic and paper, communities are facing steep collection bills, forcing them to end their programs or burn or bury more waste.
ICC DATA 2018

- Single-use plastic dominate beach clean-ups
- First time cutlery products found
- Most items are not recyclable
Life Without Plastic Is Possible. It’s Just Very Hard.

Going plastic free starts with cloth bags and straws. Suddenly, you’re … making your own toothpaste?
Plastic Free Choices,
Plastic Free Zones
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF NEW REGULATIONS ON SINGLE-USE PLASTICS ENTERING INTO FORCE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL WORLDWIDE

Source: UNEP 2018
Policies regulating single-use plastic work to reduce pollution
The world’s first passenger flights without any single-use plastic just took off

BY MELISSA LOCKER 1 MINUTE READ

Portuguese airline Hi Fly took off from Lisbon on Wednesday without a single piece of single-use plastic on board their flight to Natal, Brazil—no plastic cups, no plastic silverware, no plastic cocktail stirrers, no plastic food containers.
WE COMMIT FOR
A PLASTIC-FREE OFFICE

- NO Plastic bottle
- NO Plastic bag
- NO Plastic cup
- NO Plastic food containers
Thank you

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www.oceana.org/plastics