

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch



The Great Pacific Garbage Patch (GPGP) is the largest of the five offshore plastic accumulation zones in the world's oceans. It is located halfway between Hawaii and California.

Plastic Accumulation

It is estimated that 1.15 to 2.41 million tonnes of plastic are entering the ocean each year from rivers. More than half of this plastic is less dense than the water, meaning that it will not sink once it encounters the sea.

The stronger, more buoyant plastics show resiliency in the marine environment, allowing them to be transported over extended distances. They persist at the sea surface as they make their way offshore, transported by converging currents and finally arriving in the patch.

Once these plastics enter the gyre, they are unlikely to leave the area until they degrade into smaller plastic under the effects from the sun, waves and marine life. As more and more plastics are discarded into the environment, plastic concentration in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch will only continue to increase.

Estimation Of Size

The GPGP covers an estimated surface area of 1.6 million square kilometres, an area twice the size of Texas or three times the size of France.

Location

Due to seasonal and yearly variabilities of winds and currents, the GPGP's location and shape are constantly changing. Only floating objects that are predominantly influenced by currents and winds are likely to remain within the patch.

Plastic Count for every Human

A total of 1.8 trillion plastic pieces were estimated to be floating in the patch – a plastic count that is equivalent to 250 pieces of debris for every human in the world.



Picture of Garbage Patch



Picture of a Turtle stuck in a plastic Bag