



FIND HOW MANY PLASTIC OBJECTS ARE HIDDEN IN THE PICTURES THAT HAVE NO PLACE IN OUR SEAS AND ON OUR BEACHES. (Write the answer: .....)

Plastics in the sea and on coasts also affect fishermen and tourists. How would you feel if instead of fish you caught debris in your nets? Would you enjoy swimming at a beach full of cigarette butts, plastic bags and bottles?



Heavy objects should not wind up on the sea floor. Once there, it is practically impossible to remove them.

Imagine what happens when we not floats on the surface of the sea is food". As seabirds, our instinct tells us "whatever floats on the surface of the sea is food" but also feed it to our young.

So, we very often wind up tangled in forgotten fishing nets, barrels, crates, and anything else you can imagine that has been dumped into the sea. Once trapped, we are pretty much doomed ....

You surely know that we dolphins are very intelligent and curious. If we notice something bright-coloured or of a peculiar shape, we can't resist to swim up to it to explore and examine it.

Many plastics we find in the sea were discarded by people just moments after they used them. Yet, plastics continue to "live" for hundreds of years. As long as they are there, they pose a threat: a bird or a turtle might swallow them or get entangled and trapped.

Fortunately, more and more countries are taking measures against plastic pollution. A recent decision of the European Union aims to ban some of the "single use" plastics we often find on beaches.

The very tiny particles of plastics or "microplastics" are inevitably swallowed by all marine life. Microplastics are a threat to us and to the sea creatures that eat us and it is certain that through the food chain they end up in the food on your plates.

You have probably heard that we sea turtles frequently mistake floating plastic bags to be our favourite snack: jellyfish. Many other marine creatures have the same problem and the result is that their stomach fill with many different types of plastics that they cannot digest.

For many years now, people have not managed their waste properly. As a result, we now find a lot of waste, and especially plastics, in all of our oceans and in remote and uninhabited coasts. Scientists warn that if this continues, by the year 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean!

GOOD NEWS FOR THE SEAS AND COASTS OF EUROPE: PLASTICS DON'T HAVE A PLACE HERE ANYMORE!

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

Plastics are polymers based mainly on petrochemicals. They first entered our lives in the mid-20th century and became very popular because they are durable, versatile and weigh very little. Combined with their low cost, these features led to their mass production.

Each day, all over the planet, huge amounts of plastics end up in the oceans, on coasts and beaches and cause harm to many marine organisms and even their death. Indeed, about half of these plastics are from packaging that is discarded immediately after its use.

Plastic pollution has negative impacts not only on marine organisms and ecosystems, but also on the welfare of societies, especially in islands and coastal areas, where the local economy relies on tourism and fishing.

The problem of plastic pollution becomes even more complicated because many countries export their waste to other poorer ones that do not have the capacity to manage it properly, with most of it ending up in the ocean.

Fortunately, in recent years we see many countries taking serious actions to address this global problem. In particular for the countries of the European Union, recent legislation is expected to change the way we deal with the crucial issue of single use plastics in our lives. Gradually, from 2021 plastic products such as drinking straws, cutlery, plates, swabs, etc. will no longer be produced and by 2029 we will be obliged to collect 90% of the plastic bottles we use.

Proper recycling of plastic packaging contributes to:

- cleaner seas, coastlines and beaches
- fewer negative impacts on marine organisms and humans
- new jobs in the recycling sector
- new innovative materials on the market
- less burdened sanitary landfills that can function for much longer

## DON'T BE A BYSTANDER. BE PART OF THE SOLUTION!

- Stop using single use plastics!
- Prefer materials that are friendly to the environment. Reuse what you can and recycle what can be recycled!
- Say NO to unnecessary packaging
- Pack your lunch in reusable containers
- Recycle the plastic packaging you use correctly in the appropriate bins: empty them, compress them and then throw them in the bin without a bag
- Live for a week "free from single use plastics" and write your impressions in a diary
- Do not litter, because the wind and the rain will inevitably push it into the sea
- Take part in cleaning beaches, coasts, parks, streams and wetlands
- Organize a school festival, a trip, or a birthday party without any plastic waste!
- Inform your friends and families about plastic pollution and the new European legislation on single use plastics
- Design together with your classmates how to REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE at school
- Your school can adopt a beach, a stream or a park in your area. Organize a clean-up and look after it to make sure that it is always kept clean and in good condition.

Be an example for others. Remember that any action you take may directly impact marine organisms.

Act responsibly, with love and respect for our seas and coastlines.

### It's your turn to take action!

Discuss with your parents and/or your teacher and tell us all about it (e.g. a narrative, photos, a video, a drawing) at: <https://bit.ly/22vkwf2>

My action: .....

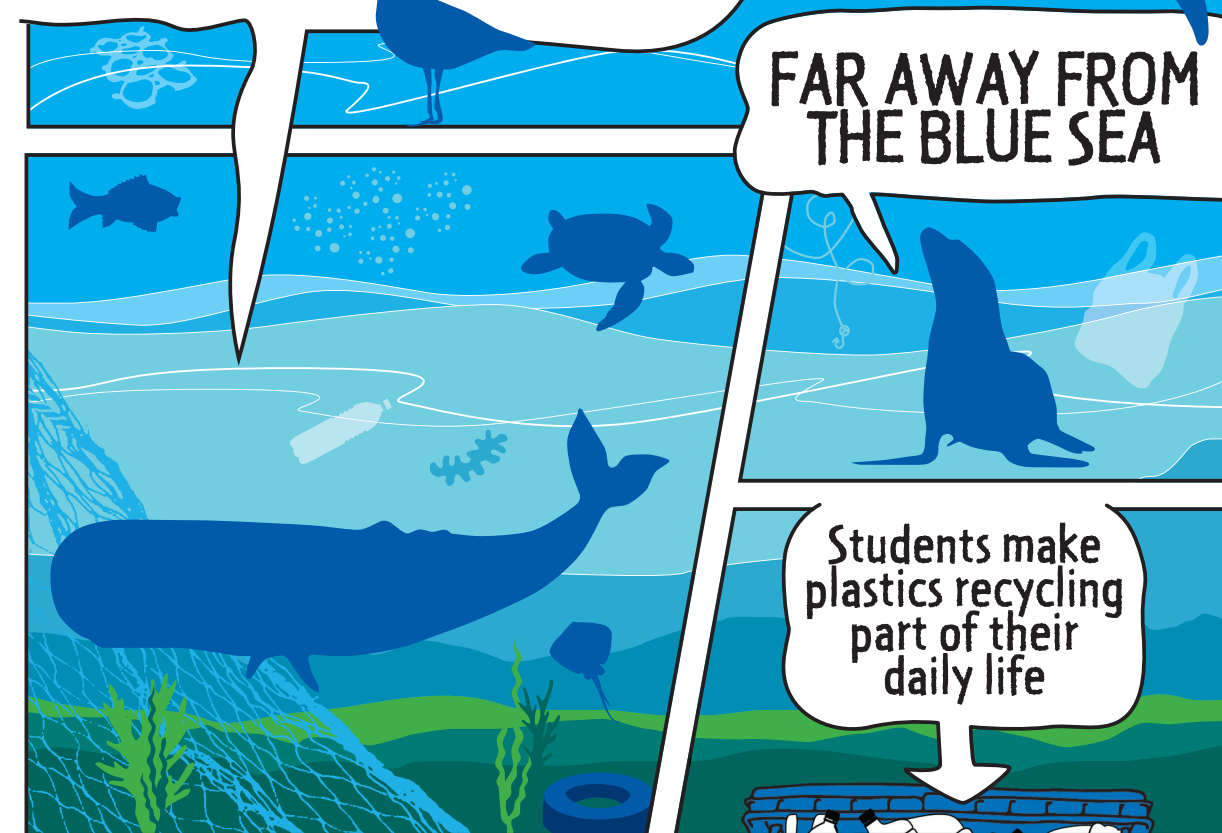


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## PLASTIC WASTE? INTO THE RECYCLING BIN!



AN 'EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT' PROGRAM COORDINATED BY THE MEDIES NETWORK AND THE HELLENIC RECOVERY RECYCLING CORPORATION

The Program is implemented mainly on islands and in coastal areas in cooperation with the local municipalities.

