

Trash- It's an International Issue

Did You Know?

The Great Pacific Gyre (Garbage Patch) is found between Hawaii and California. Some reports have estimated it to be twice the size of the continental United States, but no one can accurately measure the boundaries of trash gyres because they are vast, remote and always shifting with ocean conditions. In any case, plastic marine debris is now found on the surface of every ocean on Earth. In addition to the harmful impact of debris on marine life, gyres can act as floating transportation, allowing non-native species to hitchhike to unfamiliar parts of the world, threatening biodiversity.

Read the attached article “Great Pacific Garbage Patch” and answer the following questions. Answer questions 1-3 on your own then discuss your answers and answer question 4 as a group. (Use full sentences in your answers.)

1. What is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and how did it form?

2. What are the two main reasons plastic makes up the majority of debris in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch?

3. What impact does the Great Pacific Garbage Patch have on marine life?

4. Pretend you are in charge of an international commission tasked with cleaning up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Create a proposal for shrinking the size of the garbage patch. Explain your thinking.