

Bring Your Own Bag!

Plastic pollution has become one of the greatest environmental threats, and one of the most hazardous toxins to the planet's oceans for the following reasons:

Once in a marine environment, plastic absorbs chemicals including Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP's)

POP's —specifically polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). The toxic plastics are double the threat to the wildlife that consume them and the toxins in the plastic can then move up the food chain through the processes of bioaccumulation and biomagnification.

Wildlife:

Microplastics and microfibrils are being found in the tiniest building blocks of the ocean's food system: in zooplankton.

Zooplankton absorb the plastic and the toxins it contains, and are unable to digest it after consumption. Small fish, krill and shrimp feed on zooplankton and also ingest the toxic waste. Young salmon that spawn in British Columbia's rivers head out to sea once they're mature enough will likely consume between two and seven plastic particles per day just from eating zooplankton.

Plastics such as bags, packing bands and rubber bands continue to adversely impact Stellar Sea Lions on the coast.

An eight-year study in Southeast Alaska and British Columbia documented 388 sea lions entangled in plastic debris. Plastics can become so embedded in the animal that the obstructions often puncture and tear the stomach lining, leading to starvation and death.

Studies have shown that hundreds of species of cetaceans have been negatively impacted by plastic pollution in the past two decades.

According to Marine Pollution Bulletin, cetaceans are ingesting plastic debris at a rate as high as 31 percent, and in turn, 22 percent of those cetaceans were at an increased risk of death. On the coast we love whales, who are sadly becoming increasingly threatened by the pollution caused by plastic bags and other forms of plastics.

The Solution.

Remember to Bring Your Own Bag and say no to single use plastics!

There was once a time, not long ago, when we didn't use plastic bags and we managed without them. Countries all over the world are now banning plastic bags and these nations are also figuring out ways to live without them. We can too. If you forget your own bag, then ask for a cardboard box, or a paper bag, or ask for a free bag from the free bags collected and made by the Surfrider Stitch n Beach team!

Ways to remember your bag?

- Leave a reusable bag in your vehicle and/or bike compartment.
- Put a sticky note on your front door, fridge or vehicle to remind you to bring your bag when you leave home!
- If you do not have a reusable bag, come out to Surfrider's Stitch 'N' Beach program which makes reusable bags every month in Tofino and Ucluelet out of recycled textiles!

