

There without them,
the predators of that



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There is so much plastic waste in the world that it could circle the world four times if lined up together. Plastic is a material that is used very commonly, found in things like water bottles and grocery bags. Although plastic is very durable and cheap to manufacture, the littering of the material can severely harm the environment . It can harm animals, disrupt the food chain and affect human health. This is a big problem and has increased significantly over the last few years.

Is there be an alternative to plastic that can help reduce plastic pollution throughout the world? Plastic pollution comes from the constant use and disposal of objects containing plastic. Each year, over 8 million metric tons of plastic is brought from land into the ocean. It was found that the average american throws away about 185 pounds of plastic a year, which is a leading cause of plastic pollution.

Only 50% of plastic objects used is used just once and is disposed of, which wastes material and pollutes the land and oceans. The plastic eventually gather into what we call “ garbage patches”. The biggest garbage patch is named the “ Great Pacific Garbage Patch”, which is about twice the size of Texas and outnumbers the sea life 6 to 1 in the amount of plastic. If everybody used plastic objects more efficiently, the effects of plastic pollution could be decreased significantly. One negative effect of plastic pollution is its impact on marine life.

Plastic debris can completely disrupt the food chain; if an animal ingests the plastic, it can become sick. The predator of that animal could also become sick from eating that animal because they are also eating the plastic. This

concept could occur many times. Another way that plastic could disrupt the food chain could be because of prey becoming sick from taking plastic into their digestive systems, causing the species to lessen. Without them, the predators of that animal could have nothing to eat and also perish. A study has found that over 100, 000 marine animals de cease annually because of plastic pollution, which can be partly because of the food chain disruption. A place with many animal deaths due to plastic pollution is called the Midway Atoll. Although this island is very isolated and small, it still receives lots of plastic debris due to unfortunate ocean currents.

Over 1. 5 million Laysan Albatrosses (bird species) that inhabit Midway Atoll have plastic in their digestive systems. If you visit the island, you will find bird corpses littered across the coastline with plastic objects where their digestive systems used to be. Plastic is very harmful towards the environment and reducing it could save lots of lives of animals. Even though plastic has many good qualities, it's durability and strength can backfire by promoting plastic pollution. Plastic takes 500-1000 years to degrade, contaminating the land and ocean for centuries. ? Plastic also eventually breaks down into small particles, which is very difficult to get rid of.

A one-liter bottle could end up on any beach when broken down and scattered. When plastic eventually does degrade, it releases toxins into its surrounding environment. 93% of Americans age six or older tested positive for a plastic chemical called BPA. Plastic may be very useful, but the disastrous effects of it outweigh the benefits of the material. An alternative to plastic could be biodegradable plastic. Biodegradable plastic is made of natural materials, such as corn oil, orange peels, starch and plants.

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The procedure for making biodegradable plastic includes melting the materials being used, pouring them into molds that resemble the shape of the object intended, and letting them dry. ? Unlike plastic, biodegradable plastic does not release pollutants when recycled or melted because the substances weren't involved in the manufacturing process. Although biodegradable plastics are more environmentally friendly, they cost more to produce causing many manufacturing companies to mainly use normal non-biodegradable plastic. Even so, an eco-friendly alternative to plastic needs to be created for the sake of the world's well-being. A 21 year old by the name of Boyan Slat plans to clean up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch by the 2040's.

? Slat first was first aware of the plastic when he was 16. He dropped out of college because of this and founded the " Ocean Cleanup" foundation to help clean the plastic pollution. ? Slat is attempting to clean up the garbage patch by using the same ocean currents that formed the patch and letting them push the plastic into a curved network of floating barriers. After the plastic is collected, it will be funneled towards a central tank that will be collected once a month.

Slat's plan is doubted by many scientists in the community, but he is persistent and still intends to continue his plan without getting discouraged. Even is Slat's plan doesn't succeed in cleaning up the entire garbage patch, it will still benefit the environment, which is very important. If an alternative to plastic that reduces plastic pollution is found, it would be very beneficial presently. An alternative could save lots of resources that could be used for many other things. An alternative could save many animal lives, plant lives

and human lives. Most importantly, an alternative could help diminish plastic pollution and significantly improve the world.

The information in this paper will hopefully help solve this ever-growing problem.