

Plastic Waste

Ren's mother is at sea collecting plastic waste. Read the passage below and answer the questions about plastic waste in our oceans.

It is estimated that there are now more than 30 trillion pieces of plastic in the world's oceans and a lot of this has been collected in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch (GPGP). Located between the west coast of America and the east coast of Japan and spans 1.6 million square kilometres.

Yet it is not an actual island of floating waste that can be easily collected and removed but a large area of floating microplastics. Microplastics are created when plastic, such as a bag or a bottle, breaks down in smaller and smaller particles but never fully wear down.

Unfortunately these microplastics are swallowed by fish and other sea life. As they have zero nutritional content and cannot be broken down by the sea life these animals starve to death. But there is hope.

Many countries around the world, including Australia, have banned single use plastics such as cutlery, straws or packaging. Companies have created plastic bottles that do biodegrade, supermarkets are stopping plastic bag sales and sailors like Ren's mum are working to clear the ocean of debris.

1. Where is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch?

2. What is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch?

3. Why is plastic in our oceans bad?

4. What can we do to help?

Uses comprehension strategies to expand content knowledge.

