

# THE PRESERVE

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Illustration by Cathie Block

Albatrosses and pelicans soar above the oceans. Puffins inhabit shoreline cliffs. Manatees, sea turtles and many other creatures swim in the deep. All are unique and irreplaceable. Yet our garbage, especially plastics, threatens their well-being.



Plastic debris is a serious problem in oceans and waterways worldwide. It's not just unsightly; it's toxic to animals—humans included.

The millions of tons of plastics tossed into the ocean or carried through storm drains to the sea each year do not really go away. Plastic bags, bottle caps, cigarette butts, bottles and larger items wash up on once-pristine shores of remote islands.

Our oceans are not isolated. They are interconnected ecosystems. They cover more than 70 percent of the earth's surface, and hold about 97 percent of the world's water supply.

Marine animals—microscopic plankton, birds and the fish we eat—ingest plastic, mistaking it for food. Plastic fills their stomachs, leaving no room for real food. They starve. Chemicals in these plastics are absorbed into their bodies and passed up the food chain.

Microplastics are another danger. Studies show that plastics do not biodegrade, but break down into microscopic pieces that float like a fog in most oceans.

Filter feeders, animals that strain food particles from seawater, take those microplastics in with their food. Filter feeders range from tiny krill to baleen whales. They nourish popular seafood species, so what they eat may end up on your dinner plate.

Derelict fishing gear—nets, traps, buoys—floating in the oceans also kills marine animals by entangling or trapping them. It's called “ghost fishing.”

Every day you discard things that can imperil lives. Think about it.

It's time to clean up the oceans and stop filling them with trash.



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|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Bottlenose dolphin  | 15 Antarctic fur seal     |
| 2 Manatee             | 16 Plankton               |
| 3 Baleen whale        | 17 Lobster                |
| 4 Manta ray           | 18 Giant devil ray        |
| 5 Haddock             | 19 Shrimp                 |
| 6 Whale shark         | 20 Oceanic whitetip shark |
| 7 Albatross           | 21 Clam                   |
| 8 Shearwater          | 22 Dungeness crab         |
| 9 Common loon         | 23 Blue crab              |
| 10 Sea turtle         | 24 Coral                  |
| 11 Wahoo              | 25 Seahorse               |
| 12 Pelican            | 26 Fish eggs              |
| 13 Hawaiian monk seal |                           |
| 14 Atlantic puffin    |                           |