

# Are we going to wait for the world to end before we make a change?

By Zara Collins

Only nine percent of the world's plastic is recycled. Where does the rest of it go? Well 5.25 billion macro and micro pieces of plastic end up in our oceans. Some people may think, why does this matter? At least the plastic isn't dumped somewhere we can see. However, even though we can't see the plastic at the bottom of the ocean, it is causing more and more damage every day which is affecting us humans as a knock-on effect from the damage to our wildlife.

Scientists estimate that more than one million marine animals are killed yearly. When plastic ends up in the ocean it often ends up inside marine animals. When plastic is ingested, it can cause suffocation, starvation and drowning. Most people won't care about the death of these animals but what they don't realise is, when we go out for a fancy seafood dinner, we are eating these plastic infested creatures. Now I don't know about you, but that isn't something I would consider healthy.

As well as the plastic pollution, the marine wildlife is also being affected by chemical pollution. Chemical pollution occurs in industrial places and activities such as oil refineries, transportation and agricultural use of pesticides and insecticides. The use of these fertilisers leads to the runoff of chemicals into the oceans. A lot of these fertilisers contain nitrogen and phosphorus. When these chemicals end up in the ocean, it promotes the growth of algal blooms, which can be toxic to wildlife and harmful to humans. 14 American states voluntarily reported 242 harmful algal bloom events. 63 human cases and 367 animal cases of illness were reported. No ill persons died; 207(56%) animal deaths were reported. You may think about this the next time you go for a swim.

There are many small changes we can make in order to slow down pollution. Stop buying single use plastic, cook more, re-use grocery bags and obviously recycle.