

PLASTICS BY THE NUMBERS



VOLUME

- If we keep producing (and failing to properly dispose of) plastics at predicted rates, plastics in the ocean will outweigh fish pound for pound in 2050
- Worldwide use of plastic has increased 20-fold in the past 50 years, and it is expected to double again in the next 20 years. By 2050, we'll be making more than three times as much plastic stuff as we did in 2014.
- There are about 700 pieces of plastic floating in the ocean for EACH person on the planet

SCOPE

- Plastic has ended up in the stomachs of more than half the sea turtles in the world and nearly all marine birds
- Henderson Island, a remote island in the South Pacific, has the highest density of plastic waste in the world, and researchers from eight nations have estimated that about 300 billion pieces of tiny plastic are suspended in Arctic waters right now. Plastics have gone everywhere!
- Plastics from food packaging can leach into food and enter the body. The CDC reports that over 92% of people who were tested had detectable levels of BPA and other plastic chemicals in their bodies (including newborn babies).

REUSE/RECYCLING

- In 2014 Europe's plastic recycling rate was 30%, China was at 25%, and plastic recycling in the U.S. was only at 9% and holding steady.



AND IT STARTS RIGHT HERE!

Per year, the average person uses

540 baggies (sandwich bags)

425 plastic grocery bags

129 plastic disposable water bottles

500 disposable coffee cups, usually Styrofoam (office workers)

Over 1 million people in Fairfax County:

>965,000,000 plastic bags (only 2% recycled)

>129,000,000 water bottles (23-37% recycled)

>250,000 disposable coffee cups (not recyclable)

Note: Number based on estimated # of office workers from 2015 census

Little Hunting Creek Alexandria, VA

Sources: *Science Advances (journal)*, 2014 Eriksen M, Lebreton LCM, Carson HS, Thiel M, Moore CJ, Borerro JC, et al. (2014) *Plastic Pollution in the World's Oceans: More than 5 Trillion Plastic Pieces Weighing over 250,000 Tons Afloat at Sea. The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the future of plastics*, World Economic Forum, January 2016 *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (journal)*, May 2017, www.terracycle.com, EPA, International Bottled Water Association, fairfaxcounty.gov—Demographic Report