

## FACTS ABOUT PLASTICS AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

HEIDI PEARSON, PH.D., STATES THAT:

- “Floating in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, thousands of miles from any land mass, there is a garbage pile twice the size of Texas. Known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, this pile of garbage has been steadily growing since the 1950s.”
- “An area of swirling ocean currents, called a gyre, causes garbage to concentrate in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. This gyre acts like a magnetic toilet bowl, attracting garbage from across the North Pacific, then trapping it in an eternal swirling motion.”
- “The main component of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is plastic. Plastics — in the form of bottles, shopping bags, cell phones, computers, even shoes — account for nearly 80 percent of all marine debris. Plastic outweighs zooplankton in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch by a ratio of 6 to1.”
- “Since plastics are inorganic or not “of the earth,” it takes 500 to 1,000 years for plastic to decompose. However, plastic never completely decomposes. Instead, it gets broken down into tiny bits which linger in the earth or ocean for eternity.”
- “Wherever it occurs in the ocean, plastic is a major hazard to marine life. Plastic may lead to animal mortality from the outside, through entangling or suffocating an animal. Plastic may also threaten an animal from the inside by building up in an animal’s stomach as the animal mistakes plastic for food.”
- “Reduce the number of plastic bags floating around by bringing your own cloth shopping bags to the grocery store. Use re-usable water bottles and coffee cups. Recycle paper, plastic, metal, aluminum, glass, and cardboard.”

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