Oceans: A Trashed World

Humans have always used the oceans as a dumping ground. This activity degrades the quality of the water in the ocean, which directly affects all life living in the ocean, and all life that rely on the ocean as a means of survival. It is up to big corporations and individuals to prevent oceanic dumping in order to preserve the beauty and biodiversity of this vast saltwater world.

Interesting Facts About Ocean Pollution

Marine debris, especially plastic, kills more than one million seabirds and 100,000 mammals and sea turtles every year (Leahy, 2004).

In North Sea, Fulmars (seagull) averaged thirty pieces of plastic in their stomachs (Leahy, 2004).

Six pounds of plastic for every one pound of algae was found in the middle of the North Pacific (Leahy, 2004).

Plastic pellets are a magnet for toxic chemicals such as DDT and PCBs creating poison pill for many animals. Plastics are also responsible for leaching endocrine-distributing chemicals such as Biphenyl A into the water (MarineBio, 2008).

In the 1970’s, 17 million tons of industrial waste were legally dumped in the oceans. In the 1980’s, this number was reduced to eight millions pounds of industrial waste, but it still contained acids, alkaline waste, scrap metals and coal ash (MarineBio, 2008).

Saltwater has the potential to pump pollutants from the ocean into coastal freshwater aquifers making wells and other water sources contaminated (Jones, 2003).

Organic pollutants are much less soluble in saltwater than in freshwater (Jones, 2003).

Between 50 and 60 million tons of untreated municipal waste is disposed from China’s coastal cities every day (PATP, 2008).

Today, there is an island of trash in the Pacific twice the size of Texas (GG, 2007).

There are over 150 dead zones in the oceans worldwide. These are oxygen poor areas caused by fertilizer runoff, sewage and emissions from vehicles and factories. These areas contain minimal to no flora and fauna.

This graph shows the expenses of cleanup costs compared to penalties of ocean pollution. In most cases, especially with cleanup on a large scale, the penalties are only a fraction of the cleanup costs. This gives little initiative for a big company to clean up after itself, hindering the efforts to improve the quality of the oceans.

Trash is consistently found in the insides of birds in some of the most remote areas on earth such as the North Pacific Gyre (Moore, 2003). More than one million seabirds and 100,000 mammals and sea turtles are killed each year from

Many people know how enormous and devastating oil spills from ships can be, but many don’t know that it only accounts for five percent of the total oil in the ocean. The main culprit is oil from vehicles which ends up in the drains and then is dumped into the oceans.

References


