

[intro music, nature sounds, fades in and out] Welcome back to The Nature Talk with Lily Halloway! [Lion Roar] On today's episode we will continue the topic of environmental sustainability specifically looking at ocean plastic. Ew. So, how much plastic is really in our oceans? Well that's not easy to answer. Many researchers have discussed the notion of missing plastic. Here is head oceanographer, Laurent Lebreton, to tell us more.

[insert audio clip: Lebreton, L., discusses missing plastic]

But we shouldn't let some uncertainty about missing plastic cloud our judgments. There is a massive amount of plastic piling up on our beaches and floating on the ocean surface. An area located between California and Hawaii is home to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch holding nearly 87,000 tons of trash. Imagine how much more synthetic materials are scattered across all the oceans.

And think of the negative effects on the lives of marine life. Seagulls and sea turtles are dying from consuming plastic, penguins are dying from entanglement, and plankton are dying from floating plastic smothering food sources. Also, beautiful coral reefs are being destroyed beyond salvation. And the problem is only getting worse. With the impact of the CoronaVirus, there has been a large increase of plastic production used to make personal protective equipment or PPE. Organizations from Opération Mer Propre (Operation Clean Sea) in France to Greenpeace in the United States are posting videos of the litter from masks cluttering the seafloor to divers wading through used gloves. This creates even more risk for our marine ecosystem.

But it's not just animals who suffer. [dramatic music] This pollution damages our water supply, exposes us to chemicals linked with disease, and even end up in our bodies as we consume microplastics from food sources like fish. Economically, there are repair and replacement costs for ships damaged by ocean plastic as well as clean up costs for coastal plastic build-up. From

economic to health issues, we're wreaking havoc by not disposing of our trash properly and by buying single use products.

But aren't environmental activists and organizations and commercial companies already responding to the problem? Well, Boyan Slat, founder of The Ocean Cleanup, has some surprising news. Listen to this!

[insert audio clip: Slat, B. discusses nespresso and national geographic with single use plastic]

The companies are valuing profit over the earth's health. Disposable items are generally cheaper to produce and require consumers to buy the product repeatedly increasing profitability.

And there may be some generational aspects to our response. Members of the older generations may be more relaxed about sustainability, since they won't experience the irreversible effects of environmental damage in their life times. Hopefully our younger generations can take more drastic measures to help prevent the accumulation of more ocean pollution. Here is marine scientist Jennifer Lavers here to tell us more!

[insert audio clip: TRTWorld. Discusses the younger generations stance]

So what can we do as individuals to help prevent the build up of more plastic in our environment? [hopeful music] One, we can limit our purchases of single use products. Throw away that Nespresso pod and paper coffee cup and switch to a reusable coffee filter and use your own mug! Next, you can participate in a beach cleanup if you live near the coast, gathering litter before it ends up in the marine ecosystem. And you can help raise awareness and contribute to groups supporting sustainability.

So keep your oceans clean by doing your part to help the innocent marine life as well as yourself! [outro music: nature sounds, fades in and out] See you next time on The Nature Talk with Lily Halloway. [Lion Roar]