

Coral prey or plastic?

Did you know corals are eating plastics?

Microplastics are very small pieces of plastic, often created when water bottles, nappies, fishing nets, bags, paint, and more are broken down by the waves and sun. Corals can mistake microplastics for living plankton, their usual food.

When plastics are eaten by the corals, they often block up the coral and stop the coral from getting any further nutrients to grow. We are still learning about the harmful impacts from plastic consumption. A study in the journal *Environmental Pollution* showed that eating microplastics was linked to tissue death and bleaching in corals.

That matters because coral reefs help support 25% of all marine life, including over 4,000 species of fish. Reefs contribute to our local communities through direct use values from fisheries and tourism industries and through indirect use values, like coastline protection from waves.

Corals are not the only animals eating plastics: different types of plastics have been found in the stomach of sea turtles, birds, whales, and even the fishes we eat! Plus, fossil fuels are the primary ingredient in plastics, so **reducing plastics** fights climate change.

How do we keep our seas free from plastics?

In March 2022, the world's ministers for the environment agreed to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee with the mandate to forge an international legally binding agreement to end plastic pollution.

Pacific leaders are stepping up too. SPREP and UN Environment are working to implement the Pacific Regional Action Plan: Marine Litter 2018–2025 with the Pacific countries to keep our seas clean through better waste management.

When you use your own reusable container for take-away, bring your own bag for shopping and say 'no thanks' to single-use plastic, you are saving the ocean—and saving us too.

Help give voice to this Pacific Conversation – learn more about marine and coastal biodiversity in the Pacific islands.

**Join in the Pacific Conversation: #SaveOurOcean
#ResilientPacific**



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