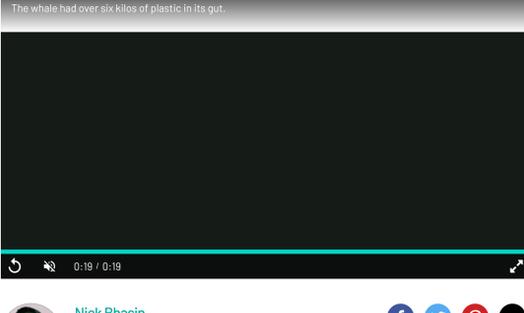




VIEWS

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Whales Are The Hard Working Garbage Collectors Of The Sea!



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Views Editor
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Like Netflix with its Christmas movies, the ocean has a trash problem.

Why?

Because people and corporations throw trash into it. Over six billion kgs every year. I'm not a mathematician, but that seems like a lot.

Some of it washes away from land through drainage or rivers, some of it is accidentally dropped and some of it is criminally dumped. There are a lot of cigarette butts and plastic bottles, but as it turns out, there are also lots of toilets, which is interesting.



In fact, there is so much trash that huge trash collections have formed all over the globe. There's one garbage dump twice the size of Texas in the middle of the Pacific Ocean! It's almost the size of Queensland.

Toys, toothbrushes, Halloween masks... the Great Pacific Garbage Patch has it all.

And that's just the garbage we can see. Most of the trash in the ocean is made up of plastic that's been made super tiny by the sunlight and water erosion, so it's impossible to clean up.

Also plastic doesn't biodegrade so it'll probably be there forever.

We've tried recycling, trash scavenging and forgetting about the problem because it's underwater and we can't see it. Nothing has helped.

So what are we supposed to do? Are you going to do something? What about the corporations and governments? I don't think I should have to do anything. I can't open my eyes in salt water, how am I going to look for trash?

No. We need to leave this to the experts:

The whales.

Yes, whales are beautiful, enigmatic animals. The subjects of novels and poetry and the tales we tell children so that they may luxuriate in the grand splendour of mother nature. They're almost mythological.

They're also really big and can eat a lot of trash!



This week, a 10-year-old male sperm whale brought 100 kgs of garbage neatly wrapped in its stomach onto a beach in Scotland. Like a kind of Garbage Santa Whale, the big fella had just been out there in the ocean, collecting the trash we put in there so it could bring it back to us so that we can hopefully dispose of the stuff correctly this time (but who knows, right?).

There was netting, rope, plastic cups, bags, gloves, packing straps and "tubing". What's tubing, you ask? Well, the whale didn't say. But it gathered it all up for us, that's what matters.

And this trash in whale is just one of many heroes. In April, a miscarried female whale in Italy hauled in 22 kgs worth of disposable dishes, shopping bags, detergent packaging and tubing (again in the tubing?). She showed real dedication, working to pick up trash while pregnant, earning every minute of that well-deserved maternity leave.



In March, another whale brought 40 kgs of plastic trash back to the Philippines. Apparently, the whale used some gastrointestinal trick to calcify some of the plastic so that it formed neatly compact bricks.

Last year a Spanish whale collected almost 30 kgs of trash. One in Thailand brought in about eight. And an Indonesian whale moved 1,000 pieces of plastic, including a pair of flip-flops (so that's where those went), onto the shore.



But it's not just whales working overtime to pick up our sea trash. Turtles are chipping in too!

In October, a baby sea turtle in Florida was found transporting 104 pieces of plastic inside of it somewhere.



So do deep water fish, 73 percent of which eat microplastics. Granted, it's not big plastics, but they're doing what they can.

The albatrosses are also pitching in, though this one probably overdid it with the bottle caps. I know what that's like. I can't eat just one! Yum yum yum yum...



Don't put a plate of bottle caps in front of me. I can't help myself! (Image: National Geographic)

But we're not letting animals have all the fun. Apparently, every human being in the developed world has a little bit of plastic in their blood.

Yes, humans caused this garbage. And yes, we're not doing all that much about it. But the whales are wise. They see how hopeless the situation is and they say "How can I help?", though it probably sounds more like and underwater "uhhhhhhhhhhh" in that funny whale language they have. Sometimes I'm like "Just speak English!" but what can you do.

The only criticism I have is that the average sperm whale weighs 35,000 to 57,000 kgs and is about 12 metres long – you're telling me 100 kgs of trash is all that Moby Dick can carry?

It's a small note. A quibble really. You know what? Forget I even mentioned it. I shouldn't complain.

Especially when you consider that whales have probably been cleaning up the really hardcore stuff we used to dump in the ocean. (There are laws against this kind of dumping now. Not sure why you'd over regulate with more red tape when you could let the free whale market decide.) Petroleum products, chemical waste, "heavy metals" (rock on), dredged material (whatever that is), sewage sludge, radioactive waste containers and of course demolition debris.

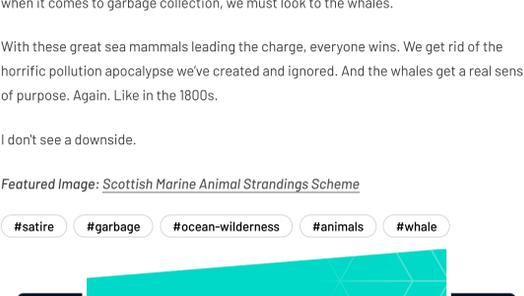
As with machinery lubricant, lamp oil, whalebone corsets and whaletooth chess pieces, when it comes to garbage collection, we must look to the whales.

With these great sea mammals leading the charge, everyone wins. We get rid of the horrific pollution apocalypse we've created and ignored. And the whales get a real sense of purpose. Again. Like in the 1800s.

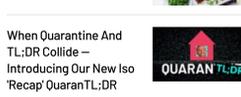
I don't see a downside.

Featured Image: Scottish Marine Animal Strandings Scheme

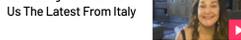
#satire #garbage #ocean-wilderness #animals #whale



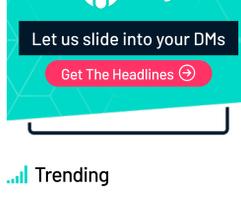
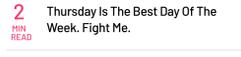
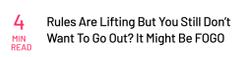
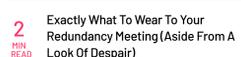
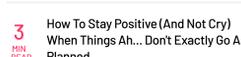
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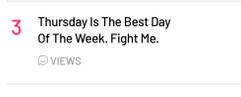
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