

Podcast Monologue Transcript:

Plastic is a material, and it takes a very long time to decompose, longer than paper and longer than metal. For people who study environment and climate, this is especially concerning to Earth's oceans because pieces of plastic are reduced to smaller pieces by waves and ocean currents which then form groups with a high density of plastic, such as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Marine animals, such as whales, seabirds, and turtles, have been discovered dead from the high number of plastic particles that they consume when they are trying to eat. The plastic harms humans too because the toxic chemicals that fish eat become more concentrated in the animals which eat the fish, including humans, in a process called biomagnification. For example, many fish now have a small amount of mercury within them which does not harm them, but now humans who eat fish daily are more likely to develop mercury poisoning.

In 2013, the organization The Ocean Cleanup was founded by a young Dutch inventor named Boyan Slat. As a teenager, Slat became dedicated to tackling the issue of plastic pollution in the oceans when he went diving and saw that there was more plastic in the places he was exploring than fish. This soon led to an intensive high school project about plastic pollution, and later a TEDx talk where he presented his designs for a system that could catch plastic using the ocean currents. He became so passionate about his idea that he later dropped out of university to found The Ocean Cleanup as its CEO, aged just 18 years old. Boyan Slat now spends his career developing technology to remove plastic from the oceans, and very much like the Swedish

activist Greta Thunberg, Boyan Slat is a young genius with high ambition who is very devoted to his cause of environmentalism.

In addressing plastic pollution, the media has employed the use of the phrase “reduce, reuse, recycle,” otherwise known as The Three Rs. Recycling is the practice of converting waste into reusable material, whereas reusing means that a household might use a plastic container a second time before throwing it out, and thus before it becomes waste. However, reusing and recycling is not an entirely reliable method of reducing pollution because it is not guaranteed that all plastic will be recycled, therefore the first R, reduce, is the most important act, for it refers to avoiding plastic altogether by using other alternatives. Some schools are advocating for the replacement of plastic bags with beeswax wraps so that students can carry litterless lunches, or without wasting plastic excessively; this is a prime example of the first R, reduce. The other two Rs, reuse and recycle, are best used in households and in businesses to exercise caution about the disposal of their plastic products where plastic usage maybe cannot be reduced very easily.