

# There Will Be More Plastic Than Fish in the Ocean by 2050 (If We Don't Change)



There will be more plastic than fish in the ocean by 2050, according to a new report from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Photo credit: Plastic Pollution

By Cole Mellino | [Eco Watch](#)

There will be more [plastic](#) than fish in the ocean by 2050, warned the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#) in a [report](#) published Tuesday. The report, *The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the Future of Plastics*, was produced by the foundation and the [World Economic Forum](#) with analytical support from McKinsey & Company.

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Every year “at least [8 million tons of plastics](#) leak into the

ocean—which is equivalent to dumping the contents of one garbage truck into the ocean every minute,” the report finds. “If no action is taken, this is expected to increase to two per minute by 2030 and four per minute by 2050.

“In a business-as-usual scenario, the ocean is expected to contain one ton of plastic for every three tons of fish by 2025, and by 2050, more plastics than fish (by weight).”

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Plastic production has increased 20-fold since 1964, reaching 311 million tons in 2014, the report says. It is expected to double again in the next 20 years and almost quadruple by 2050. New plastics will consume 20 percent of all oil production within 35 years, up from an estimated 5 percent today.

The vast majority of plastics is not effectively recycled, either, according to the report. Only 5 percent is properly recycled, while 40 percent is sent to a landfill and a third ends up in the environment, including in the world’s oceans. Much of the rest is burned, which generates energy, [The Guardian](#) noted, but also causes “more fossil fuels to be consumed in order to make new plastic bags, cups, tubs and consumer devices demanded by the economy.”

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The report provides a first-ever “vision of a global economy in which plastics never become waste, and outlines concrete steps towards achieving the systemic shift needed,” the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#) said.

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