

The United States consumes 500 million disposable drinking straws per day, which break down into microplastics and get inside animals like fish, which humans then eat.

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Human ingestion of microplastics has been linked to reproductive harm, obesity, organ problems and developmental delays in children.

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Mercury, a toxic chemical, is released from coal combustion and industrial waste into the air, where it settles into the ocean. High levels of mercury makes some fish inedible and impairs the nervous system, hearing, speech, vision and muscle control.

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Runoff from human sewage waste can promote growth of algal blooms, which kills wildlife and is harmful to fishing and tourism industries.

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Runoff from farm fertilizer can also cause sickness in humans; in fact, 10 percent of all foodborne diseases are caused by eating seafood contaminated by algal toxins.

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The tourism industry loses nearly 1 billion each year through loss of fishing and boating activities as a result of ocean pollution.

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Oil pollution destroys the water repellency and insulation of ocean mammals and birds. Without protection from the cold water, many sea creatures will die of hypothermia.

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The equivalent of one garbage truck of trash is dumped into the ocean every minute.

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The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is an area in the ocean which is heavily littered with microplastics and debris, brought together by ocean currents. It covers an area over twice the size of Texas and contains an estimated 3.6 trillion pieces of plastic.

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Afroz Shah started cleaning Versova Beach with just his neighbor, but soon more and more people joined in the effort. The beach was cleaned after 3 years.

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In 2019 Afroz Shah visited schools and colleges twice a week to spread his mission and inspire future leaders.

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In 2019, Afroz Shah started the Afroz Shah Foundation, which helps spread his mission of ocean awareness and cleaning up beaches around the world.

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Afroz Shah used to visit Versova Beach as a child – when he came back decades later, it was covered in trash, which inspired him to start the cleanup movement.

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After cleaning Versova Beach, Shah started a new mission to clean up River Mithi – the longest river in Mumbai.

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In 2016, the United Nations named Afroz Shah a Champion of the Earth.

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CNN named Afroz Shah a Top 10 Hero of the Year in 2016.

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Shah's movement has cleared over 60 million pounds of trash from the ocean.