

What is the *Great Pacific Garbage Patch*?

- A vast area of the Pacific Ocean that is filled with millions of pounds of floating trash.
- It extends downward from 100 to 300 feet beneath the surface.
- It is estimated to cover an area twice the size of the state of Texas.

What is it?

- 90% of floating marine litter is plastic. Some of it is in the form of a “plastic soup” made of tiny bits of broken down plastic. In these areas, there is six times as much plastic as plankton, which is at the base of the food web.

Where did it come from?

- Nearly 80% of marine debris comes from land-based sources. The rest is fishing gear and trash from ships.
- Most of it comes from people not handling waste materials on land properly.

Why did it end up here?

High pressure systems, and clockwise winds and currents create a vortex of swirling waters that trap the trash. This gyre is only one of five major oceanic gyres in the world. It covers about 10 million square miles.

