



COMMENTARY



Different Types of Plastic Debris: An Environmental Loss

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Description

Micro, macro, and mega plastics are the three main types of plastic that make up plastic pollution. The Northern Hemisphere has the highest concentrations of mega and micro plastics, which are located in urban areas and waterways. Because currents move the trash, plastic can be found off the coast of some islands. Packaging, footwear, and other household objects that have been dumped in landfills or washed ashore include both mega- and macro-plastics. Items used in fishing are more likely to be discovered near distant islands. The terms micro, meso, and macro debris may also be used to describe them. There are two types of plastic debris: main and secondary. When collected, primary plastics remain in their unaltered state. Micro beads, bottle caps, and cigarette butts are a few examples of them. On the other hand, secondary plastics include the smaller plastics left over when primary plastics degrade.

Plastic fragments between 2 and 5 mm in size are known as micro debris. Beginning as meso or macro debris, plastic debris can break down into tiny particles through degradation and impacts to produce micro debris. Nurdles are a more popular name for micro debris. Nurdles are recycled to manufacture new plastic products, however because of their small size; they are frequently released into the environment during production. Through rivers and streams, they frequently find their way into the ocean. Scrubbers are another name for micro debris that comes from cleaning and cosmetic goods. Scrubbers and micro debris are frequently consumed by filter-feeding species because of their small

size. Nurdles can leak during shipping or come from land-based sources to enter the water. According to the Ocean Conservancy, more plastic is dumped into the ocean by China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam than by all other nations combined. Nurdles, together with plastic bags and food containers, are among the most prevalent types of plastic pollution, accounting for 10% of the plastics in the ocean. Because of their hydrophobic nature, persistent bioaccumulating toxins including bisphenol A, polystyrene, DDT, and PCBs can build up in the waters as a result of these micro-plastics and have harmful effects on human health.

Environmental losses are anticipated to rise despite global efforts to minimise the production of plastic garbage. According to modelling, without significant interventions, between 23 and 37 million tonnes of plastic garbage might be dumped into the environment annually by 2040 and between 155 and 265 million tonnes annually by 2060. An increase of this scale could have drastic effects because the ecosystems are already being negatively impacted by the plastic garbage that is dumped into the environment. While plastic debris is greater than 20 mm, it is categorized as macrodebris. These include things like supermarket bags made of plastic. Ocean waters frequently include Macrodebris, which can negatively affect local creatures. Priority contaminants have included fishing nets. They keep capturing marine life and other plastic waste even after being abandoned. These abandoned nets eventually get too heavy, weighing up to 6 tonnes, and are too difficult to remove from the ocean.