

World News

Floating garbage 'killing marine life'

By staff writers

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Furry flotsam ... this puppy was one of the more unusual tenants in the Pacific Patch / Reuters



Some of the rubbish floating in the Pacific / Reuters

- Garbage pile "harming animals"

- Bigger than previously thought
- Toys, kayaks found by scientists

DOLPHINS, fish and birds may be getting killed off by toy puppies and water bottles floating around in a giant ocean garbage patch.

Known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the floating pile of debris in the [Pacific Ocean](#) could be killing off marine life at a shocking rate, a group of scientists from the University of California say.

Amongst the usual bottle caps, plastic bags and old fishing nets, the researchers discovered a large amount of water bottles - and even a stuffed toy dog - in the pile, the *Associated Press* reports.

They also discovered that the floating garbage tip, located between the west coast of the US and Japan, was larger than they thought.

"It's pretty shocking," lead researcher [Miriam Goldstein](#) said.

"It's unusual to find exactly what you're looking for."

She said that even when the larger pieces of plastics are broken down to mere millimetres, they can still pose a fatal problem for some creatures.

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Why don't they stop researching it and start cleaning it?

"They're the right size to be interacting with the food chain out there."

The scientists will continue to analyse the garbage found in the patch of ocean to work out how many animals are dying after ingesting the debris.

US oceanographer [Charles Moore](#) accidentally discovered the patch in 1997 while taking a short cut from Hawaii to California.

He estimated that the patch contained up to 100 million tonnes of debris.

It's believed that the patch is spread across 500 nautical miles and is held in place by swirling currents.

Kayaks, footballs and Lego bricks have previously been found amongst the debris.