

Wasted Life

Turtles are known to be affected by plastic litter in range of ways. Turtles use sight and scent to select their prey and often mistake plastic for prey as marine plastic can look and smell like natural prey. Research has shown that plastic found in the digestive tracts of turtles differ between species depending on what they feed on.

Scientists estimate that there is between 1000-3000 tonnes of floating plastic in Mediterranean at any one time. If a turtle accidentally ingests plastic, it not only makes the animal feel falsely full resulting in starvation, but can leave internal injuries leading to infection. The presence of plastic in the digestive tract can also affect the animal's buoyancy. Turtles entangled in floating plastic are subjected to increased drag when swimming, causing starvation or drowning.



Litter on the beach can also be a hazard to turtles. Female turtles come onto the beach to lay their eggs and their emerging hatchlings become entangled in plastic and other waste on their journey to the edge of the sea. The garbage can even effect turtles before they hatch from their eggs as the sex of turtles is determined by the temperature of the nest during development. The build-up of litter on the sand could affect the temperature of the nest leading to an unnatural sex ratio of the hatchlings.