

# PRESERVE THE EARTH

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Illustration: Cathie Block

Cathie Block 19



Albatrosses and pelicans  
soar above the oceans.  
Puffins inhabit shoreline  
cliffs. Manatees, sea turtles  
and many other creatures  
swim in the deep. All are  
unique and irreplaceable.  
Yet our garbage, especially  
plastics, threatens their  
well-being.



Plastic debris is a serious problem  
in oceans and waterways worldwide.  
It’s not just unsightly; it’s toxic to  
animals—humans included.

The millions of tons of plastics tossed into the ocean  
or carried through storm drains to the sea each  
year do not really go away. Plastic bags, bottle caps,  
cigarette butts, bottles and larger items wash up  
on once-pristine shores of remote islands.

Our oceans are  
not isolated. They  
are interconnected  
ecosystems.  
They cover more  
than 70 percent of  
the earth’s surface,  
and hold about  
97 percent of  
the world’s water  
supply.

Marine animals—  
microscopic plankton,  
birds and the fish  
we eat—ingest plastic,  
mistaking it for food.  
Plastic fills their  
stomachs, leaving no  
room for real food.  
They starve. Chemicals  
in these plastics are  
absorbed into their  
bodies and passed up  
the food chain.

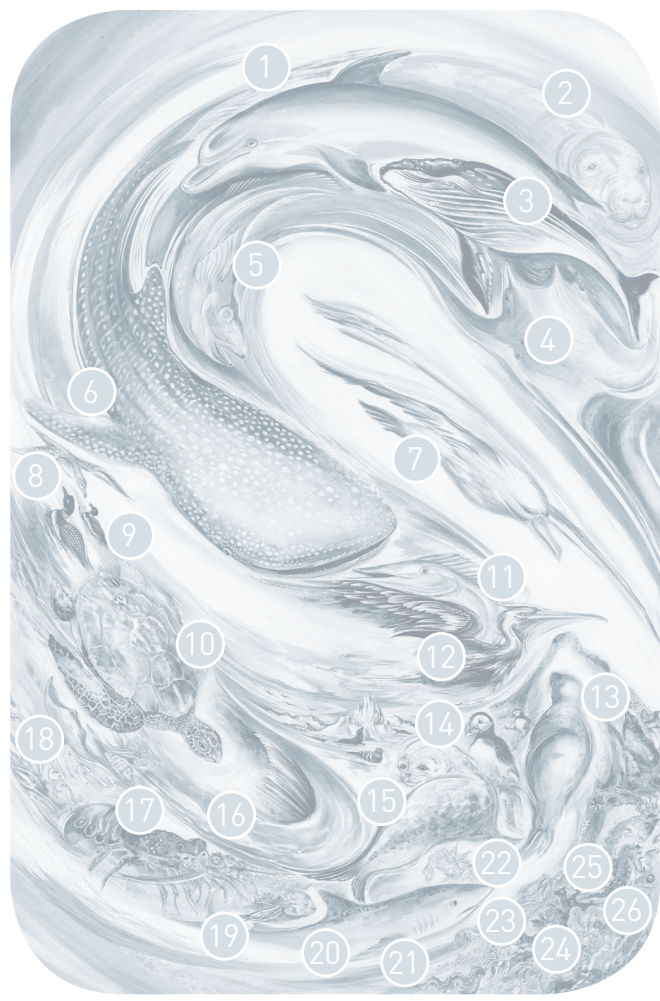
Microplastics are  
another danger. Studies  
show that plastics do not  
biodegrade, but break  
down into microscopic  
pieces that float like a fog  
in most oceans.

Filter feeders, animals  
that strain food particles  
from seawater, take those  
microplastics in with their  
food. Filter feeders range  
from tiny krill to baleen  
whales. They nourish  
popular seafood species,  
so what they eat may end  
up on your dinner plate.

Derelict fishing gear—  
nets, traps, buoys—floating  
in the oceans also kills  
marine animals by entan-  
gling or trapping them. It’s  
called “ghost fishing.”

Every day you discard  
things that can imperil  
lives. Think about it.

It’s time to clean up  
the oceans and stop filling  
them with trash.



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|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Bottlenose dolphin  | 15 Antarctic fur seal     |
| 2 Manatee             | 16 Plankton               |
| 3 Baleen whale        | 17 Lobster                |
| 4 Manta ray           | 18 Giant devil ray        |
| 5 Haddock             | 19 Shrimp                 |
| 6 Whale shark         | 20 Oceanic whitetip shark |
| 7 Albatross           | 21 Clam                   |
| 8 Shearwater          | 22 Dungeness crab         |
| 9 Common loon         | 23 Blue crab              |
| 10 Sea turtle         | 24 Coral                  |
| 11 Wahoo              | 25 Seahorse               |
| 12 Pelican            | 26 Fish eggs              |
| 13 Hawaiian monk seal |                           |
| 14 Atlantic puffin    |                           |