

Peace & Justice Report

For the week of August 25, 2017

7 Eco-Friendly Alternatives to Plastic Straws to Help Save the Oceans

By [Joe McCarthy](#) Global Citizen



“Straws are a gateway plastic,” said Dune Ives, executive director of Lonely Whale, a nonprofit committed to protecting the oceans and marine life.

She didn’t mean that using straws eventually leads people to use saran wrap, plastic bags, and ponchos.

She meant that giving up plastic straws makes it easier for people to give up other types of plastic and to ultimately think about the impact plastic has on the environment, especially the oceans.

The scale of plastic pollution in the oceans is truly staggering. An estimated [8 to 11 million tons of plastic](#) enters the oceans every year — the equivalent of emptying a garbage truck filled with plastic into the oceans every minute.

Ives said that because the average human doesn’t interact with the oceans much, the problem isn’t widely known.

“We tend to focus more on land issues, but we have equally if not more impact in the oceans,” she said. “But it’s so far away from us, it’s so out of sight, out of mind, and really inaccessible for the vast majority of people, that we don’t really understand that it’s happening.

Straws might seem like a trivial place to start — but the US alone [consumes 500 million straws each day](#). Most of these straws end up in the world’s oceans, where they clot shorelines and gather in thick gyres.

They end up being mistaken for food by marine life, which, when swallowed, can cause injury or even death, or they can get painfully jammed into orifices, [like with this turtle](#) whose suffering sparked widespread outrage. And straws — coffee stirrers, cocktail straws, big, bendy straws — gradually break down into microplastics that leach toxins into the water and eventually blanket the sea floor.

Seen from this macro-perspective, minimizing straws would be a pretty effective place to start in the quest to clean the oceans.

Read more: <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/alternatives-to-plastic-straws-eco-friendly/>

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- 1) stop using straws
- 2) encourage restaurants to use straws not made of plastic
- 3) use alternatives



Bamboo Straws



Straw Straws



Paper Straws



Steel Straws



Glass Straws



Reusable Cup & Straw

...OR NO STRAWS!