


The background is a deep blue ocean scene. On the left, a white shark with a black eye and a small smile swims towards the right. On the right, a large blue whale with a white belly and a small smile swims towards the left. The scene is populated with various smaller blue fish of different sizes and shapes, some swimming in schools. There are also several blue coral-like structures and bubbles scattered throughout the water.

HOW PLASTIC POLLUTION IN THE OCEAN AFFECTS INDIVIDUALS AS WELL AS SOCIETY'S

By Xinge Li

An illustration of an underwater scene on a dark blue background. In the top left, there are several blue bubbles of varying sizes. In the top right, there are several light blue fish swimming towards the right, and a piece of light blue coral. In the bottom left, there is a piece of red coral and some green seaweed. In the bottom right, there is a large, stylized blue dolphin swimming towards the right. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

Approximately 8 million tons of plastic ends up in our oceans every year. This staggering amount is equivalent to dumping garbage trucks full of plastic into the ocean every minute.



Alarming levels of plastic pollution in the oceans

The effects of this pollution are far-reaching. It not only affects marine life, but also destroys entire ecosystems. For example, WWF (2021) reports that more than 700 species, including endangered species, are known to be affected by plastic pollution, often through ingestion or entanglement.





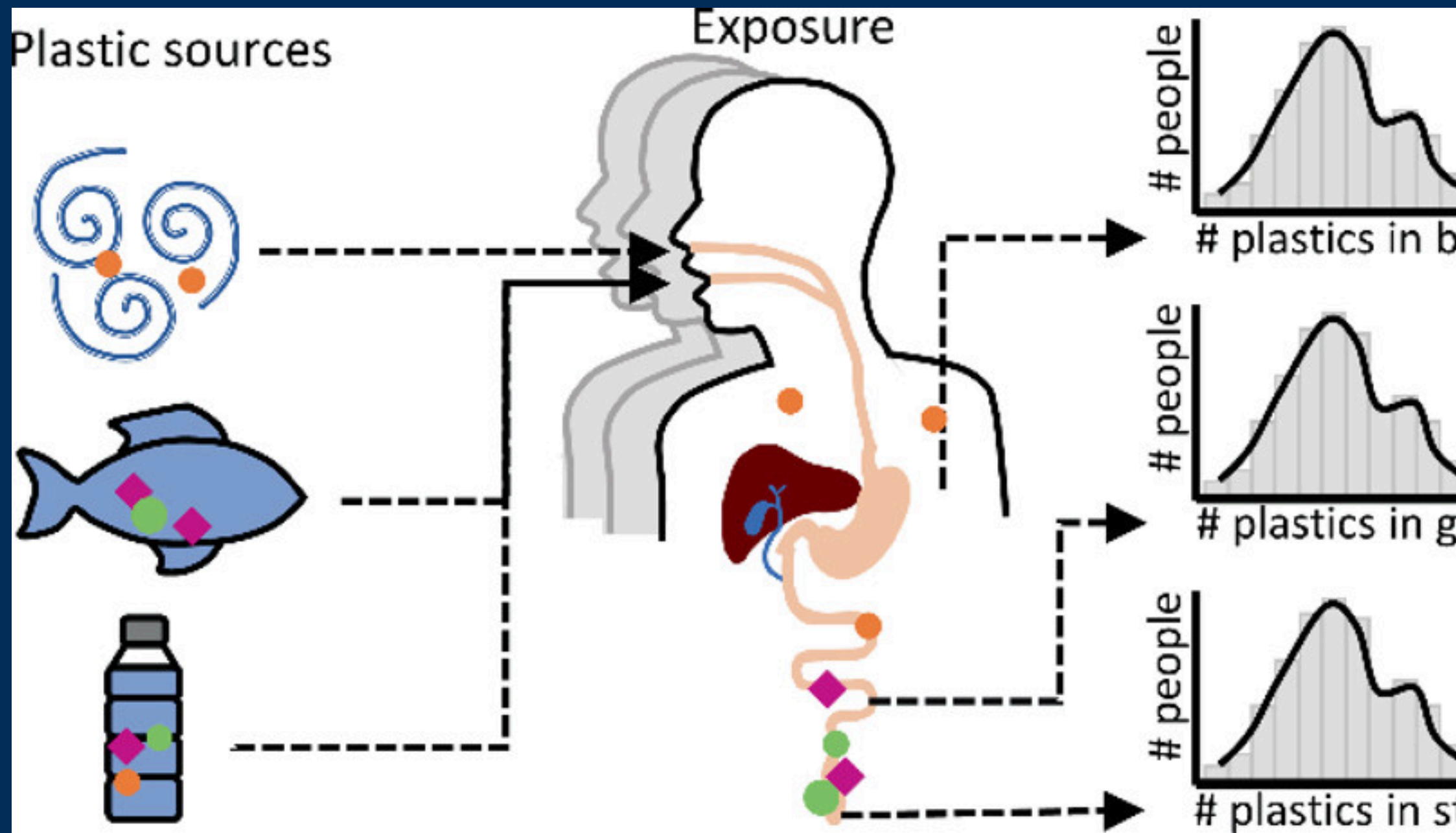
Furthermore, this plastic eventually breaks down into microplastics, which according to a study in the Marine Pollution Bulletin (Johnson et al. 2023) have been found in the deepest parts of the oceans, demonstrating the pervasive nature of this pollution



Impact of Plastic Pollution on Marine Life and Human Health

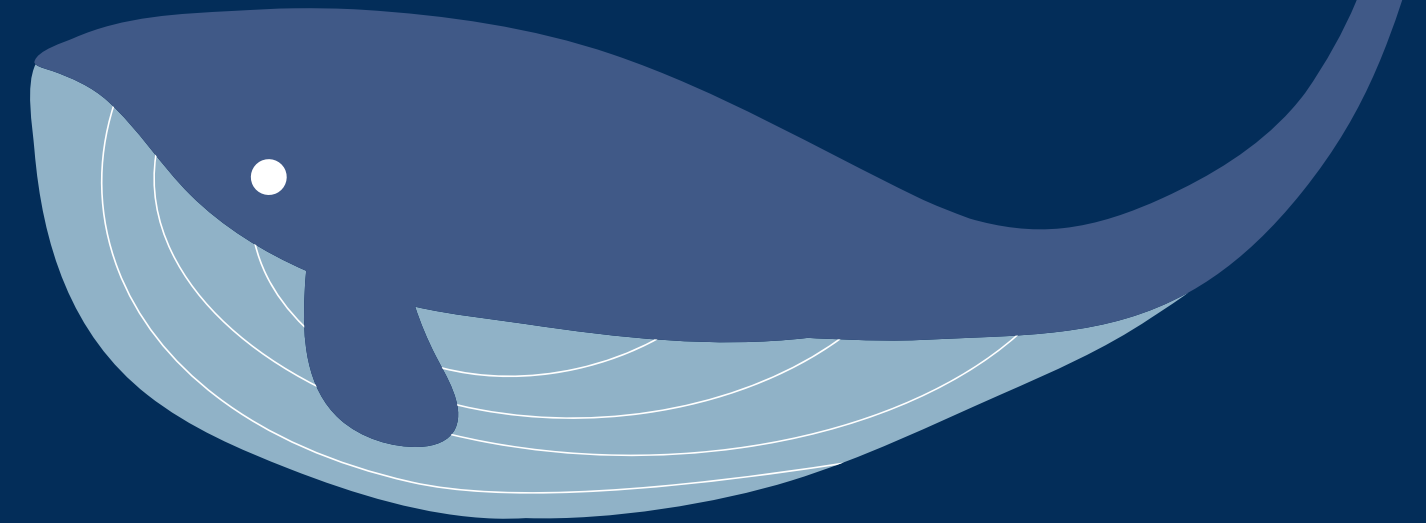
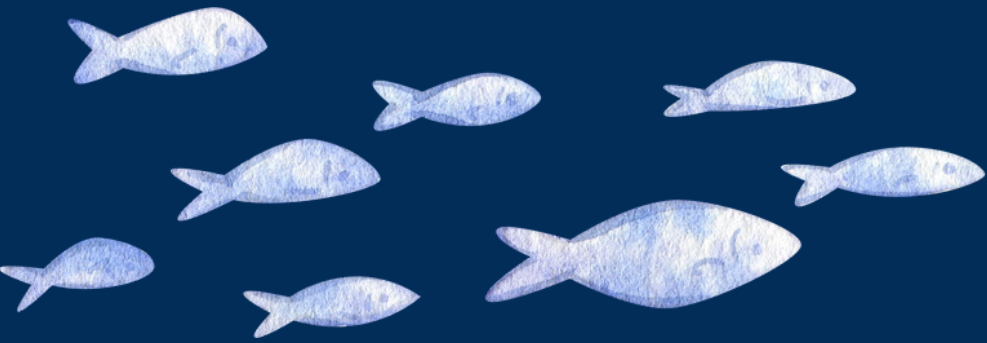


Plastic waste poses a direct threat to marine life. The marine animals, including fish, birds, and mammals, routinely ingest plastics and mistake them for Food. This can lead to injury, illness, and even death.

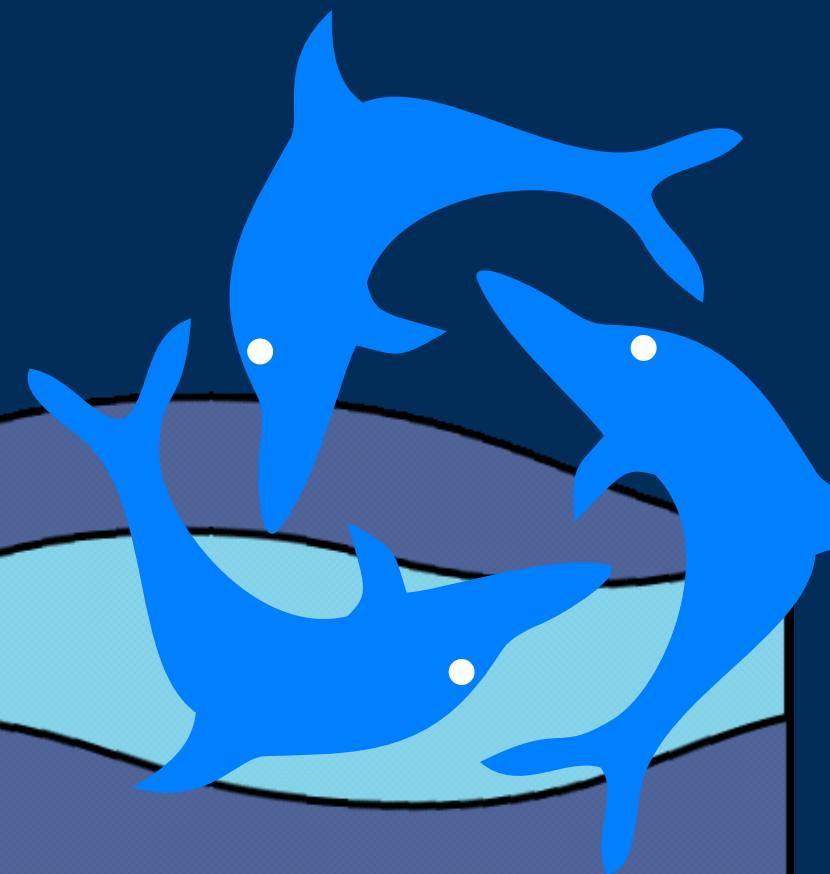


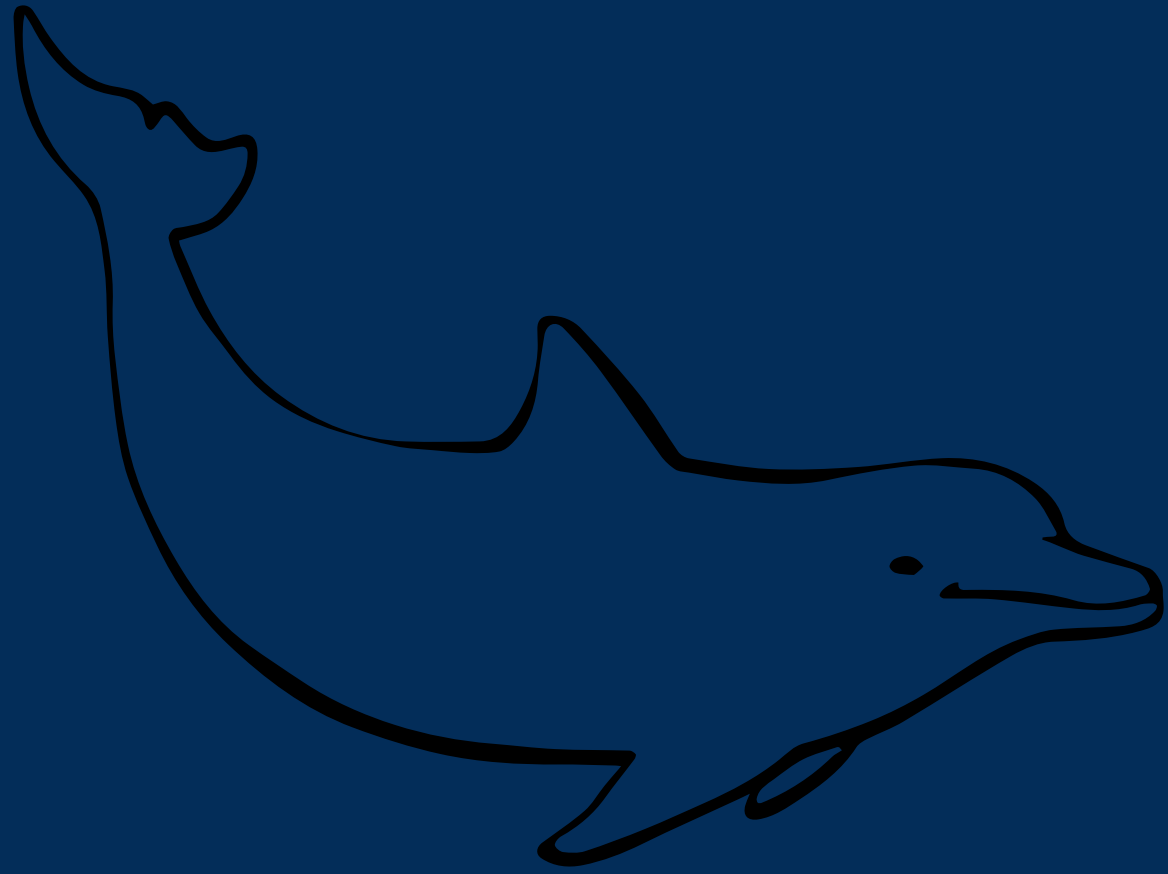
The consequences extend beyond marine life. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (2023) reports that microplastics, tiny pieces of plastic, have been found in seafood and pose potential health risks to humans, including endocrine disruption and endocrine effects. In addition, the degradation of marine ecosystems as a result of plastic pollution affects local economies and communities, especially those dependent on fisheries and tourism.

Possible steps to mitigate marine plastic pollution

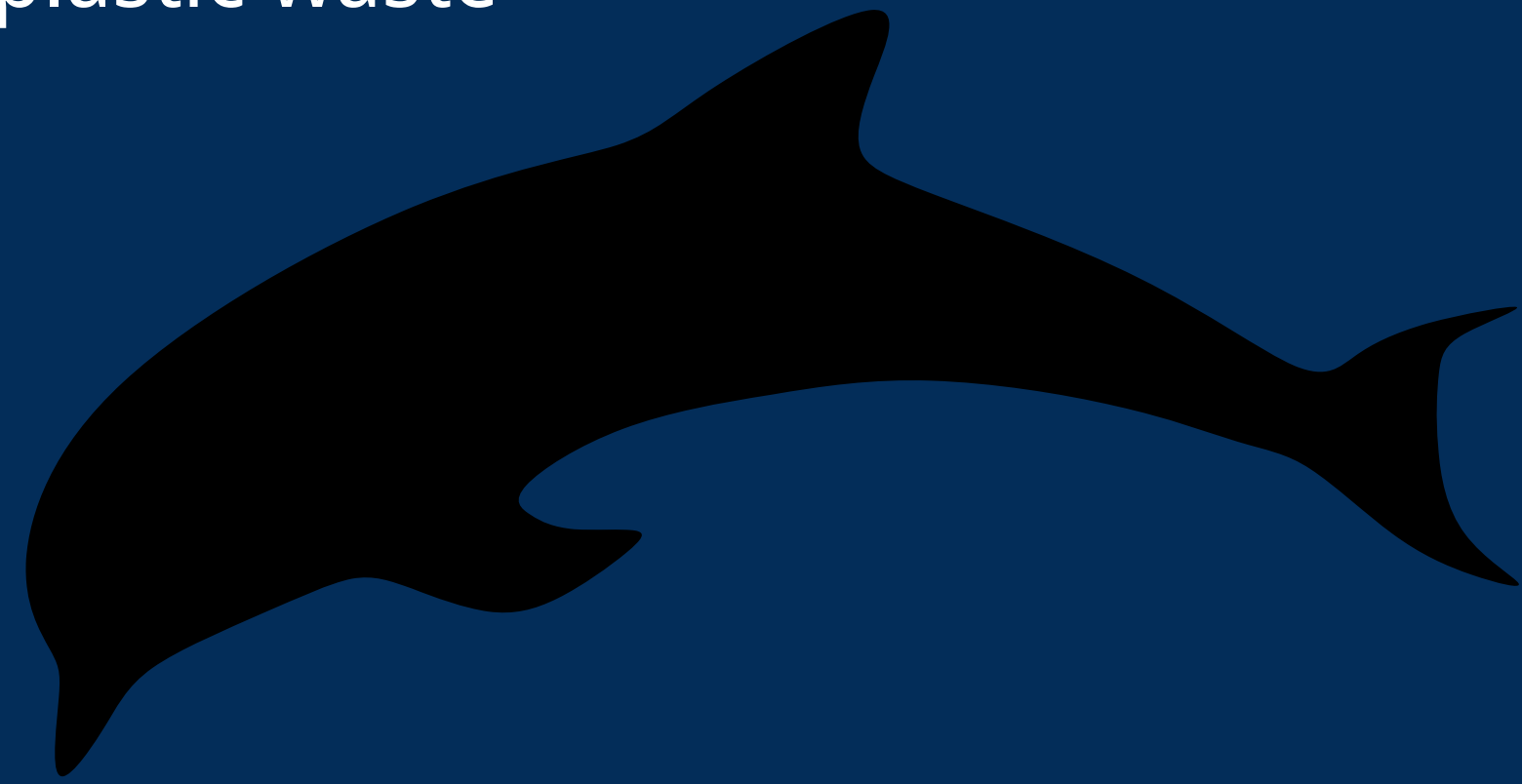


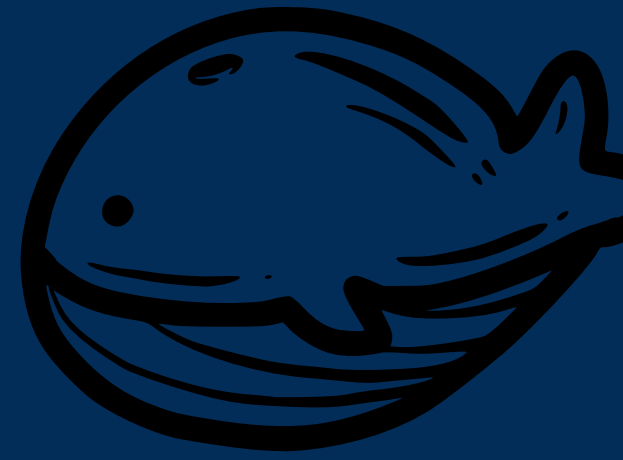
One effective approach is to increase recycling efforts. The Environmental Protection Agency (2022) emphasizes the importance of recycling and proper waste management to significantly reduce the amount of plastic that ends up in the ocean



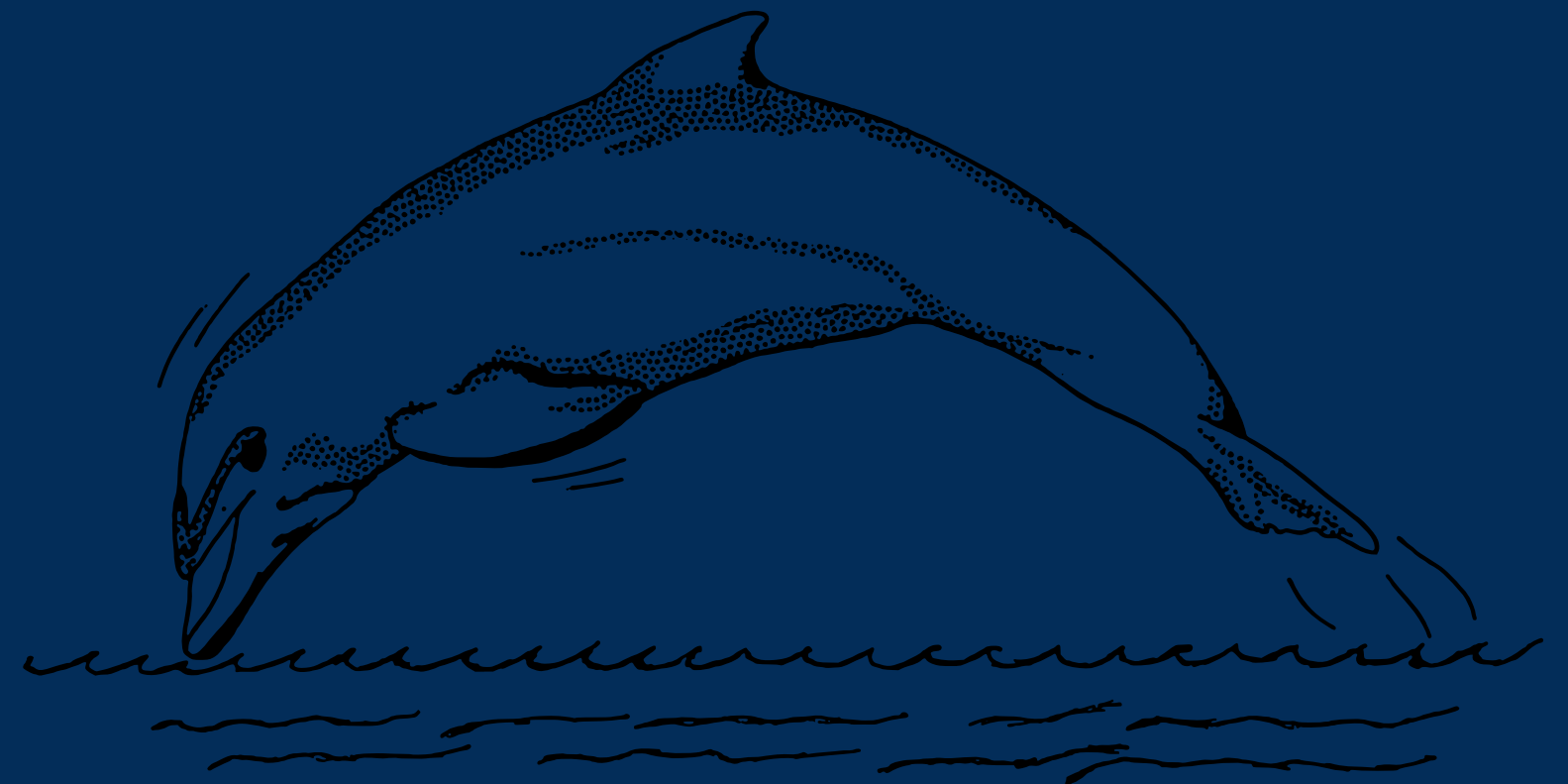
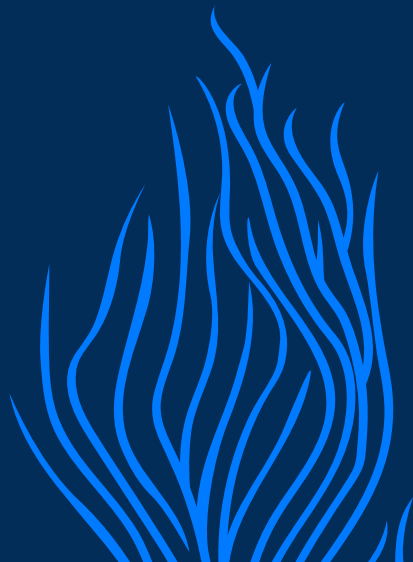
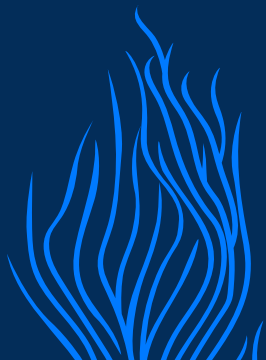
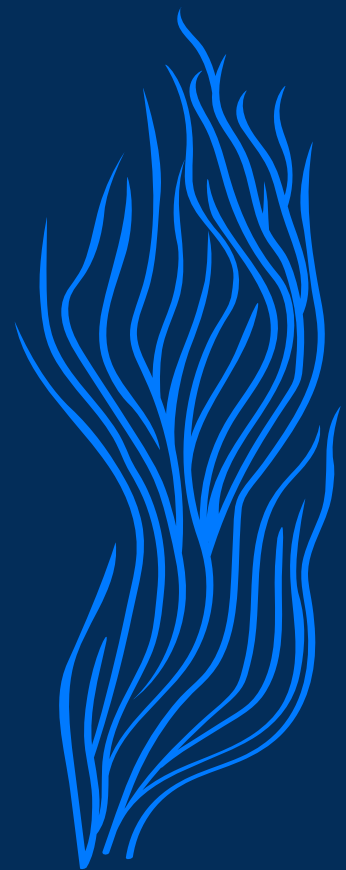


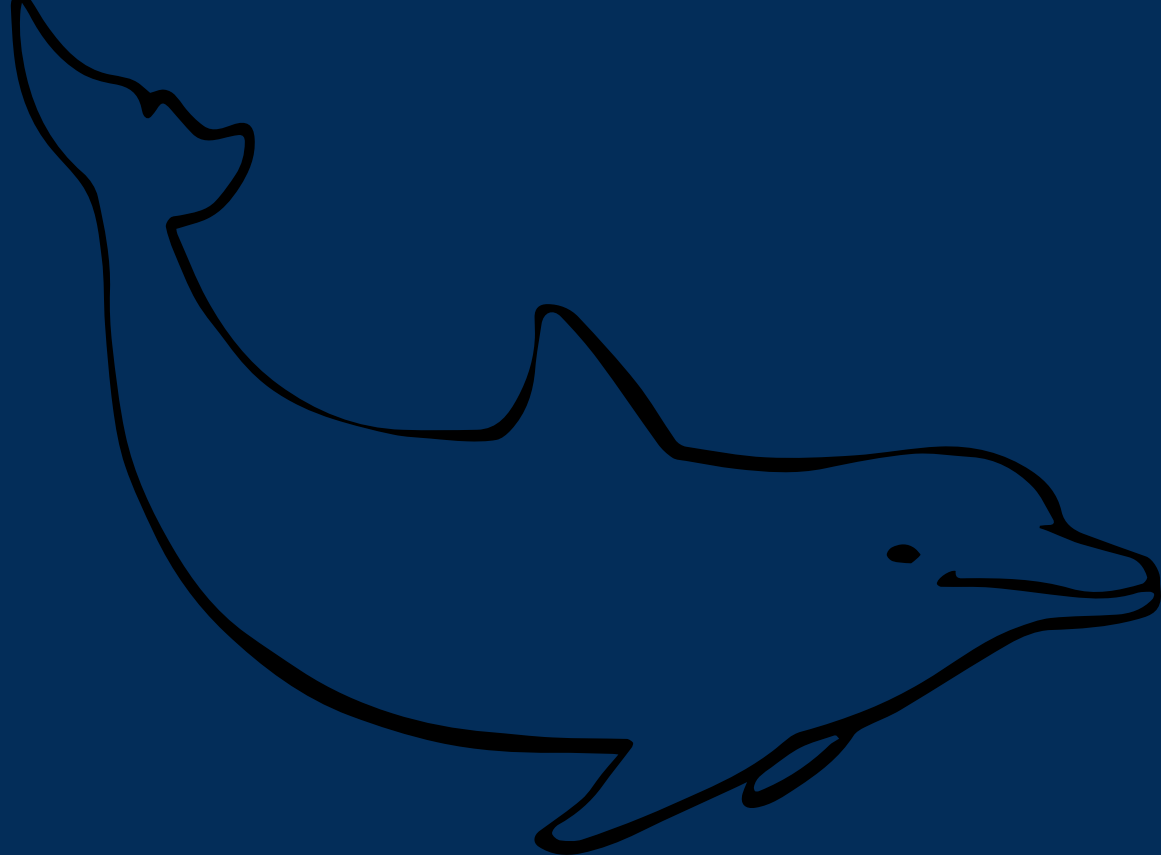
Individual action is also critical. Environment News Service. (2017) shows that individual choices, such as choosing reusable products over single-use plastics, can collectively have a significant impact in reducing plastic waste





Finally, supporting policy change is key. Research by the World Economic Forum (2022) shows that policies aimed at reducing plastic production and increasing producer responsibility have been effective in several countries, demonstrating the potential for broader legislative impact.





Today, we explore the dangers of plastics to our oceans and how it affects the health of people, marine life, and the planet. Plastic not only affects our health, but also our economy. But if we can support impact policies, we can make a difference for ocean pollution.

It is up to us to make the decision that the power to change the oceans is in our hands, for the sake of the oceans and for the health of humanity. It's not just about saving the oceans; it's about protecting our home, so let's make the choice to meet the challenge of protecting our home and our oceans.



Reference List



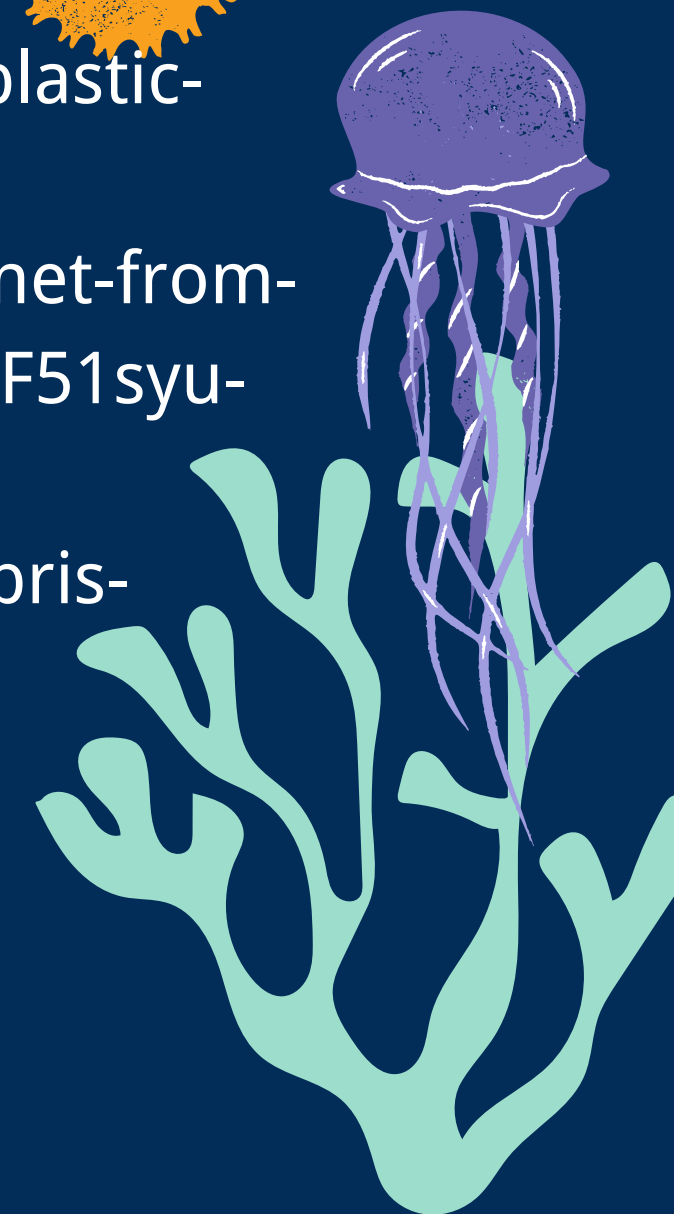
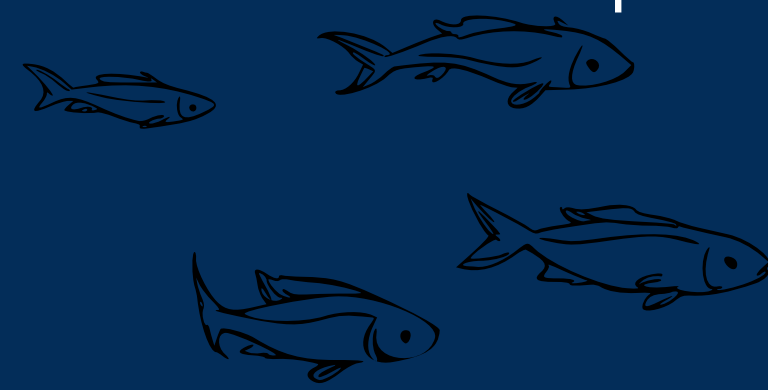
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