

## Exploring the Pacific Ocean Garbage Patch

*Seeking the Science of the Pacific Ocean Garbage Patch*

August 5, 2009

Scripps Institution of Oceanography / University of California, San Diego

Scripps research vessel *New Horizon*

Scientists from Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego have embarked on a research journey into the vast and little-explored "Great Pacific Ocean Garbage Patch."

The North Pacific Ocean Gyre is roughly a thousand miles off California's coast. Just how much influence the accumulation of human-produced plastic and other debris has on this ocean area is currently being speculated. Scientifically, very little is known about the size of the "garbage patch" and threats to marine life and the gyre's biological environment.

From August 2-21, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, with support from UC Ship Funds and Project Kaisei, is dedicating a scientific mission to explore and analyze the problem of plastic in the North Pacific Ocean Gyre. The graduate student-led Scripps Environmental Accumulation of Plastic Expedition (SEAPLEX) aboard the Scripps research vessel *New Horizon* will explore threats from several angles, with research that includes surveys of plastic distribution, investigations of floating plastic and assessments of impacts on sea life.

"During the SEAPLEX cruise we are going to try to target the highest plastic areas we see to begin to understand the scope of the problem," said Miriam Goldstein, chief scientist of the expedition. "The team of graduate students will be studying everything from phytoplankton to zooplankton to small midwater fish."

Daily blogs will be posted on the SEAPLEX Web site.

Follow the expedition on Twitter: @Scripps\_Ocean and @Seaplexscience

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