

# Rubbish crisis

The scourge of plastic debris in the world's oceans is creating a worldwide rubbish crisis. Remote and uninhabited, Henderson Island in the Pacific Ocean is fast becoming one of the most polluted places on earth.

## GLOBALLY

More than  
**8 million**  
tonnes of plastic is dumped  
into oceans every year.

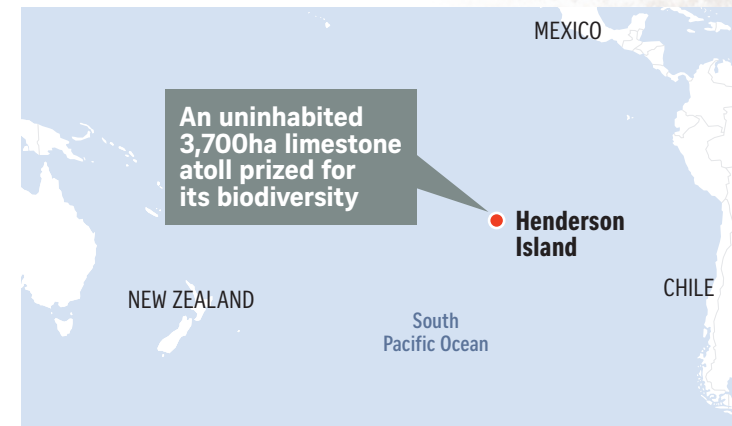
Annual production of plastic  
has risen sharply from  
**1.7 million**  
tonnes in 1954 to  
**311 million**  
tonnes in 2014.

An estimated  
**5 trillion**  
plastic items – mostly less  
than 5mm in size – are  
circulating in the surface  
layer of the world's oceans.



## ON HENDERSON ISLAND

- Scientists calculated that there were 671.6 items per sq m on Henderson Island's North Beach – the highest reported density anywhere in the world.
- 68 per cent of debris on North Beach is buried less than 10cm in the sand.
- Most of the items were everyday household items such as cigarette lighters, plastic razors, toothbrushes, plastic scoops and babies' pacifiers.
- The amount of rubbish was such that it took a five-person team six hours to survey a 10m section of North Beach.
- Each day, 17 to 268 new items wash up on a 10m section of North Beach, representing a daily accumulation rate of 1.7 to 26.8 items per metre.



Sources: PLASTIC OCEANS FOUNDATION, PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE  
PHOTOS: JENNIFER LAVERS  
STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS