

Free the Sea and Let the Ocean Be

When you think of Hawaii, what comes to mind? Well, when I think of Hawaii, I think of a beautiful paradise, a place of diversity, and where sea turtles, monk seals, and many more animals freely roam. Protecting our ocean and wildlife within it, is our responsibility, but our ocean is dying because of us. If we want our ocean to continue to thrive and be healthy, we have to change what we are doing now. Changing what we are doing now, will help and save our ocean, even our planet. In this article, I will be addressing our issue and proposing solutions about what we can do to change our act and help our ocean life.

Marine debris and plastic pollute our ocean. Plastic pollution falls under the category of marine debris, but it is one of the largest concerns worrying many and affecting marine life. Marine debris, such as nets, are commonly found in our ocean. These nets are killing monk seals, one of Hawaii's most endangered species. Monk seals are getting caught in these nets and drowning because they are stuck tangled in it longer than they can hold their breath for. Plastic pollution, such as plastic bags, are a main cause of death in marine life. Turtles mistaken these plastic bags for jellyfish, which is a part of a sea turtle's diet. If a turtle swallows a plastic bag, it causes blockage in their body which results in gases unable to be released from their body. Sea turtles aren't the only animals being affected by plastic pollution, in fact, every animal in the ocean ecosystem are affected. If an animal has a decline in population due to humans, we can't help but feel a little guilt. We should all be willing to do whatever possible to save these animals.

According to scientists, by 2050, it is predicted that there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean. How crazy is that! This prediction isn't even over a range of 50 years. We have to act now and change the way we are living. The things we could do to help change our ocean quality is to use reusable bags and not plastic bags. We could eventually ban the use of plastic bags in the state of Hawaii, but what could we replace these with? In Indonesia, cassava has been used as an alternative for plastic bags. This cassava-based bag is eco friendly, biodegradable, compostable, and non toxic for the environment. Avani, the company that creates this bag, claims that it is safe for wildlife to eat, having the bag only made of cassava starch, vegetable oil, and organic resins. A cassava bag could be key to having a safe and cleaner water quality. Another thing we could do is participate in beach cleanups to help get debris out of our ocean. Also, instead of using plastic toothbrushes and floss, we could use bamboo toothbrushes and pure silk floss. Now, these things may not be big, but it's the little things that make the biggest impact. I wouldn't expect boats to go around the islands and look for trash because the trash will end up in the landfill, plus once it's put in the landfill, it could go right back to the ocean. It's important that people stop supporting plastic because they are showing others that it's okay to keep trashing our ocean, which is a horrible thing.

Our ocean benefits us. As a born and raised surfer, the ocean is my playground. Many people in Hawaii feel the same way. The ocean is a part of me, it's a part of who we are as people. Acting now can save our ocean. Acting

now, will be the difference between tomorrow, in a week, or a month from now. If we make the little efforts count, we can save lives, maybe not human lives, but animal lives. Clarence T.C. Ching had a vision, to make Hawaii and the rest of the world a better place. He was a man of philanthropy and helping others. By helping our ocean, we will support his vision. It may not be human beings we're helping, but our ocean wildlife, because they matter, too. Animals can't talk, maybe in their own language, but not in ours. So, by others making a difference in what they do to stop having these animals live in misery, we are giving a voice for those who have none.