A holistic approach to the plastic problem

Learning from our linear past

Libby Peake
Senior policy adviser, Green Alliance

WARNING

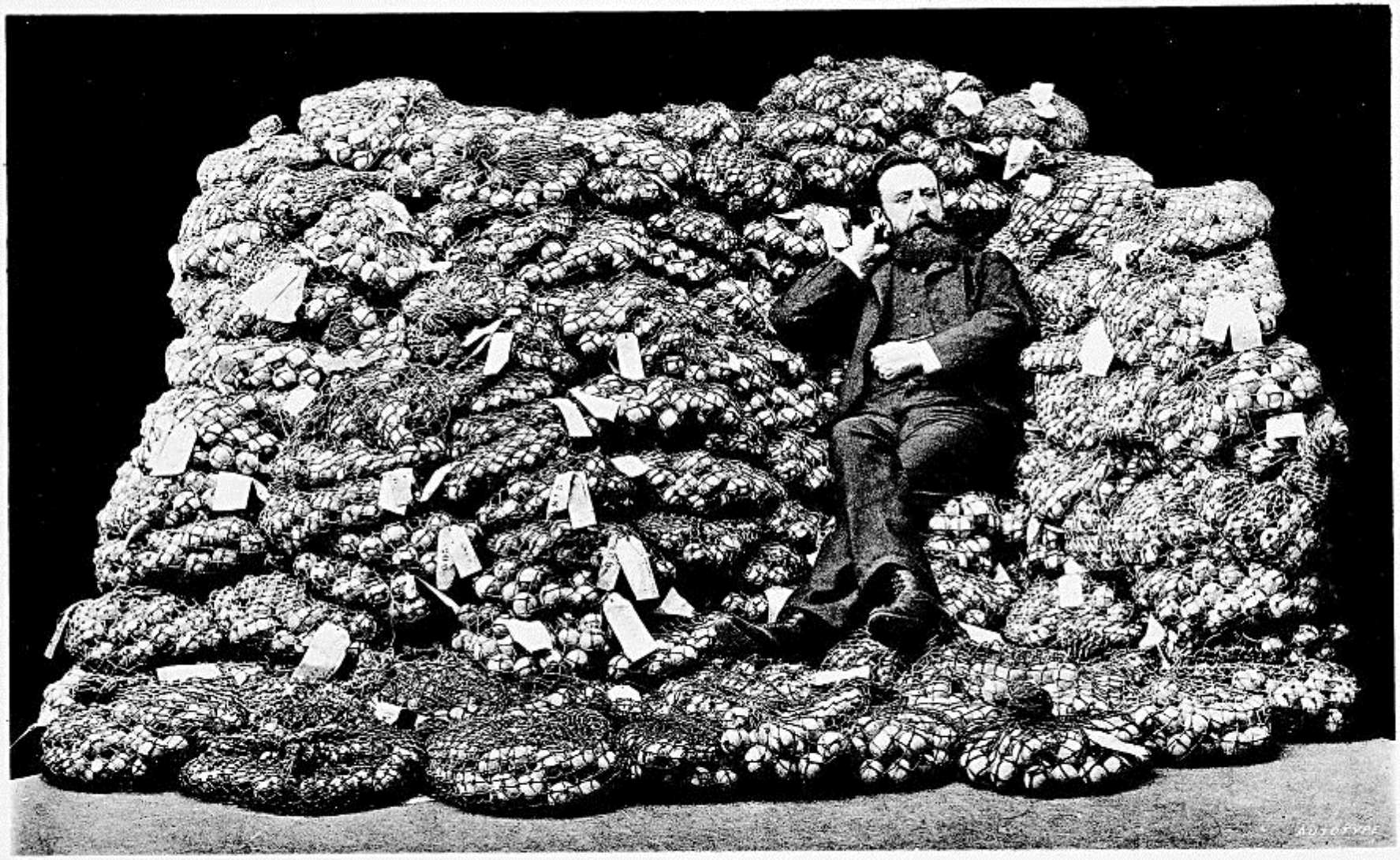
THIS PRESENTATION CONTAINS GRAPHIC IMAGES THAT VIEWERS OUGHT TO FIND DISTURBING



neg no. LC-USZ62-999



A Mountain of Billiard Balls.



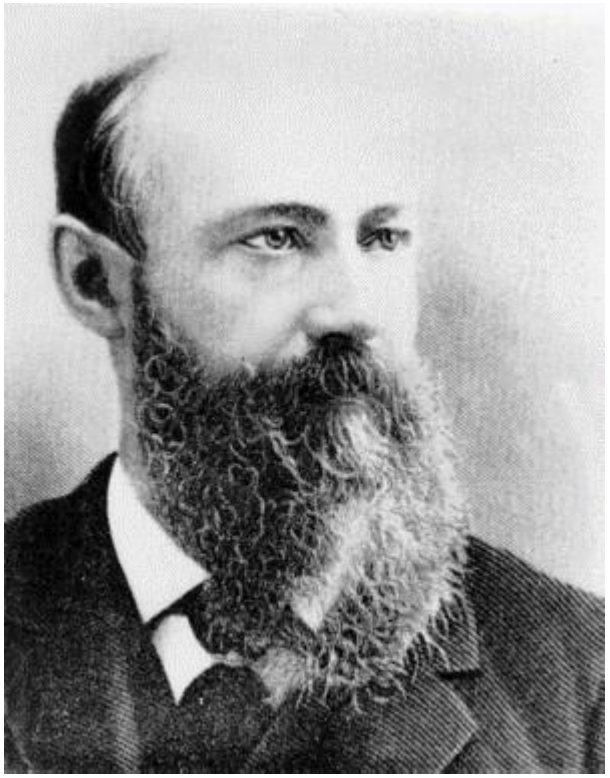
PHOTOGRAPH OF BURROUGHES & WATTS' STOCK OF IVORY BILLIARD BALLS.

Yours Truly
James H Burroughes
F. Z. S.

20,000, value £16,000. The largest Stock in the World. The average number cut from the Tusks of an Elephant is 10 (5 from each Tusk), and the above Stock represents the produce of the enormous number of 2,000 Elephants. Our average Sale of Billiard Balls is 950 per month, which is equivalent to the produce of 95 Elephants, or the annual total of 1,140 Elephants.

Image courtesy of the Smithsonian Institute. Available at: ocean.si.edu

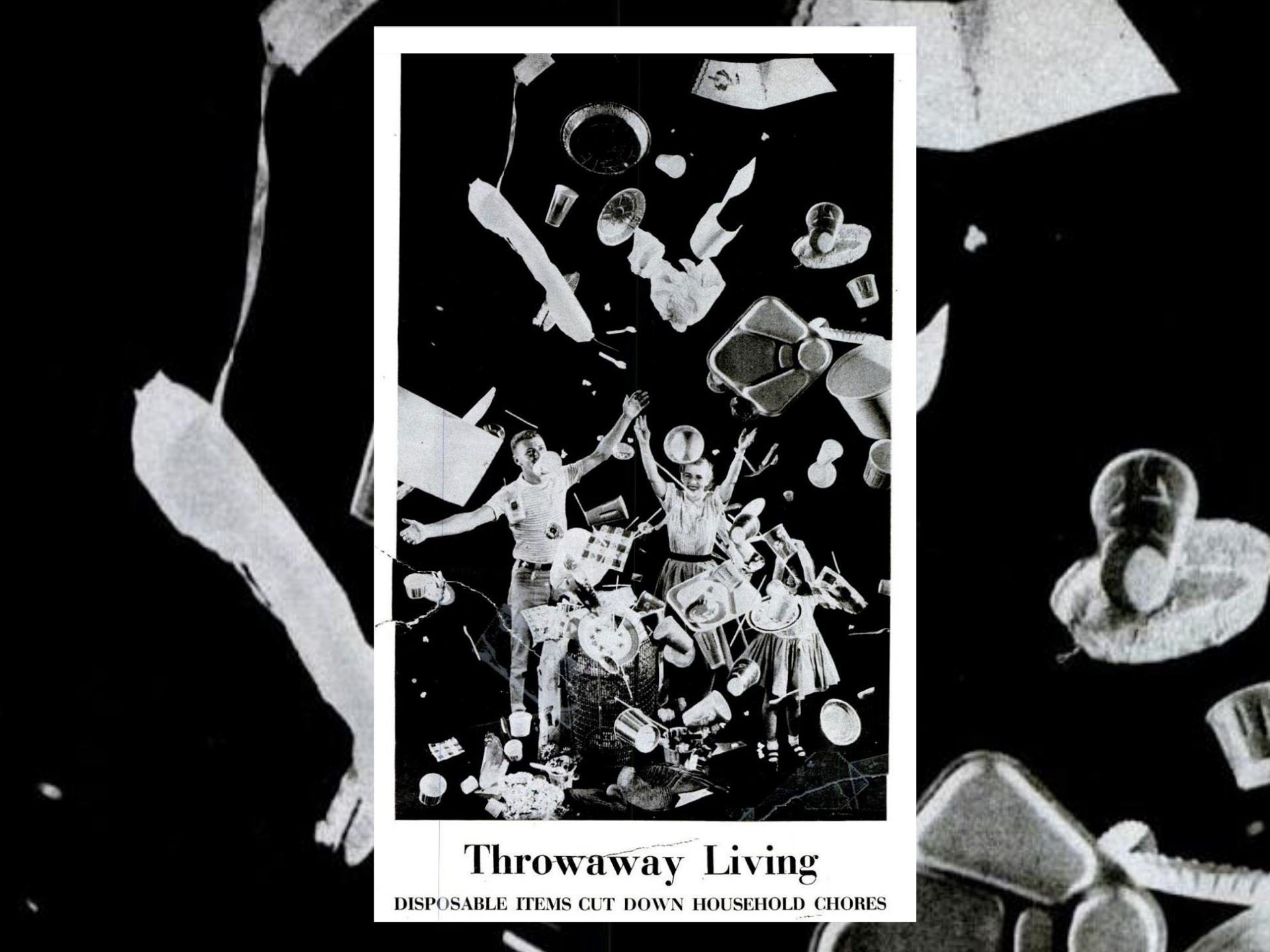
Aiming for a $10,000 reward



John Wesley Hyatt,
inventor of celluloid

"As petroleum came to the relief of the whale, so has celluloid given the elephant, the tortoise, and the coral insect a respite in their native haunts; and it will no longer be necessary to ransack the earth in pursuit of substances which are constantly growing scarcer."

early celluloid pamphlet



Throwaway Living

DISPOSABLE ITEMS CUT DOWN HOUSEHOLD CHORES

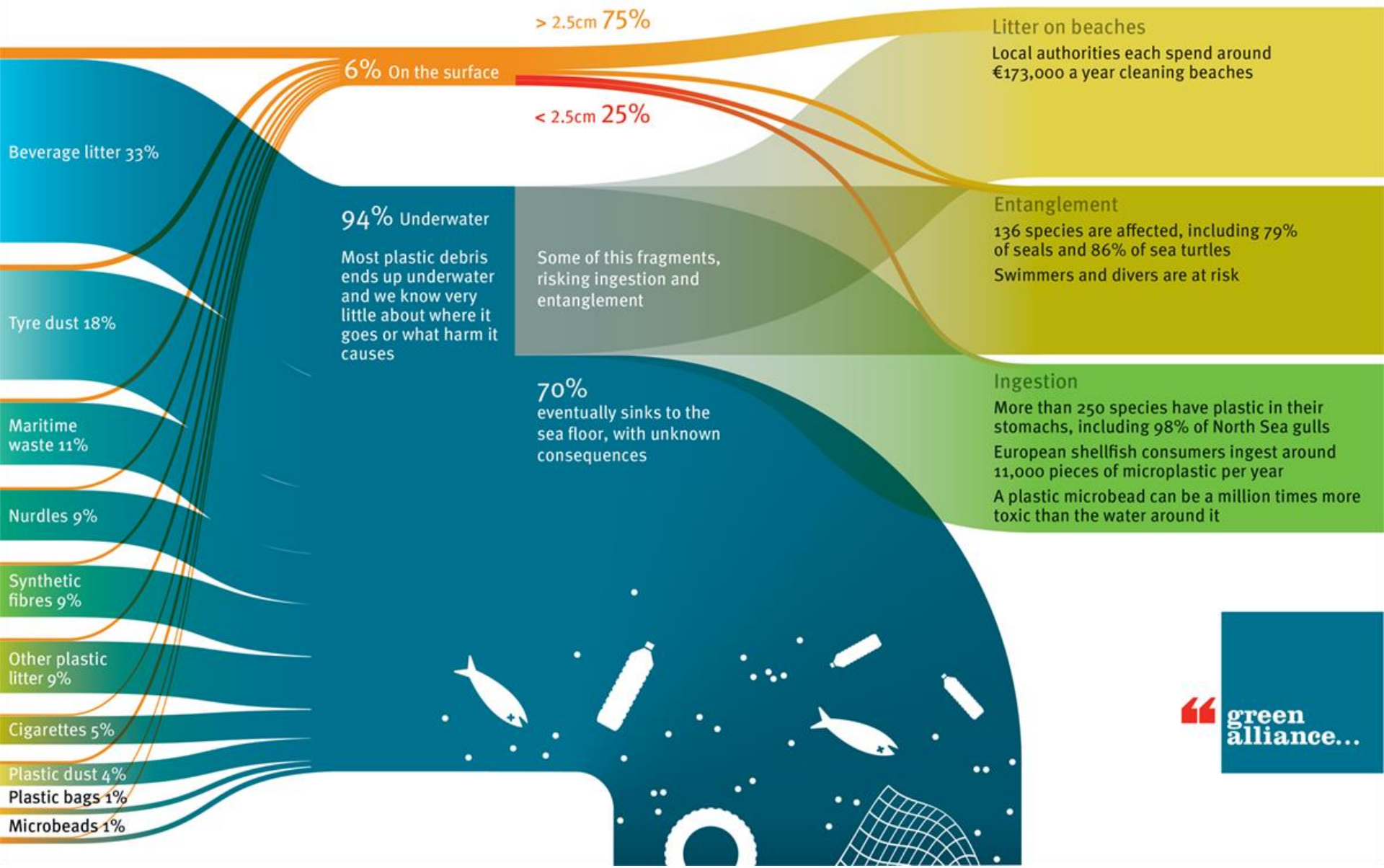
Properties of plastic

- Flexible
- Hardenable
- Waterproof
- Durable
- Cheap



Image: Shafiu Hussain: , (CC BY 2.0), available at www.flickr.com

What happens to plastic in the sea?



green alliance...



Image: Chris Jordan (via U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters), (CC BY 2.0), via Wikimedia Commons


Image: NOAA



Image: Stefan Leijon, **(CC BY-ND 2.0)**, available at www.flickr.com

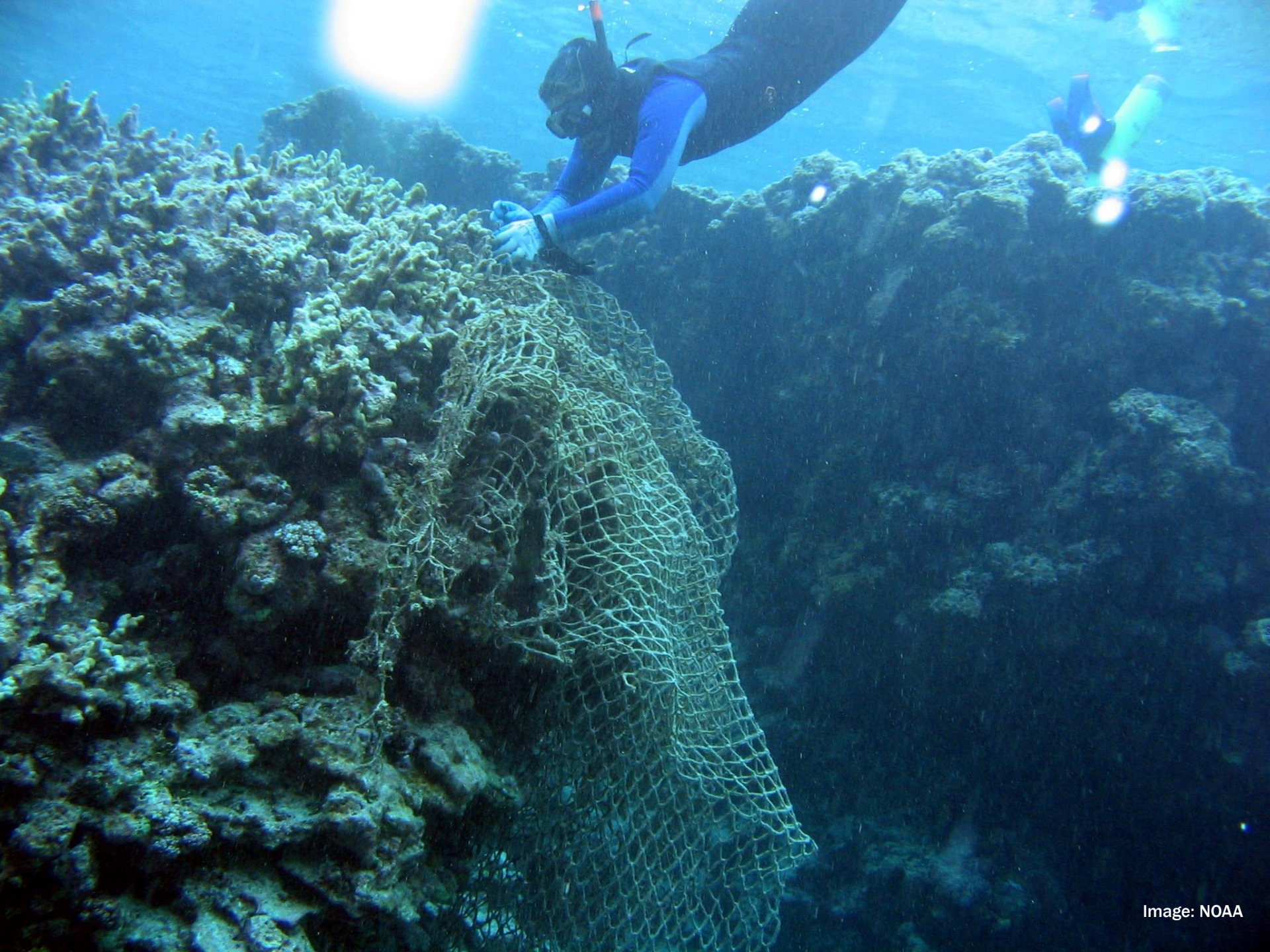


Image: NOAA



By Bernard Dupont (CC BY-SA 2.0), via Wikimedia Commons

"As petroleum came to the relief of the whale, so has celluloid given the elephant, the tortoise, and the coral insect a respite in their native haunts; and it will no longer be necessary to ransack the earth in pursuit of substances which are constantly growing scarcer."

early celluloid pamphlet

Plastic promises



Plastic promises



Plastic promises



Plastic promises



Potential post-plastic problems

- Increased emissions
- Damage to ecosystems
- More unrecyclable or unrecycled waste

Preventing plastic pollution

- Don’t try to find a ‘drop-in’ solution
- Don’t forget reduction
- Stop producing unrecyclable plastic
- Carefully consider trade-offs and potential unintended consequences



Image: NOAA

Get in touch

Libby Peake,
Senior policy adviser, resource stewardship
lpeake@green-alliance.org.uk