

Approximate Time it Takes for Garbage to Decompose in the Environment

Many of the below examples of trash contain plastic components. **Once in the water, plastic never fully biodegrades, but breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces, eventually being dubbed a "microplastic" —something that is less than 5mm long and still able to cause problems for marine life.**

Glass Bottle.....	1 million years
Monofilament Fishing Line...	600 years
Plastic Beverage Bottles.....	450 years
Disposable Diapers.....	450 years
Aluminum Can.....	80-200 years
Foamed Plastic Buoy.....	80 years
Foamed Plastic Cups.....	50 years
Rubber-Boot Sole.....	50-80 years
Tin Cans.....	50 years
Leather.....	50 years
Nylon Fabric.....	30-40 years
Plastic Bag.....	10-20 years
Cigarette Butt.....	1-5 years
Wool Sock.....	1-5 years
Plywood.....	1-3 years
Waxed Milk Carton.....	3 months
Apple Core.....	2 months
Newspaper.....	6 weeks
Orange or Banana Peel.....	2-5 weeks
Paper Towel.....	2-4 weeks

More info about marine debris is available at the [NOAA Marine Debris Program](#) and [Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation](#) websites.

Learn more about plastic in the ocean in "[What We Know About: Plastic Marine Debris](#)" [Info Sheet](#) and the "[Plastics in the Ocean](#)" [Infographic](#), both from the NOAA Marine Debris Program.