

Great Pacific Garbage Patch

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a collection of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean. Marine debris is litter that ends up in the ocean, seas, and other large bodies of water.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, also known as the Pacific trash vortex, spans waters from the West Coast of North America to Japan. The patch is actually comprised of the Western Garbage Patch, located near Japan, and the Eastern Garbage Patch, located between the U.S. states of Hawaii and California.

Subtropical Gyre. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) defines a gyre as a large system of swirling ocean currents. Increasingly, however, it also refers to the garbage patch as a vortex of plastic waste and debris broken down into small particles in the ocean. The North Pacific Subtropical Gyre is formed by four currents that flow in a clockwise direction.