

To fight plastic pollution,

**BEWARE OF PLASTIC  
FAKE OUTS.**

**More than 400 million  
tons of plastic are  
produced worldwide  
every year.**

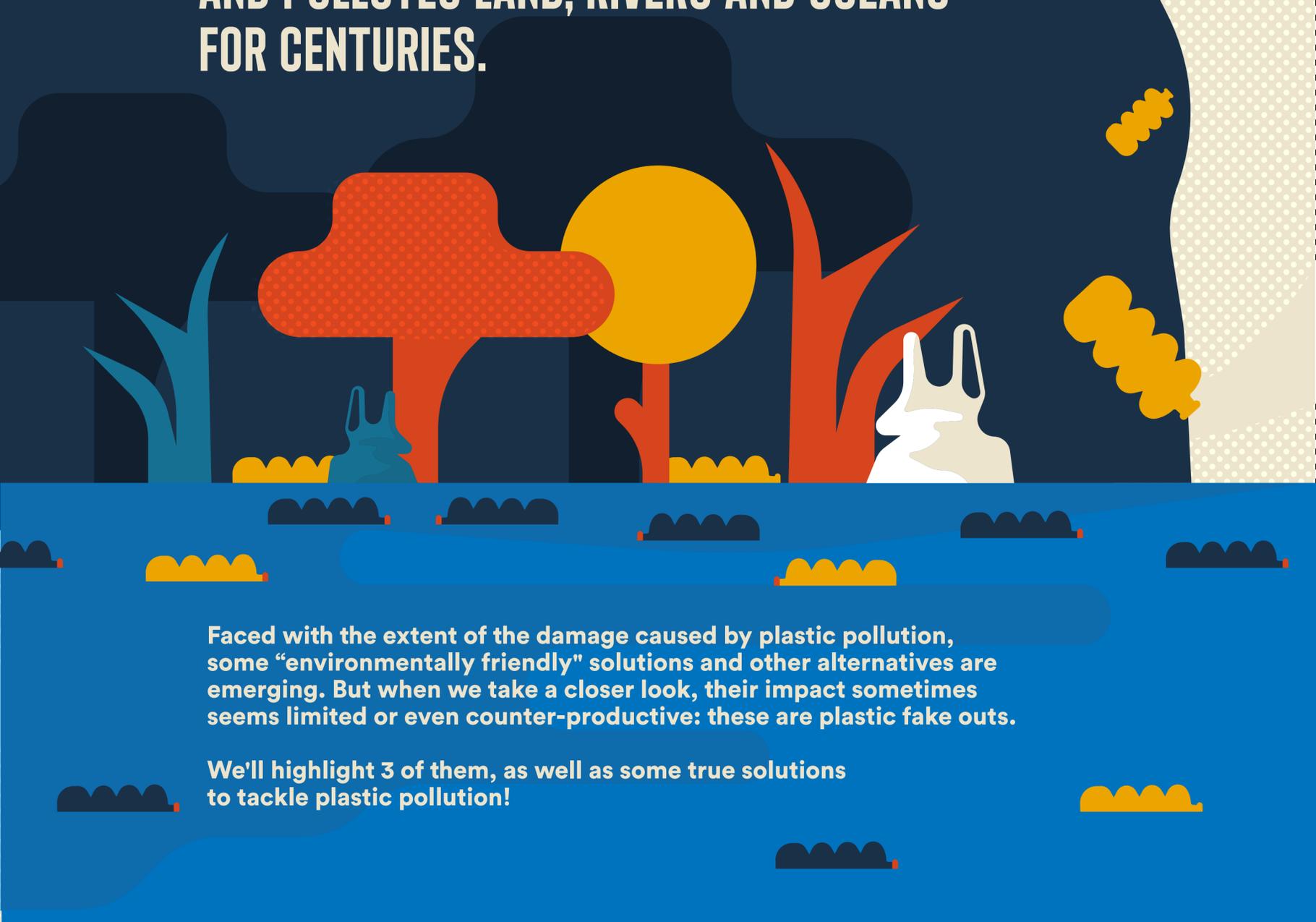
**More than 1/3  
of all plastics  
produced are  
single-use  
packaging.**

In addition to the impact generated by plastics throughout their life cycle, the problem is that we still don't know how to deal with the millions of tons of plastic waste produced.

**1/3 OF PLASTIC WASTE  
ENDS UP IN THE ENVIRONMENT EVERY YEAR  
AND POLLUTES LAND, RIVERS AND OCEANS  
FOR CENTURIES.**

Faced with the extent of the damage caused by plastic pollution, some “environmentally friendly” solutions and other alternatives are emerging. But when we take a closer look, their impact sometimes seems limited or even counter-productive: these are plastic fake outs.

We'll highlight 3 of them, as well as some true solutions to tackle plastic pollution!



# 03 HOPING THAT WE CAN CLEAN ALL THE PLASTIC FROM THE OCEAN.

The ocean is the final destination for a lot of plastic waste:

**AN AVERAGE OF 8 MILLION TONS OF PLASTIC ARE DUMPED INTO THE OCEAN EVERY YEAR.**

Faced with this ecological tragedy, a dream emerges, that of being able to clean the ocean of its plastic pollution. Time, money and grey matter are spent endlessly trying to develop curative solutions. Meanwhile, the flow of plastic into the ocean is increasing and no major initiative is being taken to stop it at its source.

Plastic is found on the surface of the ocean...

It is estimated that 250,000 tons of plastic drift on the ocean surface. But this volume would represent only 1% of all the plastic that is dumped into it.

...but especially beneath the surface

Most of the plastic waste is expected to be found in the water column and in the deep sea. Plastic was recently found in the Mariana Trench, the deepest place on Earth at more than 10,000 meters.

Plastic is found throughout the world's ocean and seas

but the largest area of waste accumulation due to currents is in the North Pacific.

The seas are not spared: 600,000 tons of plastic end up in the Mediterranean Sea alone every year out of the 24 million tons of waste produced by its 22 bordering countries.

Once in the water, as the result of UV radiation, waves and currents, plastic fragments into microparticles.

It's hard to imagine fishing them out of the water. These microplastics are a real nuisance for fish, crustaceans and other living organisms that ingest them along with the plankton. They contaminate the food chain and end up on our seafood menu.



All this is particularly harmful to aquatic life.

More than 270 species are victims of entanglement in fishing nets and more than 240 of plastic ingestion. British researchers have observed the digestive systems of several marine animals: all the turtles studied had plastics.



The economic toll is also very heavy

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) estimates the loss of natural capital caused by this pollution on fisheries and tourism at 8 billion dollars a year.

## FACED WITH THIS OBSERVATION, A DREAM EMERGES: TO BE ABLE TO CLEAN THE OCEAN FROM ITS PLASTIC WASTE.

Several projects are developing along these lines:

### The Seabin project

This is a small collector with a pump to suck up debris and floating plastic waste. Developed by Australians, its ambition is not to clean the ocean in its entirety but to act in ports and marinas where the waste is concentrated before it reaches the sea or ocean.



### The Manta

Imagined by the association The Sea Cleaners, the Manta would be a kind of catamaran capable of collecting large quantities of macroplastics floating in the ocean. The first missions will be launched in 2022. They would be able to collect only macroplastics at the surface of the ocean which represent only a small part of the plastic pollution of the ocean.



### The Ocean Clean-up

In 2013, a 19-year-old Dutch boy, Boyan Slat, said he had found the solution to clean up the ocean, especially the gyres that concentrate the most plastic waste. The idea created a buzz and a project emerged: The Ocean Cleanup.

#### What is it about?

It consists of a 600-meter-long floater at the surface of the water and a 3-meter-deep skirt underneath. The floater provides buoyancy to the system and prevents plastic from escaping above, while the skirt prevents debris from escaping underneath. The whole system moves using the strength of the currents.

In 5 years of R&D:

**273 MODELS WERE TESTED**

**6 PROTOTYPES WERE DEVELOPED**

**40 MILLION DOLLARS IN DONATION WERE COLLECTED**

In 2018, the project is launched with excitement from San Francisco, to tackle the North Pacific Gyre, the largest plastic vortex in the ocean. The objective is to clean up 50% of its plastic waste, representing 70,000 tons of plastic waste, in just 5 years, but the cost-effectiveness of the project has quickly raised questions.

## DREAMS HAVE THEIR LIMITS:

While these initiatives are commendable, cleaning up the ocean is proving more complicated than expected.

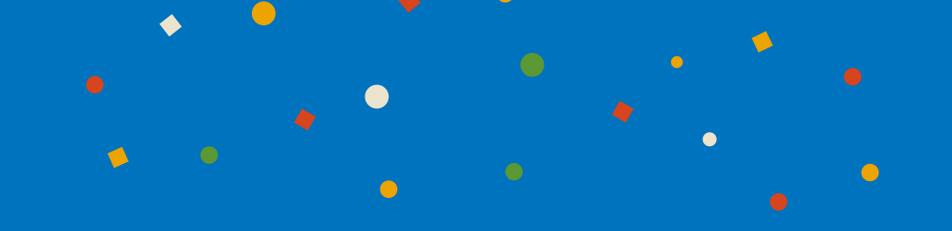
### The ocean, an overly complex environment:

After its launch in 2018, the Ocean Cleanup project quickly encountered technical difficulties:

- Using the natural current to move forward, the speed of the device is too slow and the plastics escape.
- The structure erodes rapidly under the effect of wind and salt water. With only 2 tons of plastic collected after one month, for the time being the device is not able to reach the set objectives.

### The problem of microplastics:

All these initiatives essentially tackle the floating macroplastics which are only the emerging face of a much deeper and more insidious pollution.



## THE TRUE SOLUTION

# STOP POLLUTING THE OCEAN NOW

In the wake of our increasing consumption of plastic, hoping the ocean will be able to self-clean can be dangerous.

It is unrealistic to think that all the plastics dumped into the ocean over the last 60 years can ever be recovered.

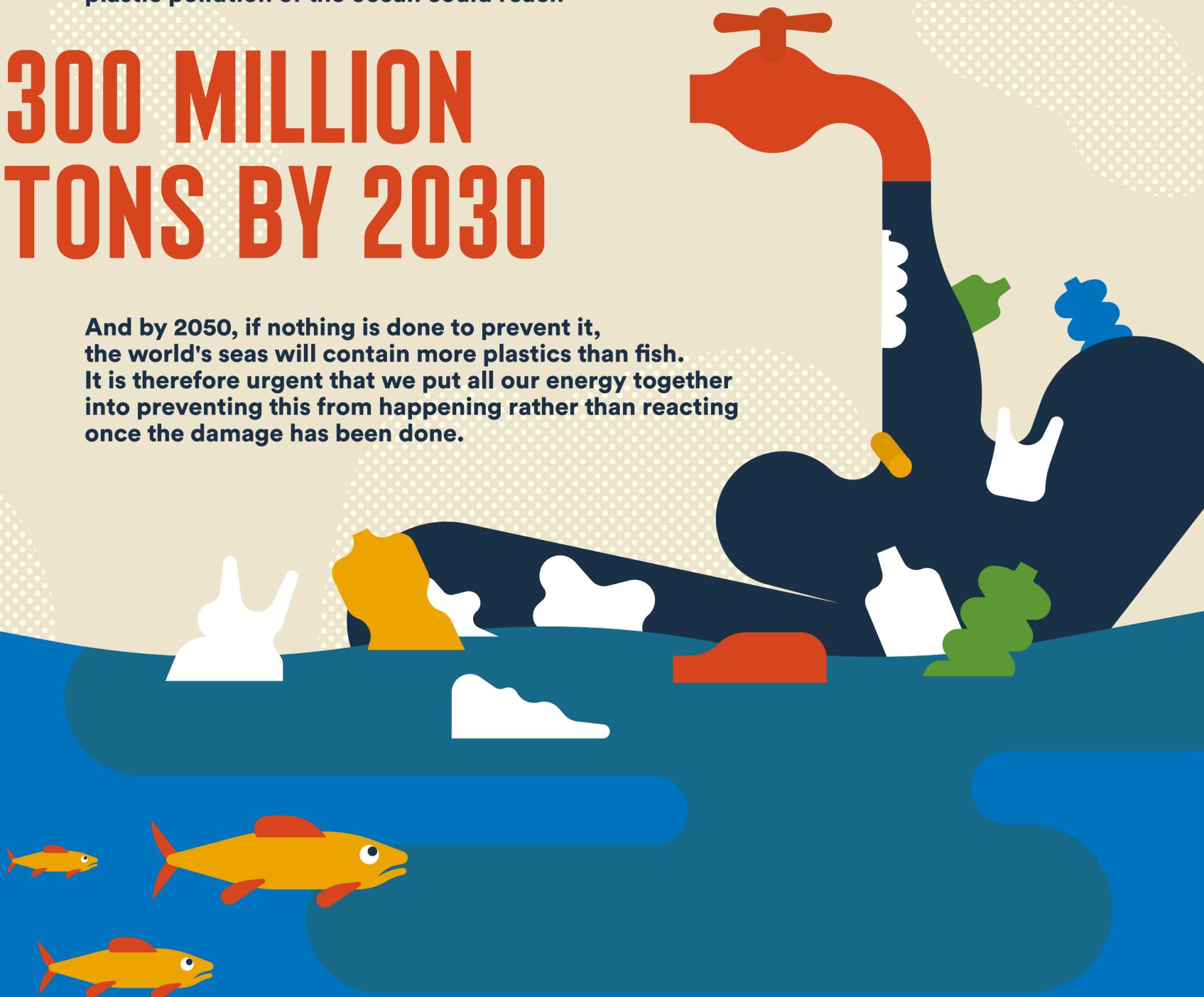
And until new, efficient technologies are developed, plastic pollution could cause irreversible damage to the environment.

### Close the plastic tap as soon as possible:

The only short-term solution is to reduce our production and consumption of plastic. If we don't make any changes, plastic pollution of the ocean could reach

# 300 MILLION TONS BY 2030

And by 2050, if nothing is done to prevent it, the world's seas will contain more plastics than fish. It is therefore urgent that we put all our energy together into preventing this from happening rather than reacting once the damage has been done.



Plastic pollution is often reduced to a problem of incivility and waste management. However, the best waste is waste which is not produced at all. To solve the problem of plastic pollution, we must act at the source. To achieve this, everyone can take their share of responsibility: companies, local authorities and ourselves, because we are all part of the solution.

# What can we do?!

## PUT PRESSURE ON BUSINESSES

Much of the world's plastic pollution is generated by a handful of brands whose products we consume and packaging we throw away on a daily basis.

Every year, the **Break Free From Plastic** movement conducts an audit of plastic pollution documenting the brands found on plastic waste collected at clean-ups to hold plastic polluting companies accountable.



THE AUDIT SHOWS THAT COCA-COLA, PEPSICO AND NESTLÉ ALONE ACCOUNT FOR 14% OF PLASTIC POLLUTION WORLDWIDE.



## AT OUR SCALE, WE CAN RETHINK THE WAY WE CONSUME

The more we change our purchasing behavior, the greater the impact on brands and players in the sector.



WE REFUSE OVER PACKAGED PRODUCTS

WE INFORM OURSELVES ON WHAT WE'RE BUYING



WE PRIORITIZE REUSABLE PRODUCTS AND BUY IN BULK

WE DON'T GET INFLUENCED BY MARKETING



WE CAN LAUNCH AND SUPPORT CAMPAIGNS TO GET BRANDS TO REACT

I BOYCOTT

## REQUIRE OUR LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO TAKE ACTION

At the local level, authorities can experiment with alternatives to plastics and implement tangible solutions. If this involves rethinking certain habits and needs, it also encourages the development of local actors and contributes to rebuilding social ties.

### 01 Eliminate single-use packaging and plastics in their public procurement



**IN BARCELONA (SPAIN)**

in all municipal services, the use of single-use plastics must be replaced by sustainable alternatives such as water fountains and carafes.

Encourage your city to get rid of plastic bottles: have a look at Surfrider Foundation Europe's good practice guide on plastic bottle-free cities.

READ THIS

### 02 Ban or regulate the use of disposable plastic products in public places or events



**IN BRUSSELS (BELGIUM)**

the city has banned single-use plastics in festivals.

Discover the Surfrider Foundation Europe charter to organize eco-friendly events

READ THIS

### 03 Facilitate access to single-use plastic alternatives

Support the ban on disposable plastics with measures facilitating access to reusable alternatives for all:

- water fountains in public spaces,
- sharing of reusable dishes,
- promotion of retailers offering reusable packaging,
- setting up a local refund system for reusing packaging — etc.



**IN FREIBURG (GERMANY)**

since 2016 the city has been providing retailers with returnable and reusable cups for hot drinks to take away. 26,000 "Freiburg cup" are now in circulation in the city's 112 cafés.

### 04 Mobilize citizens to take up the zero-waste challenge at the local level



**ROUBAIX (FRANCE)**

organizes a Zero Waste Family Challenge. Since 2016, 500 Roubaix families have participated in the challenge and benefitted from workshops and guidance.

## ELIMINATE PLASTIC FROM OUR DAILY LIVES

To drastically reduce our plastic waste, we can act at the source and stop consuming it, this is the challenge of the zero-waste movement.

This means choosing products that are more sustainable within their lifetime, reusable or refillable, without packaging, and optimizing their end of life. No waste should be incinerated or sent to landfill and no toxic substances should end up in the soil, water or air.

Saying this makes sense, but how can we limit our plastic consumption when it is absolutely EVERYWHERE?

### Where should I start?

The list of solutions is long, but here's where to start:

#### AT HOME

Fix things rather than throw them away. You can find tutorials on the internet or get help from an expert:

REPAIRCAFÉ



## AT THE GROCERY STORE

Bring a reusable shopping bag so you don't have to buy one.

Favor as much as possible local shops and short loops.



## AT WORK

Bring reusable containers for your lunch breaks.

Use your own reusable cup for the coffee machine.

To go further...

## MAKE YOUR OWN CLEANING AND COSMETIC PRODUCTS

### OCEAN CAMPUS' TUTORIALS



### GET COACHED TO BE MOTIVATED

The Ocean's Zero application developed by Surfrider Europe is your personal assistant, which brings you through challenges towards a zero-waste way of life.

IOS

ANDROID

## ENJOY GOOD BOOKS (WHICH CAN BE BORROWED FROM THE LIBRARY) TO ADOPT THE TIPS OF ZERO-WASTE EXPERTS



**Zero Waste Home – The Ultimate Guide to Simplifying Your Life by Reducing Your Waste** by **Bea Johnson**.

Producing virtually no waste while reducing expenses by 40% is the challenge Bea Johnson and her family have taken up. She provides over a hundred tips on how to do this in this book.



**Famille presque Zéro Déchet** by **Jérémie Pichon et Bénédicte Moret**.

Here, another family, French this time, recounts the torments of their zero-waste experience. A funny and honest story with good anecdotes and a multitude of practical tips.

## SUPPORT THE NGOS, WHICH AMPLIFY OUR VOICES:

Because legislative measures are vital to change practices, NGOs are joining forces to bring citizens' demands to local, national, European and international public institutions:

### At the global level:

The **Break Free From Plastic** movement brings together 1900 NGOs which demand massive reductions in single-use plastics and push for lasting solutions to the plastic pollution crisis. Member organizations run joint campaigns to have the strongest possible impact, including on companies. The movement publishes an annual plastic pollution audit report which identifies the world's top corporate plastic polluters:

### BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC



### At the European level:

**Rethink Plastic Alliance**, a member of the **Break Free From Plastic** movement, works together with other NGOs (**Surfrider Foundation Europe, Zero Waste Europe, Greenpeace, Client Earth, etc**) in the fight against plastic pollution. Its objective is to work with European policy makers to design solutions to fight plastic pollution.

The alliance has been particularly involved in the drafting of the European Directive on single-use plastics which must now be transposed into the national law of each Member State by July 2021. It has fought to inform on the dramatic environmental and health impacts of single use plastics, to demonstrate that alternatives are within reach, to justify the need for restrictive measures and to frame definitions so that they do not allow certain products to escape the regulation.

**Rethink Plastic alliance obtained key measures on all single-use plastics covered by the Directive, with no exemption granted for bioplastics.**

For our part, we can convey their message to as many people as possible on social networks, support their campaigns, sign their petitions and take part in their actions.

### RETHINK PLASTIC ALLIANCE

www.qqf.fr  
A Qqf infographic produced in partnership with



#break free from plastic



### SOURCES

Surfrider Foundation Europe | Dalberg & WWF | WWF | Plastic Atlas | Conversio | National Geographic | ADEME | Break free from plastic | Rethink plastic alliance