

Our Orangihina

Orangihina is a beautiful park. It's got hundreds of special birds and native species, as well as spectacular views, walkways, cycleways and picnic tables. It's a lovely spot to go on a hike or bike ride and enjoy a nice meal with your family, you can also bring your binoculars and admire the beautiful sight.

It is a very big park that is full of litter. You don't see it at first glance but there are approximately 8 million pieces of litter at the bottom of the sea that are killing a lot of the animals and plants. In 2016 scientists made a study about how much litter there was, and it could fill approximately 120 rugby fields, piled half a metre high. That's a lot!

Copper from brake pads is the most common metal pollution in waterways and can have lethal impacts on urban water qualities and aquatic life. When we apply the brakes on our cars, particles of copper and other metal material within the pads flake off...when it rains, the particles fly into gutters and through the stormwater system. Then they flow into the waters and lakes killing out beloved sea life.

Anti depression medication is getting into Orangihina and damaging fish brains and the sad thing is, us kiwis are not doing anything to help stop this problem.

Kiwis are using about 1.9 million single use plastic bags a year which are ending up in the ocean. Polluted water or gas gets into soil/plants which the animals eat and if we eat the animals; we become polluted as well! The question is "how do we stop that?" Well...here's how we can be helpful in our everyday lives.

First of all we can bring and use our own containers to get meat or veggies at the supermarket so you can save the shop using plastic bags. If you don't want to do that Pak'nSave and Countdown also have soft plastic bins outside!..and did you know that 70 percent of litter is plastic!

BUT plastic IS NOT bad! The only thing that's unfortunate about plastic is that it can be dumped in the ocean intentionally or unintentionally. Plastic kills the beautiful animals in the sea when it gets caught around their bodies or they eat it. They can also pick up diseases from eating the dirty litter and spread it to other animals and possibly humans.

In lockdown the litter problem got better but we did find that there were a lot of masks being dropped on the ground and just floating away into the sea or somewhere on land and that is getting into the animals so littering is bad for you as well as the other wildlife and the environment in general.

Food scraps that are not disposed properly can end up causing an increase of algal bloom. This means that fish and other marine animals are threatened due to the toxins which kill.

The bloom uses up all the oxygen in the water which creates a dead zone, and damages or clogs the gills, killing the fish, But how many fish will we have left if we do it?? Some statistics tell us that by 2050 the litter in the sea will outweigh fish!

Scientists have predicted that the oceans will contain at least 937 million tons of litter and 895 million tons of fish! Thats A LOT of litter!! The worst type of litter is plastic, but cigarette butts, paper, food wrappers, lolly packaging and napkins/tissues are amongst the highest recorded types of litter found.

The YRE programme encourages students to look at problems identified through The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14, that affects sea life and issues related to pollution or littering. They encourage kids to come up with ways to protect marine animals and reduce the amount of pollution in the air and litter in the ocean, They especially focus on beach cleaning and litter in the ocean.

In conclusion littering is a really big problem and we all need to do our part to help the world get back to how it was before. We really don't have a lot of time so we should all get out there and make our seas beautiful again.

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