

Atlantic Ocean swamped by plastic

There is at least 10 times more plastic in the Atlantic Ocean than previously thought, according to a study led by the UK's National Oceanography Centre

Previous estimates of amount of plastic entering Atlantic since 1950

17 million tonnes

Mass of microplastic particles* in upper 200m of Atlantic found by new study

12-21 million tonnes

Mass of three most common types of plastic in entire ocean (assuming concentration found in upper 200m is representative of rest of depth of Atlantic)

200 million tonnes
(or 178 million tonnes more compared to previous estimates)



21 million tonnes would fully load almost 1,000 container ships

● **Sample sites:** Three most common types of plastic litter – polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP) and polystyrene (PS) – assessed at 12 locations in 2016

*Ranging from 32-651 microns in size (human hair is about 75 microns across).
Study team found up to 7,000 particles per cubic metre of seawater