Microplastics in the Ocean are More Abundant than Previously Thought

A new study from the Plymouth Marine Institute in the U.K. has found that the amount of microplastics in our oceans is much higher than previously thought. Scientists trawled off the coast of Maine in the U.S. and the coast of Plymouth in the U.K. and used mesh nets in sizes of 100 microns (0.1mm), 333 microns and 500 microns. Scientists found 2.5 times more particles in the smallest 100-micron net than in the 333-micron nets usually used in microplastic studies. Both U.S. and U.K. coasts had similar results, which suggests that other, populated coasts would have similar results.

> *The estimate of marine microplastic concentration could currently be vastly underestimated…Using an extrapolation, we suggest microplastic concentrations could exceed 3,700 particles per cubic meter – that's far more than the number of zooplankton you would find…"*
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> *Professor Pennie Lindeque, Plymouth Marine Institute*

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The majority of microplastics found in this study were textiles fibers from ropes, nets, synthetic clothing, and other plastic laden fibers. It's unclear how many microplastics are in the ocean (scientists estimated there were from 15 and 51 trillion individual pieces in the oceans in 2014), but it's clear that we haven't even begun to truly measure those numbers.