The Environmental Impact of Disposable Masks

Experts are now estimating that 129 billion face masks, and 65 billion gloved, are being disposed of globally each month. Surgical masks weigh approximately 3.6g, equating to 451,500 tons of masks thrown away each month.

> *Conservationists and non-governmental organisations are increasingly concerned that a lot of the plastic waste, especially pandemic-related waste, is ending up in landfills, waterways and oceans, adding to the millions of tonnes of plastic waste already dumped into the world's oceans every year*
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> *Three million masks every minute: How Covid-19 is choking the planet*

It's not uncommon for masks to end up in the ocean where animals get tangled up in the elastic ear loops of the mask. Animals can choke on masks and gloves that end up along shorelines.

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Disposable surgical masks are made of polypropylene, a type of plastic. This type of plastic is unsuitable for recycling and does not break down easily.

If you have to wear a face-covering when going out, consider a reusable one. If you find yourself with a surgical mask that you have to dispose of, be sure to cut the ends of the ear loops off the mask so marine life doesn't get tangled up in them.