

# Keep New Zealand Beautiful - Writing Entry **TEXT**

## **Suffocating in a Plastic World**

### **By Indiana**

The man used me for his eyes and his memories, to record details that he could look at and remember. He used me for a long time until that one day when I was chucked out in a rubbish bin.

My journey started after the man passed away and strangers came, piling up boxes to take away. When they saw my appearance as a dusty old thing, they threw me out, right into the bin. It was piled high with plastic, I was lucky I was at the top of the bin, not drowning at the bottom. I sat there waiting, nestled in the plastic. After a long period of time, a great rumbling noise came up the street and suddenly I was tipped upside down and spinning through a narrow chute. With a 'thump', I came out into a large opening where the pile of plastic suffocated my lense. There were tonnes of it inside the rumbling thing.

After hours of suffocating, I got tipped out into a larger pile. A dump, where the plastic is supposed to disintegrate over thousands of years but actually just turns into microplastics which kills wildlife if ingested. While my mind was wandering, a worker stared at me intently. He bent over and cautiously examined me in his hands. "Who wants an old dusty camera?" he hissed. "It's not suitable for dumping". I held my breath. Was my life about to get better or worse? Then suddenly he flung me out of his hands and I went crashing into trees and tumbling down hills, knocking my record button on as I went. I couldn't turn it off. In a few moments, I was skimming through the sand on a beach, spraying it in all directions. After sliding on shells I came to a halt. I took a deep breath. I was safe now, it was over. But I was wrong and with a crash, a wave scooped me up and carried me towards the depths of the sea.

I was sinking and the colours were fading from turquoise to indigo, becoming darker as I went deeper. Soon creatures started to appear, well at first they looked like Jellyfish, bobbing on the tide but in the end, they were plastic bags that fish mistakenly swallowed in their gaping mouths. I even examined dead fish that had choked on plastic through my lense. The fish looked awfully bloated. Imagine eating plastic and the pressure they would make inside your stomach..

As I bobbed about in the oceans for months, discovering many species dying from plastic. The disgusting, devastating substance of plastic strangles hundreds of marine creatures every day. I remembered filming a study for the Plymouth University where they discovered that at least one hundred million marine creatures die from plastic pollution every year. Another study that I filmed, they found out that three hundred million tons of plastic is consumed by animals every year. It was awful to actually see the marine animals dying from ingesting plastics. In the middle of my daydream, shadows took over the little light left in the darkness and a ship loomed above me. I hadn't experienced a ship this big before. I then saw a net swooping downwards,

sweeping the waters and scooping fish up into its beckoning mouth. I wanted to swim away except I had no fins or flippers. I just had to bob and travel with the tides and hope I didn't end up being scooped up into the tangled mess of net. To my horror, the net edged closer and closer until I was swept up into the strands of thread. I couldn't go out the way I'd come in, the gap was closing. I was trapped! Fish frantically squirmed about as the water gushed past on either side of my lens as the net was pulled higher to the surface of the water. Soon the faces of fishermen came into view, sweat running down their foreheads from the heavy bulk of the net. The fishermen emptied the contents into a pile and swooped down on the fish they thought would be the catches of the day. But then they came across me, hidden under the oily mess of the slimy scaled fish. 'What do we do with an old camera?' said a fisherman. 'Should we just toss it back in the sea?' he continued. 'No, it would probably be best to chuck it in the dump', said another. No, I wanted to scream as I quivered and shivered in the sweaty palms of a fisherman, I had just come from the dump! Out of the corner of my lens, I saw a bold figure edging closer dressed in a fluoro vest. On the back of his vest, letters read "Supervisor". He slowly slinked closer towards the huddle. 'What have you got there?' the supervisor questioned. 'We found an old camera in the net' a fisherman replied. 'Hand it over' demanded the supervisor. The fisherman reluctantly held out his hands and I was transferred over to the supervisor. I quivered. What would he do to me? Unexpectedly, he started pressing buttons to see if I would work. When he discovered I did, a smile spread across his face. I was forced to reveal my secrets of the media I'd recorded when he pressed numerous buttons. Watching the video of my journey through the seas, horror crossed his face. Within a few seconds, I was stuffed into his pocket and he was running through the town like a wild stallion, stopping outside the police station. He revealed me to the police and uncovered the media I carried. After watching the devastating scenes of plastic overtaking the oceans, the police lept to action, displaying all my media on the internet and demanding plastic to stop.

A few months later, the plastic in the oceans had reduced. If it hadn't been for my lens, we couldn't have saved the sea life. Raise awareness.

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