

# **Turning the Tides:** Tackling Our Ocean's Plastic Pollution Problem



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## Today's Speakers



**Dr. Jesse Daystar** *Vice President and Chief Sustainability Officer* 



Carole Dubois Senior Sustainability Consultant



Dr. Richard Venditti

Elis-Signe Olsson Professor in Pulp and Paper Science and Engineering Department of Forest Biomaterials







## Cotton Incorporated Funding Sources and Oversight









## The average person ingests over 5,800 particles of synthetic debris annually from those 3 sources alone



159 global tap water samples: 81% of tap water sampled contained various levels of synthetic microplastics



12 U.S. beer brands sampled: all beer sampled contained various levels of synthetic microplastics



12 sea salt brands sampled: all salt sampled contained various levels of synthetic microplastics PLOS ON

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Anthropogenic contamination of tap water, beer, and sea salt

#### Mary Kosuth<sup>10+</sup>, Sherri A. Mason<sup>20</sup>, Elizabeth V. Wattenberg<sup>16</sup>

1 University of Minnesota, School of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health Sciences, Minnespolis, Minnesota, United States of America, 2 State University of New York at Fredonia, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Fredonia, New York, United States of America

Plastic pollution has been well documented in natural environments, including the open

#### These authors contributed equally to this work kosu0003@umn.edu

#### Abstract

waters and sediments within lakes and rivers, the open ocean and even the air, but less attention has been paid to synthetic polymers in human consumables. Since multiple toxicity studies indicate risks to human health when plastic particles are indested, more needs to be COPEN ACCESS known about the presence and abundance of anthropogenic particles in human foods and Citation: Kosuth M, Mason SA, Wattenberg EV beverages. This study investigates the presence of anthropogenic particles in 159 samples (2018) Anthropogenic contamination of tap wate beer, and sea salt, PLoS ONE 13(4); e0 194970 of globally sourced tap water, 12 brands of Laurentian Great Lakes beer, and 12 brands of https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0194970 commercial sea salt. Of the tap water samples analyzed, 81% were found to contain anthro pogenic particles. The majority of these particles were fibers (98,3%) between 0,1-5 mm in Editor: Zhi Zhou, Purdue University, UNITED Received: October 17, 2017 Accepted: March 14, 2018 Published: April 11, 2018 Copyright: © 2018 Kosuth et al. This is an open cress article distributed under the terms of the reative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and

910/DVN/IRCKDL

Kosuth in 2016.

Funding: Funding for this study was provided by

provided by the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health

Sciences. This scholarship was awarded to Mary

Competing interests: The authors have declar

that no competing interests exist

the James W. Wright Scholarship which was

length. The range was 0 to 61 particles/L, with an overall mean of 5.45 particles/L. Anthropo genic debris was found in each brand of beer and salt. Of the extracted particles, over 99% were fibers. After adjusting for particles found in lab blanks for both salt and beer, the average number of particles found in beer was 4.05 particles/L with a range of 0 to 14.3 particles/ L and the average number of particles found in each brand of salt was 212 particles/kg with a range of 46.7 to 806 particles/kg. Based on consumer guidelines, our results indicate the average person ingests over 5,800 particles of synthetic debris from these three sources

annually, with the largest contribution coming from tap water (88%). eproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. Data Availability Statement: Data for the study, Anthropogenic contamination of tap water, been

and sea sait, can be found here: https://dataverse harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10

PLOS ONE https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0194970 April 11,2018

#### Introduction

The first peer-reviewed papers to document plastic pollution in the natural world were published over 45 years ago [1,2]. Since then, a robust body of work has accumulated, and the ubiquity of synthetic polymers in the environment is now undisputed. From abandoned gillnets hundreds of meters in length to plankton sized fragments, synthetic polymers have been extracted from remote corners of the Earth's biosphere. Plastics have been quantified in marine environments [3] that include segments of the pelagic biome [4] coastal habitats [5], deep sea sediments [6, 7], as well as freshwater lakes [8,9] and associated tributaries [10].

Kosuth, M., Mason, S.,	& Wattenberg, E.	2018). Anthropogenic contamination of tap water, beer, and sea salt. P	LOS One.
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TACKLING THE VISIBLE AND THE INVISIBLE TO CLOSE THE PLASTIC LOOP

## THE PLASTIC LEAK PROJECT



Carole Dubois - Quantis

## Consumer awareness is rising



### Plastic makes the headlines

Invisible plastic: microfibers are just the beginning of what we don't see Mary Catherine O'Connor

The timy pollutants in our clothes are forcing us to look harder for, and think i carefully about, the ways humans have shaped the environment



Devery time we waith our clothing the synthetic Abers the are comprised of leach into our waterways, rivers a oceans. Photograph: arthmaynes/AVP/Getty Images

## Swiss honey contains harmful plastic: TV report

Malcolm Curtis neerspithelocal ch (Delocatestice 26 March 2014 10.58 CET-01:00 Share this article



Most honey from Switzerland contains plastic particles that endanger health, according to tests conducted for a Swiss consumer affairs TV programme.



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94% Of US Tap Water Has Micro Plastic Fibers In It, Study Finds (Oh, & That Sea Salt, Beer, Flour, & Honey That You Buy ... It Does As Well)



September 10th, 2017 by James Ayre

The scale of the world's current micro plastics pollution problem can't be overstated. Plastics, and more importantly their nearly invisible hall-broken-down remnants, are now everywhere. They're in the food you eat, the water you drink, and even often enough in the air you breathe.



### Brands are put under pressure



http://plasticpolluters.org/



# **EMOTIONS**

" There will be more plastic by weight in the ocean than fish by 2050"



# FACTS

" You can't manage what you don't measure " WHAT DO WE KNOW?

## How much plastic is there?



Plastics Europe & EPRO. (2017). Plastics – the Facts 2017. https://www.plasticseurope.org/application/files/5715/1717/4180/Plastics\_the\_facts\_2017\_FINAL\_for\_website\_one\_page.pdf

Since the beginning of plastic production era (1950) we have produced 8300 Mt of plastic...



Total virgin plastic produced

Quantis + ea

Source: "Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made" by R. Geyer et al., Science Advances

... and only 7% of the world's plastic has been recycled (1950-2015)



Total virgin plastic produced

Quantis + ea

Source: "Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made" by R. Geyer et al., Science Advances

... the rest has been discarded (1950-2015).



Total virgin plastic produced

Quantis + ea

Source: "Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made" by R. Geyer et al., Science Advances

## Plastic pollution is going to get worse if we do not act now



Ryan, P. G. (2015). A brief history of marine litter research. In Marine anthropogenic litter (pp. 1-25). Springer, Cham.



But big numbers do not necessarily mean big problem

The **benefits** of **plastic** versus **other materials** 

Lightweight	lity	Malleability	Low
	abi		carbon
versatility	Dur	LOW COST	footprint

The problematic: leakages from the system



## How much plastic is leaking? The visible and the invisible



## How much plastic is leaking? The visible and the invisible



Jambeck, J. R., Geyer, R., Wilcox, C., Siegler, T. R., Perryman, M., Andrady, A., ... & Law, K. L. (2015). Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean. Science, 347(6223), 768-771.

### Focus on primary microplastics

## GLOBAL RELEASES OF PRIMARY MICROPLASTICS TO THE WORLD OCEANS

BY SOURCE (IN %).



 Firmary Microplastics

 Indext Events

 Actors: Jalen Boscher, Damer First

Boucher, J., & Friot, D. (2017). Primary microplastics in the oceans: a global evaluation of sources. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.



Plastic release is a regional issue:

Microplastics outweigh plastic from wastes in some regions

#### GLOBAL RELEASES TO THE WORLD OCEANS:

COMPARISON WITH PLASTICS ORIGINATING FROM MISMANAGED WASTES



## WHY DO WE NEED BETTER METRICS ?

A tool to measure the contribution of industries & products

# We know the big numbers...

...but, what about **YOUR** numbers ?





+ How much plastic is released throughout your value chain ?

+ Is it macro- or micro- plastics ?

+ What are the impacts ? (versus carbon and other impacts)

+ Where should you set priorities for action (product design vs. market stewardship)?

## How is plastic currently considered in the product development process ?



## LCA does not account for plastic as

**a pollutant.** Only the indirect impacts of plastic are accounted for.



Carbon Footprint



Water

Footprint



**Ecosystem** Quality



Natural Resources



Human Health

## LCA does not account for plastic as

## **a pollutant.** Only the indirect impacts of plastic are accounted for.







Water

Footprint



**Ecosystem** Quality



Natural Resources



Human Health



Plastic Leakage

## Generic Case: The plastic leakage of a polyester t-shirt and its packaging



Quantis & Environmental Action (2018). Tackling the visible and the invisible to close the plastic loop. https://quantis-intl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ocean\_plastics\_pollution\_quantis\_ea\_2018.pdf





This matrix shows the contribution (in %) of the different life cycle stages and regions to the 1 450 kg plastic potentially released to the oceans.

Quantis ea

Quantis & Environmental Action (2018). Tackling the visible and the invisible to close the plastic loop. https://quantis-intl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ocean\_plastics\_pollution\_quantis\_ea\_2018.pdf



This matrix shows the contribution (in %) of the different life cycle stages and regions to the 1 450 kg plastic potentially released to the oceans.



Quantis & Environmental Action (2018). Tackling the visible and the invisible to close the plastic loop. https://quantis-intl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ocean\_plastics\_pollution\_quantis\_ea\_2018.pdf



## The Plastic Leak Project

A collaborative, multi-stakeholder initiative to identify, measure and develop scalable solutions to close the tap on plastic leakage.

### Started on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Paris

Please contact me would you like to join!

- Measure leakage from your plastics value chain
- Deliver meaningful and robust metrics
   with a streamlined methodology, next
   to carbon or other impacts
- Evaluate and develop scalable solutions to reach near-zero leakage
- Guide companies to move from passion to fact-based actions
- Create and nurture a community of leaders committed to solving plastic leakage problem

## Project timeline & deliverables



Advisory board discussions going on with small groups all over the year



Quantis + ea

Sector.

cottonworks.com

## Expected project leadership, advisors and members



## Expected project leadership, advisors and members



## Join the Plastic Leak Project

+ Participation package: 30,000 €

#### **BENEFITS OF JOINING**



#### Global leadership

Gain visibility as a participant in a collaborative effort to find a solution to one of today's most pressing topics. Benefit from powerful communications.



### Strategic decision-making

Define where and how to best tackle the plastic problem within your value chain, ensuring company resources are wisely invested and the best outcomes are achieved.



#### Metric-based reporting

Upgrade your sustainability reporting with metrics-based plastics data aligned with other sustainability metrics



#### Fill the knowledge gap

Pioneer a new science-based approach towards finding the right solutions to the plastic crisis



#### **Global Guidelines** Set the standard on assessing plastic leakage



#### **Exclusive network**

Team up with other key industry stakeholders to implement plastic field level and eco-design actions

We encourage you to contact us to discuss a contribution and desired deliverables that fit your specific needs





Carole Dubois

The Quantis and EA team



Jon Dettling



Melissa Zgola



Project Manager

#### Laura Peano



Julien Boucher

## Ready to join us?

Get started with the project that will drive solutions and influence the future of how we tackle the plastic problem.

## Contact us

Carole Dubois Senior Sustainability Consultant Quantis <u>carole.dubois@quantis-intl.com</u> Julien Boucher Partner Shaping Environmental Action julien.boucher@shaping-ea.com



### MICROFIBERS GENERATED DURING LAUNDERING AND THEIR FATE IN AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS

Richard Venditti – NCSU Professor

Joel Pawlak, NCSU Professor Marielis Zambrano, NCSU Phd Candidate

## NC STATE UNIVERSITY



- Anthropogenic debris such as plastic and fibers from textiles have been found in seafood sold for human consumption. In USA and Indonesia, 25-28% of the fish evaluated contained plastics and fibers (Rochman et al., 2015)
- Microplastics (MPs) were also observed in human stools in a preliminary study made with 8 participants from different countries and different diets. No fibers were reported, but, 100% contained MPs, mainly PET particles (Schwabl et al., 2018).

## HOW MUCH MICROFIBERS ARE GENERATED IN WASHING CLOTHES?



#### cottonworks.com

## What is the size of the microfibers released during laundering?







100 % Polyester



50/50 Polyester/Cotton



100 % Rayon



100 % Cotton

## Microfibers are broken from the surface of the fabric or yarn during washing



## WHERE ARE THESE MICROFIBERS GOING?

## Are these microfibers passing through the WWTP?



#### cottonworks.com

Source: Magnusson et al. (2014), Lares et al. (2018), Talvitie et al. (2015), Talvitie et al. (2017a) Talvitie et al. (2017b), Mason et al. (2016), Mintenig et al. (2017), Wolff et al. (2018).

### **OPTIONS TO TRAP MICROFIBERS FROM THE WASHING MACHINE**

The GUPPYFRIEND washing bag, the Coral ball, and the LUV-R filter used to capture the microfibers

McIlwraith et al. (2019) showed that the

- Lint LUV-R filter trapped 87% of fibers, has pore size of 150 μm
- Coral Ball trapped only 26%

Nevertheless, our results shows that there is an important portion of microfibers with a size below 200µm that cannot be addressed by these trapping mechanisms.





## DO TEXTILE MICROFIBERS DEGRADE

IN AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS?

## Aerobic biodegradation of textile spun yarns in aquatic environments



## Aerobic biodegradation of textile spun yarns in aquatic environments



NGS Next Generation Sequence, qPCR Quantitative Polymerase Chain Reaction,

### Aerobic biodegradation of textile spun yarns in lake water



Biodegradation curves of textile yarns (ISO 14851)

Determination of the Ultimate Aerobic Biodegradability of Plastic Materials in an Aqueous Medium

3 duplicates of each sample

Inoculum – Lake Raleigh Water

Measurements – RSA PF-8000 (Oxygen Uptake)

Material Added – 80 mg of yarns/500 ml Test Medium

### Aerobic biodegradation of textile spun yarns in seawater



Biodegradation curves of the Textile Yarns (ASTM D6691)

Determination of the Ultimate Aerobic Biodegradability of Plastic Materials in an Aqueous Medium

4 duplicates of each sample

Inoculum – Seawater

Measurements – RSA PF-8000 (Oxygen Uptake)

Material Added – 80 mg of yarns/500 ml Test Medium

### Aerobic biodegradation of textile spun yarns in aquatic environments



Days

#### Biodegradation curves of textile yarns (ISO 14851)

Determination of the Ultimate Aerobic Biodegradability of Plastic Materials in an Aqueous Medium

4 duplicates of each sample

Inoculum – 30 ppm Activated Sludge from Neuse River WWTP

Measurements - RSA PF-8000 (Oxygen Uptake)

Material Added – 80 mg of yarns/500 ml Test Medium

## Aerobic biodegradation of textile spun yarns in aquatic environments



Cotton Yarns



Rayon Yarns





Polyester Yarns

## Aerobic biodegradation of textile spun yarns in aquatic environments - summary

Experiment		1	2	3
Inoculum		Lake Water	Seawater	30 ppm of Activated Sludge from Neuse River WWTP
Test Material Added/Bottle		80 mg	80 mg	80 mg
Test Medium Volume		500 ml	500 ml	500 ml
Experiment Time Frame		35 days	33 days	20 days
BOD Blank		62.40±4.95 mg/l	8.79±4.78 mg/l	26.66±1.40 mg/l
% Biodegradation	Reference Material (MCC)	79.63±0.18%	70.94±0.38%	97.25±5.06%
	100% Cotton Yarns	77.15±0.37%	49.3±0.15%	82.01±2.74%
	100% Rayon Yarns	73.43±0.24%	48.16±0.93%	79.11±6.52%
	50%/50% Polyester/Cotton Yarns	33.86±0.22%	14.57±0.36%	39.42±1.47%
	100% Polyester Yarns	Not Appreciable	4.23±0.34%	3.41±0.74%

## CAN TEXTILE MICROFIBERS IMPACT THE

MICROBIOME IN AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS?

## Microbial communities involved in the aerobic biodegradation of textile spun yarns



## Microbial communities involved in the aerobic biodegradation of textile spun yarns



Lake Water Biodegradation Experiment



Seawater Biodegradation Experiment

## Do textile microfibers degrade in aquatic environments?

- Natural-based fabrics release a greater amount of microfibers during laundering than synthetic fabrics.
- These microfibers have the potential to escape the WWTP due to their small size.
- Natural-based fibers such as cotton and rayon can be highly assimilated by the microorganisms in aquatic environments.
- The aerobic aquatic biodegradation extent of the textile fibers decrease as follows:

Cotton > Rayon > Polyester/Cotton > Polyester (near zero).

• The biodegradation of textile spun yarns not only depends on the morphology and chemical structure of the fibers but also on the microorganisms present in the environment.



## Acknowledgements

## NC STATE UNIVERSITY

## College of Natural Resources

Department of Forest Biomaterials

Dr. Richard Venditti Dr. Joel Pawlak Marielis Zambrano (PhD Candidate)



Product Evaluation Lab Color Services Lab

Mary Ankeny Dr. Jesse Daystar



Australian Government

Cotton Research and Development Corporation



Dr. Jay Chen Dr. Cong Tu



Neuse River Wastewater Treatment Plant



Dr. Carlos Goller Dr. Robert M. Kelly



# **Turning the Tides:** Tackling Our Ocean's Plastic Pollution Problem



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NEWS

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This presentation will identify key impact areas and elaborate on environmental benchmarking for cotton.



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