

To Complete the AOW, please do the following:

- 1. Annotate the text.**
- 2. Define a vocabulary word.**
- 3. Write a purpose and audience sentence.**
- 4. Write a summary statement.**
- 5. Write a 1-page reflection**

**Discovery of Garfield phones
reflects problem of plastics in
ocean**

Source: MSN.com, by. Agence
France-Presse, May 21, 2019



For more than 30 years, orange Garfield phones have been washing up regularly on the northwest French coast to the puzzlement of local beach cleaners. Now, however, the mystery behind these plastic phones has finally been cracked.

Local residents had long suspected a lost shipping container was to blame for the unusual landline phones, modeled on Garfield, the prickly feline comic strip character. These phones have plagued the northern beaches for decades.

"Our association has existed for 18 years and in that time we have found pieces of "Garfield" telephones almost each time we clean," said Claire Simonin, who is the head of the beach cleaning group Ar Viltansou in Finistere, Brittany.

But it wasn't until a local resident revealed that he had discovered the container after a storm in the 1980s that they were finally able to locate just where it was located. The shipping container was wedged in a partially submerged cave that is only accessible at low tide.

"He told us where it was," Simonin told the news organization Agence France Presse (AFP) after an expedition to track down the source of all these bright orange cat phones. The location was, however, "very, very dangerous" to access, she explained.

Remains Buried In The Ocean

They found the remains of the container at the bottom of a split in the rocks 100 feet deep.

"Under the boulders in front of the entrance, we found 23 complete handsets with electronics and wires. They were everywhere," she added.

But the mystery, first reported by the France Info public broadcaster, is not fully solved.

"We have no idea what happened at the time; we do not know where it came from, what boat," said Fabien Boileau, director of the Iroise Marine Nature Park in Finistère.

The dry-witted Garfield was first dreamed up by cartoonist Jim Davis in the late 1970s. The character has since spawned a television show and a film series starring Bill Murray as the voice of the cat. The phones are examples of a Garfield merchandising empire worth hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

The "Garfield" phone discoveries in France highlight the problem of plastic in the oceans, campaigners say.

"Seeing these plastic phones on the beaches, especially so long after the incident, is a strong reminder of the persistence of plastic waste in the ocean," Jo Ruxton told AFP. Ruxton is the co-founder of Plastic Oceans Foundation.

Plastics Slow To Disintegrate

"Plastic was designed not to break down," she said. "Large items like these being hardly weathered after 30-40 years is a clear indication of this."

The world currently produces more than 300 million tons of plastics annually. There are at least five trillion plastic pieces floating in our oceans, scientists have estimated.

Some forecasts predict that there will be more plastic in the seas than fish by 2050.

In 2017, there were 1,390 shipping containers lost at sea, according to the World Shipping Council. But those shipping containers account for only a small proportion of the pollution when compared with the plastic packaging industry.

"Phones typically don't end up in the sea," said Jocelyn Bleriot of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, a British charity that focuses on reducing waste.

"Whereas plastic packaging is pervasive, you find it pretty much everywhere. On every beach you'll find a bottle of shampoo, you'll find a packet of crisps, or you'll find a bottle of soda or whatever. That's what you see on beaches. That's what washes up."

New research published in February has shown just how far the plague of pollution reaches, even into the bowels of the planet. Animals living in the deepest ocean trenches have been found with fragments of plastic in their stomachs.

Small Fragments Are Dangerous To Animals And Humans

Over time, plastics like the "Garfield" phones "become so weathered that they start to become brittle and break up into ever smaller fragments," Ruxton explained. The fragments in turn attract harmful chemicals during this process.

These plastic pieces eventually become so small, marine animals eat them mistaking them for plankton. Consequently, the plastics "become part of the food chain that leads to us," Ruxton said.

Although the long-term impact that consumption of plastic in the food chain might have on humans has still to be determined, governments are beginning to take steps to limit the quantity of plastic reaching the ocean.

The European Parliament recently approved a proposal to address this problem. It would ban the top 10 most common single-use plastic products in Europe by 2021. Some of these products include plastic wrapping for foods, plastic bags for shopping, or plastic utensils and packaging at fast food restaurants.