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The Great Pacific Garbage Patch: A Floating Pollution Challenge



The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, often referred to as the GPGP, is a massive accumulation of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean. This environmental issue poses significant challenges and has far-reaching implications for our oceans and ecosystems. In this passage, we will explore the origins, composition, and environmental consequences of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and learn about the artist, Chris Jordan, who has brought attention to this issue through his artwork.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch: Origins and Composition

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is not an island of trash but rather a vast expanse of suspended plastic particles and debris. It is primarily located in the central North Pacific Ocean, and its formation is attributed to the convergence of ocean currents, most notably the North Pacific Gyre. This gyre is a system of rotating ocean currents that trap and concentrate marine litter, resulting in the formation of the garbage patch.

The composition of the GPGP mainly consists of plastics in various forms, including microplastics, macroplastics, and discarded fishing nets. These materials persist in the ocean for years, slowly breaking down into smaller particles due to the action of sunlight, waves, and ocean currents.

Environmental Implications of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch

The presence of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch has numerous environmental implications:

- **Marine Life Impact:** Plastic debris poses a significant threat to marine life. Fish, seabirds, and marine mammals can ingest or become entangled in plastic waste, leading to injury or death. Plastic ingestion can also introduce harmful chemicals into the food chain.
- **Ecosystem Disruption:** Plastic debris disrupts natural ecosystems. It can smother coral reefs, affect the growth of plankton, and interfere with the movement of ocean-dwelling species, causing imbalances in marine ecosystems.
- **Chemical Pollution:** As plastics break down, they release toxic chemicals into the ocean, affecting water quality and potentially harming marine organisms.
- **Economic Impact:** The presence of the GPGP can negatively impact the fishing and tourism industries, as well as coastal communities that rely on healthy oceans.

Chris Jordan: Artist and Environmental Advocate

Chris Jordan is an artist known for his work highlighting the issue of plastic pollution in the world's oceans, particularly the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Through his striking and thought-provoking artwork, Jordan creates visual representations of the scale of the problem, emphasizing the need for action and awareness.

