



150. The plastic invasion

Sarah: We've talked about forests, oceans, species, but we didn't even talk about the plastic pollution, which is huge and is a real threat for the environment.

W: You're right Sarah. The plastic bag has become public enemy number one, being most of the time a fatal hazard to wildlife.

Sarah: For sure, since it was introduced in the seventies, the plastic bag has become part of our lives, and most households have dozens of plastic bags stuffed into a drawer. Am I wrong?

W: not at all. The problem is that it is not known exactly how long a plastic bag lasts, and they account for less than one percent of the rubbish sent to landfill sites. It is the proof that the other ninety nine percent are ending up in litter.

Sarah: yes, and plastic kills countless seabirds each year, and sea turtles often mistake bags for tasty jellyfish which are their main food.

W: anyway, most of the food we buy in supermarkets is over packaged. Did you know that a study carried out for an Irish supermarket chain concluded a plastic bag can last for a million years?

Sarah: No, I didn't know the life expectancy of a bag was so long. Basically it's non-biodegradable, I mean that bags do not decompose.

W: Exactly. But in more and more countries, awareness makes governments encourage people to reuse bags. Apparently it should help slashing plastic bag usage by sixty percent.

Sarah. Hopefully, but unfortunately plastic bags are nowhere near the world's worst environmental problem...



GLOSSARY:

The plastic invasion: l'invasion du plastique	Part of our lives : partie intégrante de nos vies
To become : devenir	Households : les foyers
To introduce : introduire	Dozens : douzaines
To stuff : entasser	A drawer : un tiroir
To last : durer	The rubbish : les détrit
To account : représenter, compter	Landfill sites : les déchetteries
To send/sent/sent : envoyer	The proof: la preuve
To end up: finir	Litter: detritus, déchets
To kill: tuer	Countless seabirds: un nombre incalculable d'oiseaux marins
To mistake: se tromper	The sea turtles: les tortues de mer
To buy: acheter	Tasty jellyfish: de délicieuses méduses
To be over packaged: être suremballé	Main food: alimentation principale
To carry out: effectuer, réaliser	Supermarket: supermarché
To conclude: conclure	A study: une étude
To decompose: se decomposer, se désagréger	Irish : irlandais
To encourage : encourager	Supermarket chain : une chaine de supermarchés
To reuse : réutiliser	Life expectancy : la durée de vie, la durabilité
To slash : réduire	Non-biodegradable : qui n'est pas biodégradable
Plastic pollution : la pollution due au plastique	Usage : utilisation, usage
A real threat : une réelle menace	Nowhere near : loin de
The plastic bag : le sac en plastique	The worst environmental problem : le pire problème environnemental
Public enemy number one : l'ennemi public numéro un	Huge : énorme
A fatal hazard : un risque mortel	
Wildlife : la faune et la flore	
In the seventies : dans les années 70	