

You may recall the tale of a little, orphaned manatee (<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/news/baby-manatee-with-plastic-bags-in-his-stomach/>) who was rescued off the coast of Florida a few months ago, but just in case you don't, here's a refresher and a sad update. Emoji, the manatee, came into the care of Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo (<https://shop.lowryparkzoo.com/webstore/shop/ViewItems.aspx?CG=ZPADM&C=ZPANN>) at the end of October 2016. (<http://www.abccactionnews.com/news/local-news/emoji-the-manatee-calf-dies-at-lowry-park-zoo-staff-reminds-public-of-dangers-of-pollution>) The poor marine mammal was found when he was only a few weeks old, he was 15 pounds underweight (<http://www.abccactionnews.com/news/local-news/emoji-the-manatee-calf-dies-at-lowry-park-zoo-staff-reminds-public-of-dangers-of-pollution>) and struggling for survival. Rescuers took him to the local animal hospital where the veterinarians found out an alarming fact: Emoji was literally full of trash (<http://awesomeocean.com/2017/02/03/emoji-manatee-died-human-debris/>) and plastic which is why he could not eat. He had likely mistaken the plastic bags for food (<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/environment/how-plastic-pollution-is-killing-animals-on-midway-atoll/>) and was left in a dire situation.

The staff at David A. Straz Jr. Manatee Hospital (<http://www.lowryparkzoo.org/involvement/protect/manatee-hospital>) removed the trash from the poor manatee's stomach and he was placed in the Lowry Zoo to recover. However, after a few months, senior veterinarian at the Florida-based zoo, Dr. Ray Ball, diagnosed Emoji with a condition called disseminated intravascular coagulation. Dr. Ball explained to Awesome Ocean (<http://awesomeocean.com/2017/02/03/emoji-manatee-died-human-debris/>) that this condition "makes manatees bleed and clot at the same time." Because of the damage to Emoji's digestive track, he passed away due to internal bleeding on January 31st (<https://www.facebook.com/TampaZoo/posts/10155686556721124>).

When asked to speak about Emoji's passing, Ball said, "Now more than ever, we must hold ourselves accountable, whether that's keeping trash and plastics out of our waterways or being more mindful of potential consequences of propeller strikes on wildlife while boating." Sadly, manatees are an endangered species (<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/news/baby-manatee-with-plastic-bags-in-his-stomach/>), largely due to boating accidents and environmental pollution. The impact of plastic is devastating to the manatee population, but our plastic waste effects far more animals than just manatees – it's also threatening over 800 different marine species (<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/crushplastic/>) around the planet.

Every year we put 8.8 million tons of trash (<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/crushplastic/>) into the ocean. These harmful plastics take centuries to degrade and while they are in the water, plastics entangle, choke, and kill

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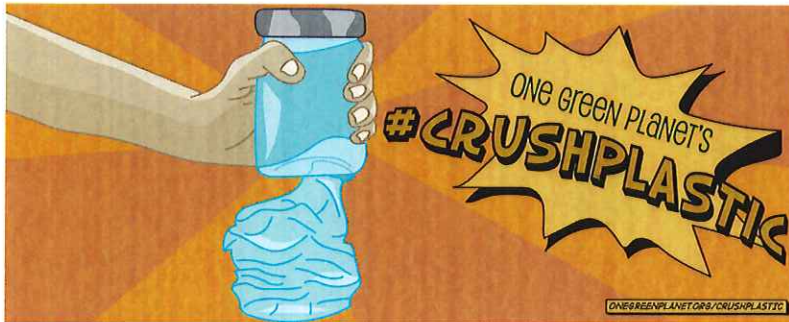
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(<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/crushplastic/>) marine animals, like Emoji. However, we can stop this tragic story from being repeated by making simple, small changes in our everyday lives.

You can reduce your contribution to plastic waste every day with a few simple swaps (<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/crushplastic/>). By bringing a reusable tote (<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/environment/keep-plastic-bags-out-of-the-oceans/>) with you when you go to the grocery store instead of using the plastic ones they have there, you can prevent 330 plastic bags (<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/environment/keep-plastic-bags-out-of-the-oceans/>) from entering the ocean. Pretty amazing, huh? And that's only one way you can help! For more information about cutting plastic out of your life, join One Green Planet's #CrushPlastic (<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/crushplastic/>) campaign.

Let's #CrushPlastic! Click the graphic below for more information.



(<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/crushplastic/>)

Image Source: Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo

(<https://www.facebook.com/TampaZoo/posts/10155686556721124/>)/Facebook



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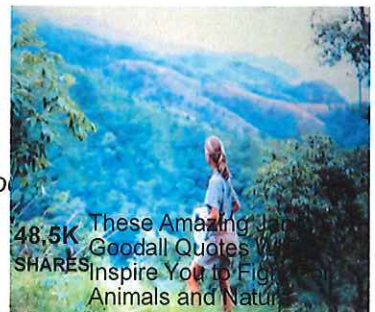
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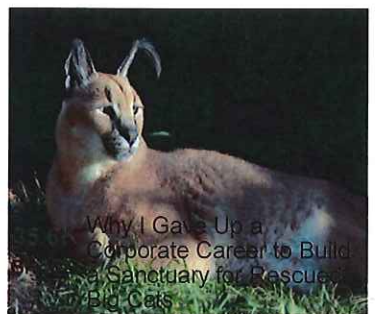
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