HOME

How Indian Fisherman Are Diverting Catch of Ocean Plastic to Be Repurposed for Building Roads

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An Indian fisherman, Xavier Peter, calls the Arabian Sea, Mother Sea. Although his mom gave him life, it's Kadalamma that gave him a purpose and a livelihood.

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This place has provided for him and offered enough fish to feed his family by selling it. And, she even protected him; he explains, by sparing him three times from cyclones and once from a tsunami.

For more than 30 years, he's been trawling for fish and shrimp off the southwestern coast. However, in the recent years, when he checks his nets, he sees more plastic than fish.

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Plastic Polluting the Beautiful Arabian Sea

Peter explains that it requires additional effort to pull out the nets because they have so much plastic tangled in them. In fact, together with his crew of six, they spend several hours dividing catch from waste.

He explains that this is a constant reminder that Kadalamma is ill and that he and his community made it like this. And, it's the biggest Indian failure, he adds.

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Before, He Chucked the Plastic Overboard, but not anymore

Since August 2017, together with almost 5000 other fisherman and owners of boats in Kollam, a town in the south of Kerala, they've been hauling the plastic to the land.

Using help from some governmental agencies, they launched the first recycling centre in the area. It cleans, sorts out, and then processes all of the plastic collected from the sea.

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In one year, they collected around 65 metric tons of waste.

Half of it has been repurposed for making 84 miles of road. The president of All Kerala Fishing Boat Operators, Peter Mathias explains that in the past, they didn't care for the plastic they caught in their nets. But, this has changed and they're now protecting their livelihoods.

Despite the fact that there are several factors affecting the fish stock, including overfishing and climate change, plastic is one of the most visible culprits.

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Unfortunately, a lot of fish dies as a result of plastic-they confuse it for prey and die because of malnutrition or poisoning.

Some sea life gets strangled by the nylon fishing nets or can't access their breeding areas because they're blocked by plastic.

This Program May Be Applied elsewhere too

This Indian program may have a larger potential. It's effective because it's the fishermen who're starting the initiative.

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They're motivated by their love for nature and wildlife and altruism. And, they're in the best position to show to the rest of the community that plastic is really dangerous.

Sources:

GOOD NEWS NETWORK

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

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