

What happens to plastic waste in Asia and Africa?



Countries with the most plastic marine debris

An estimated 8 million tonnes of plastic ends up in the oceans every year. 80% of this is from just 20 countries in the world. While China is a major polluter, contributing 2.4 million tonnes of plastic waste that wind up in the Earth's seas annually, it is certainly not alone. The contributions of other countries include:

Indonesia 0.81	The Philippines 0.47
Vietnam 0.45	Sri Lanka 0.40
Thailand 0.26	Egypt 0.24
Malaysia 0.23	Nigeria 0.21
Bangladesh 0.19	South Africa 0.16

1. Where are all these countries? Use an atlas to help you.

This map shows the top ten most plastic polluted rivers in the world.

Data: Schmidt et al. (2017)



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2. Which single country is the location for five of these rivers?
3. Locate and name the countries through which these ten rivers flow.
4. Which rivers in the world outside Asia contribute large amounts of plastic to the oceans?

- When landfill falls short in accommodating all of our rubbish, societies have turned to the rivers. This results in rivers that are entirely covered with waste. When seen from above, these rivers look like a solid sludge of plastic waste. All these rivers flow into the ocean, bringing the trash with them.
- The top ten most polluted rivers in the world have one thing in common. They are located alongside large human populations with poor waste management systems. Together, they deliver almost all the plastics in the entirety of our oceans.
- Statistics show that throwaway junk in the form of plastic bags and bottles has risen by 620% since the year 1975.

Data: Jambeck et al. (2014)

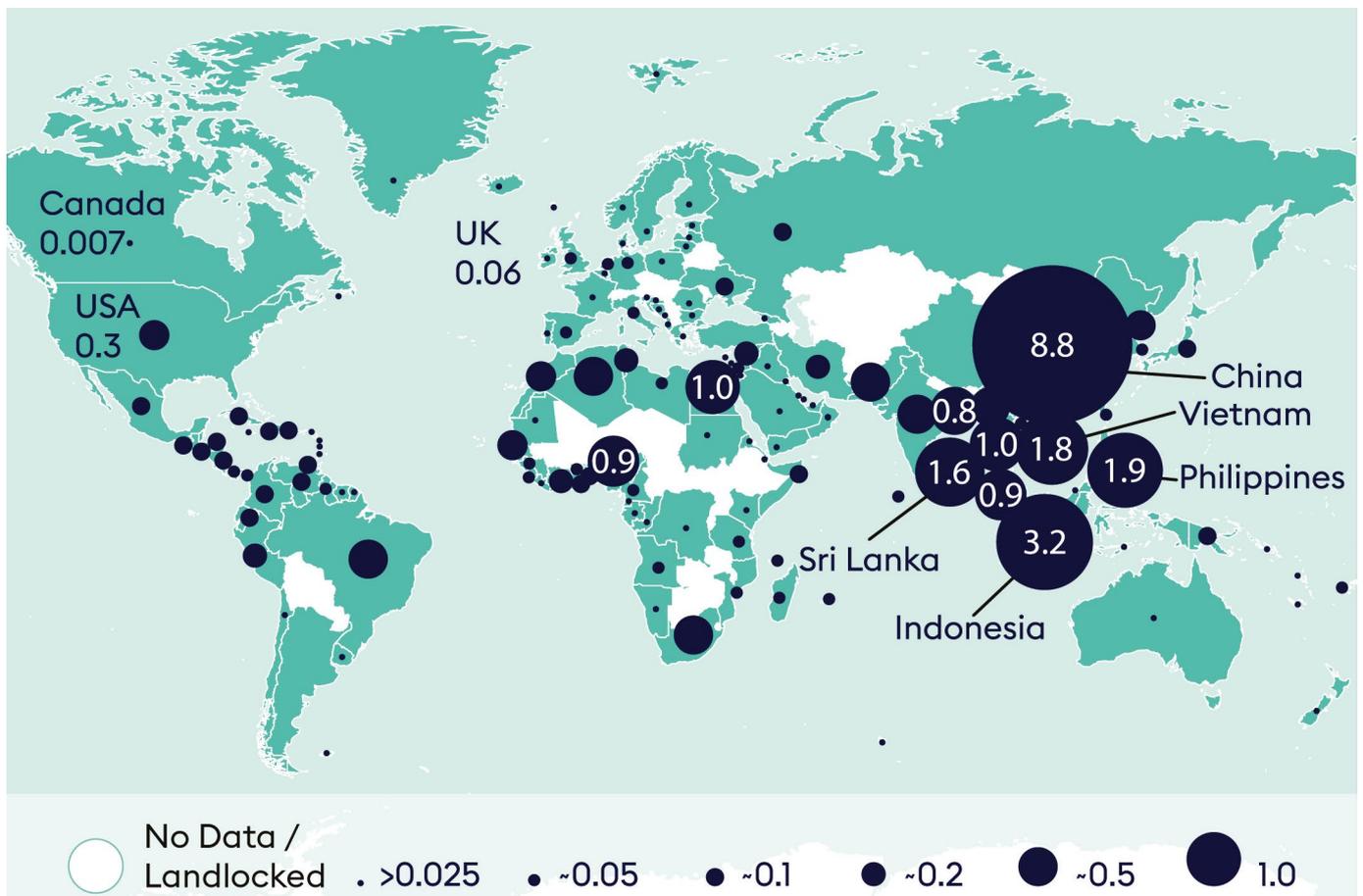


Chart showing plastic waste released by countries in 2010 in million metric tonnes

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China's Population		China's per capita disposable income	
1975	905,580,425	1978	343.40 Chinese Yuan (US Dollars: \$49.70)
2015	1,376,048,943	2018	39251.00 Chinese Yuan (US Dollars: \$5680.56)

Most countries in Asia and Africa have had a _____ population increase since the 1970s.

China's population has risen by _____. So, there are far more people using _____.

Many people have moved from rural areas to _____ areas near major rivers and work in factories or services instead of growing their own food on _____.

This means they have to buy food in shops and supermarkets and often carry it in cheap _____.

Many people have more disposable income, e.g. China's disposable income has risen by _____ in the same period of time.

So people are able to buy consumer goods made of _____ and convenience foods wrapped in plastic increasing _____ further.

In many countries infrastructure like clean water supplies has not kept up in the cities so even people on _____ wages buy _____ water.

China alone used 73.8 billion plastic water bottles in 2016 and most were not _____.

In countries like Nigeria waste collection and recycling is _____.

In other countries non-regulated disposal companies dump waste _____.

This means most will end up in the _____ and then be carried to the _____.

5. Suggest two measures for countries to reduce their plastic contribution to the ocean.