



WVS VET REPORT

WVS clinic location: Galápagos Islands, Ecuador

Animal affected: Galápagos giant tortoises

Problem: We have seen a growing number of Galápagos giant tortoises needing veterinary care. They are eating plastic items such as face masks, bags, balloons, bottles, rope and tape. They are mistaking these items for food and then becoming unwell as plastic can block their digestive system. This is worrying because they are an endangered species that already have several challenges that threaten their survival. These challenges include losing their homes, being taken as pets, not enough water and too many grazing animals eating the grasses that tortoises need for food.

Cause: Littering by tourists and locals in areas close to Galápagos giant tortoise habitats.

Solution: Taking litter home and being aware of keeping the environment clean and safe will help Galápagos giant tortoise numbers to grow.



WVS VET REPORT

WVS clinic location: Goa, India

Animal affected: Dogs

Problem: We are treating a growing number of street dogs that have injuries due to plastic. The dogs are becoming tangled up or trapped in plastic. They cannot untangle themselves easily so they get cuts and wounds. These can then become infected. The dogs also find it harder to search for food when they cannot move freely.

Cause: Littering of plastic items like bottles and bags near homes is changing street environments because:

- streets are becoming dirty
- drains are getting blocked and flooding during heavy rains
- burning plastic waste is polluting the air
- rubbish is becoming a breeding ground for pests.

Solution: Disposing of plastic waste properly and reducing the use of plastic can help to keep street dogs safe in their environment.



WVS VET REPORT

WVS clinic location: Ooty, India

Animal affected: Horses

Problem: We are removing plastic from the stomachs of horses. Horses are eating large amounts of plastic amongst the roadside rubbish. They can smell left over food and accidentally eat plastic items along with it. Eating plastic can make horses very unwell because their stomachs can't digest plastic. The plastic blocks their digestive system and the horses do not realise that they are hungry and starve. Some plastics also contain harmful chemicals which are toxic to the horses.

Cause: People are not disposing of their rubbish in a safe way, so it ends up in the streets. When owners are unable to provide proper stables for their horses, the horses are left to roam freely on the roadsides. These horses then end up eating plastic waste.

Solution: Reducing the use of plastic and recycling it can help keep horses safe.





WVS VET REPORT

WVS clinic location: Galápagos Islands, Ecuador

Animal affected: Seal

Problem: We are treating seals which are facing significant threats to survival due to plastic pollution. When plastic waste ends up in the ocean, it breaks down into smaller pieces called microplastics. These tiny pieces of plastic can make the water dirty and unsafe for seals. Plastic is harming the fish and other sea creatures that seals eat so seals are struggling to find enough food. Seals can get tangled in plastic, eat it by mistake, become unwell from chemicals and get microplastics stuck inside them.

Seals often go to certain beaches to have their babies. If these places are covered in plastic waste, it can make it difficult or dangerous for seals to raise their pups. The plastic is changing their natural environment underwater too. Large pieces of plastic cover the seafloor or float on the water's surface. Seals might avoid these polluted areas, losing important parts of their habitat.

Cause: Plastic pollution in the ocean is mostly caused by people using too much plastic and not disposing of it properly. Factories and the fishing industry contribute to plastic pollution when they fail to clean up their plastic waste.

Solution: To help seals, we can use less plastic, clean up beaches, and make sure factories and fishing companies stop dumping plastic into the ocean.

