



How long does rubbish take to break down in the sea?

The rubbish you throw in the sea doesn't just disappear; it hangs around and causes loads of problems for wildlife and people. It has been estimated that globally, over 100,000 animals die every year due to getting entangled in or eating plastics alone!



Turtles can die from accidentally eating plastic bags because they mistake them for jellyfish!

See if you can guess how long these types of litter take to break down. Circle the correct answer...

Type of litter	Time taken to break down in the sea		
Cigarette butt	5 years	15 years	5 months
Fishing line	600 years	300 years	30 years
Tin can	50 years	100 years	10 years
Apple core	6 months	3 weeks	2 months
Styrofoam cup	500 years	50 years	5 years
Aluminium can	80 years	200 years	400 years
Plastic bottle	50 years	450 years	100 years
Glass bottle	Never	1000 years	500 years
Plywood	100 years	3 years	30 years
Banana skin	2 years	6 months	6 weeks
Plastic bag	100 years	500 years	1000 years
Newspaper	6 weeks	6 months	1 week
Disposable nappy	450 years	75 years	1 year
Plastic 6 pack ring	100 years	1000 years	400 years
Wool glove	1 year	1 month	6 months

ANSWERS

Type of litter	Time taken to biodegrade
Cigarette butt	15 years
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Apple core	2 months
Styrofoam cup	500 years
Aluminium can	200 years
Plastic bottle	450 years
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