



# Black John - the Bogus Pirate



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By John Joyce

### BRING YOUR OWN BAG!

Plastic pollution is one of the biggest problems in the Ocean. At least EIGHT MILLION TONNES of waste plastic enters the Ocean EACH YEAR! And that's plastic that never goes away, but breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces, that get eaten by mistake by a vast range of marine animals. Some of this plastic also breaks down into microscopic particles called 'microplastics'. Microplastics are so small that they are filtered out of the water by shellfish such as mussels, clams and oysters that may even end up on your own plate as part of a seafood dinner!

You can read all about this in the scientific paper 'Human Health Impacts of Microplastics and Nanoplastics' at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/sab/NJDEP-SAB-PHSC-final-2016.pdf> or at a project on plastics in the Baltic Sea at <https://www.blastic.eu/about-blastic/>

So why not reduce the amount of plastics entering the Ocean by cutting down the disposable plastic articles you use and then throw away, such as plastic water bottles? The less plastics you use, the less plastic will go to waste and perhaps end up in the marine environment.

One simple way of using less plastic is to continue to cut down the number of plastic bags we bring home from the supermarket by taking in our own re-usable shopping bags and using them . . . again . . . and again . . . and again. Another good way is to avoid any product that uses 'microplastics' as an ingredient, as some cosmetics and even toothpastes do.

Here's a picture of me and the ship's cat Amos, shopping for codfish down at Mrs. Smellyfingers the fishmongers with our own reusable sack from the ship's stores. Mind you, by the size of the codfish, I think we may need a bigger sack!

And perhaps one that the crew of the 'Mucky Duck' hadn't just used for their dirty socks!



## 'Tis Little Things That Make a Difference

Avast there, me hearties! When people ask me what they can do to protect the marine environment I always say "'tis the little things that make the biggest difference!"

### BUY ONLY AS MUCH AS YOU NEED!

Another great way to protect the marine environment while we're out shopping is to firstly buy only as much seafood (or indeed any food) as you need, and secondly to buy only seafood that is caught locally.



Seafood from faraway places has not only to be transported all the way to this country, using precious fossil fuels to power the engines on ships, lorries and aircraft. Even more fossil fuels are also burned to generate the electricity to run the refrigerators needed to keep the seafood cool.

Burning fossil fuels like petrol and diesel creates carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide that pollute the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide combines with rainwater and seawater to make them more acidic, creating 'acid rain' and increasing the acidity of the Ocean. This means that animals with hard shells – such as corals, crabs, oysters and other shellfish - are in danger of finding their chalky homes dissolving as the acidity increases. So, by buying only what you need, you not only save money, but also protect the Ocean.

### BUY ONLY FROM SUSTAINABLE SOURCES

Did you know that 7.5% of all fish species in European waters are threatened with extinction? The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has published a 'Red List' of Marine Fishes listing some 52 threatened species in the North Atlantic alone. Also, kelp forests, which are one of the most productive ecosystems on Earth have undergone severe declines in recent years, possibly due to the effects of trawling for fish.

So we all need to be careful with our seafood shopping and only buying seafood that is caught without endangering the stocks of seafood themselves or the marine environment in which they live.

To help you with this, the Marine Stewardship Council has produced a 'Certified Sustainable Seafood' label to help you identify sustainably caught fish and shellfish before you buy it. Learn more at: <https://www.msc.org/> For more ideas on how to protect the Ocean through things we do every day, check out the Sea Change project at [www.seachangeproject.eu/takeaction](http://www.seachangeproject.eu/takeaction) .



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