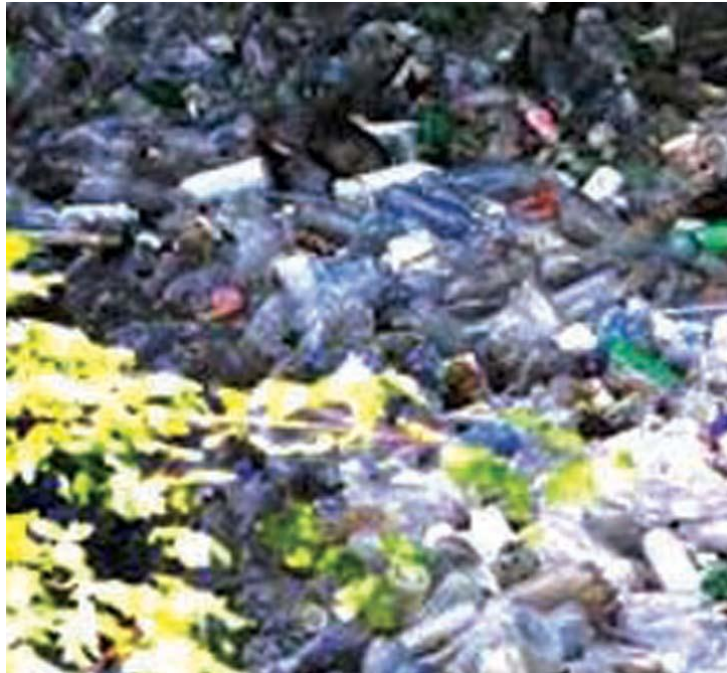


Plastic pollution builds up in Arctic waters

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By AFP

Miami, Florida, United States — Even though few people live in the Arctic, some seas in the region are heavily polluted with plastic because of an Atlantic ocean current which dumps debris there, researchers said Wednesday.



Scientists aboard the globe traveling French schooner, Tara, in 2013 were surprised to find the seas east of Greenland and north of Scandinavia are a dead-end for plastics, said the report in the journal *Science Advances*.

The findings “stress the importance of properly managing plastic litter at its source, because once it enters the ocean, its destination can be unpredictable,” said the report.

The reason the Greenland and Barents Seas and are a dumping ground is known as the North Atlantic branch of the Thermohaline Circulation, a current sometimes called “the global ocean conveyor belt,” which ferries plastic particles to the area.

The pathway of plastic through the North Atlantic Ocean was also traced using 17,000 satellite buoys.

The debris in the area was estimated to measure hundreds of tons, and included fishing lines, plastic films, fragments and granules.

A similar amount of plastic pile up can be found in areas closer to the equator.

Researchers said the large amounts of film-type plastic made them think the “plastic had largely traveled from distant sources, including the coasts of northwest Europe, the UK and the east coast of the US.”

The study found that Arctic floating plastic accounts for less than three percent of the global total, but warned it will continue to accumulate in the coming years.