



# How Is Dubai Helping to Clean Up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch?

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Dubai-based marine specialists Ecocoast are playing a crucial role in the largest oceanic clean-up project of its kind in history. By building the 600m-long, 3m-deep floating screen which will corral the plastic into an accessible location, Ecocoast are proving themselves to be an instrumental cog in the wider operation, which is being undertaken by Dutch environmental start-up The Ocean Cleanup.

The project was initiated in September of this year and aims to bring back the first loads of recovered plastic to recycle on land within six months. If the trial operation is successful, The Ocean Cleanup plans to commission 60 more devices and retrieve as much as 50% of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch within five years.

## What is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch?

A massive sprawl of over 1.8 trillion pieces of plastic lying in the Pacific Ocean between San Francisco and Hawaii, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is over two times the size of Texas and has confounded scientists and environmentalists for years. It is just one of five similar floating atrocities around the world and until now, the scientific community has been at a loss as to how to effectively remediate the problem.

There's no doubt that [prevention is better than the cure](#) when it comes to the plastic in our oceans, but The Ocean Cleanup have set themselves a target of reducing global plastic oceanic pollution by 90% by 2040. This year they have taken the first step on that lengthy road by launching a prototype machine into the Pacific Ocean to target the biggest patch of them all.

## Maiden voyage

The initial machine, named System 001, was launched on September 8<sup>th</sup> 2018 to much fanfare from environmentalists and concerned parties all over the globe. In the intervening three months, it has now reached its goal in the middle of the Pacific Ocean – over 1,200 miles from where it embarked. Now in position, it will spend six months shepherding the plastic particles into a U-shaped boom which was created by the Dubai-based Ecocoast, before the plastic is periodically removed onto waiting ships.



As well as providing an opportunity for the technology to prove it can work in the field and making the first inroads into the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, System 001 is also equipped with the requisite monitoring equipment to provide feedback on its performance. Cameras, sensors and lights – all powered by the sun – are connected to an online network and will allow future incarnations of the machine to be even more efficient.

## Dubai plays its part

The 600m boom was constructed entirely in the UAE at the behest of Ecocoast and is the first device of its kind which can successfully scoop up plastic and litter, without trapping or harming marine life which may be in the vicinity. The 3m skirt can easily be swam under by fish and other creatures and the prototype has passed rigorous testing standards prior to being dispatched into action.

“Lachlan [Jackson] and I established Ecocoast to develop pioneering solutions for a better marine environment, so to see our screen reach the Great Pacific Garbage Patch today makes us tremendously proud,” [explained Dana Liparts](#), co-founder and director of Ecocoast. “This is a screen designed and manufactured by our team in the UAE, and it is an honour to be contributing to a truly global issue.”