

Wrecking Season Teacher's Resources No.7 - Jane Darke

Plastic –

Not so Fantastic

There are 100,000 containers floating on the surface of the oceans at any time. All kinds of trade goods come out of them – in 1997 the Tokyo Express lost a cargo of Lego bits. Apart from the dragons and the brooms it was all marine-related: Aqualungs, lifejackets, harpoon guns, fins, seaweed and halyards. At the same time lighters invaded the shoreline in their thousands, all full but without a flint. Most insidious of all are the nurdles. No-one has traced the containers they come from, they spill from lorries on roads and ships in transit and have infiltrated every beach in the world – there are billions of them.

Nurdles or Mermaid's Tears

They are the **raw material** for almost every plastic product on Earth.

They are sometimes known as pre-production plastic pellets,

referencing the fact that they are a raw material, or “plastic **resin**

pellets.” As these alternate names imply, nurdles are tiny pellets of

plastic which can be melted down or vacuum formed into plastic

objects.



Plastic nurdles mixed with seaweed.

Albatross dive and range across the oceans of the World.

Some wind up dead on the shoreline.

The cause is often obvious,

More often than not, they come in without a mark on them.

You gauge the fullness of its belly. Did it die of starvation?

Plastic lodged in its gullet?

By Nick Darke

Think about how similar nurdles look to fish eggs, why could this be a danger to wildlife?

Discuss other types of plastic that are a Danger to sea life. What about turtles and plastic bags? What about tangled fishing line and nets?

Find out more about the plastic floating on our oceans.

What should be done?