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Birds' stomachs too full of plastic to eat – 25th June, 2018

Level 4

The BBC made a worrying film about the terrible impact plastic is having on seabirds near Australia. The team was on Lord Howe Island for a new documentary. They filmed dead birds with stomachs full of plastic. The birds starved to death because there was no room in their stomachs for food. Marine biologists are working to save the birds. They removed plastic from the stomachs of hundreds of chicks to increase their chance of survival.

A marine biologist explained that the birds were predators that eat anything. She said: "They have no ability to detect...non-plastic, so they eat it." Adult birds then feed the plastic to their chicks without knowing the harm. She said the plastic is "entirely preventable" and could easily be swapped for things like aluminium or wood. She said: "My own toothbrush is made of bamboo." A BBC presenter said: "We saw...90 pieces of plastic come out of one of the chicks."

Level 5

A BBC team made a worrying film about the devastating impact plastic pollution is having on seabirds in the Tasman Sea near Australia. The team was working on the remote Lord Howe Island for a documentary called "Drowning in Plastic". They filmed many birds that had died because their stomachs were full of plastic. The birds starved to death. There there was no room in their stomachs for food. The team filmed marine biologists working to try and save the birds. The scientists captured hundreds of chicks and removed plastic from their stomachs to give them a chance of survival.

A marine biologist explained what was happening. She said the birds were predators that eat anything. She said: "They have no ability to detect...non-plastic, so they eat it." Adult birds feed the plastic to their chicks, not knowing what they are feeding them. The biologist said most of the plastic is "entirely preventable". She said much if the plastic could easily be swapped for other materials, such as aluminium or wood. She said: "My own toothbrush is made of bamboo." A BBC TV presenter said: "We saw...90 pieces of plastic come out of one of the chicks."

Level 6

A BBC team has filmed disturbing footage of the devastating impact plastic pollution is having on seabirds in the Tasman Sea, which is between Australia and New Zealand. The film crew was working on the remote Lord Howe Island for a new wildlife documentary called "Drowning in Plastic". They filmed many birds that had died because their stomachs were literally too full of plastic to be able to eat any food. The birds starved to death because there was no room in their stomachs for food. The documentary team filmed marine biologists working on the island to try and save the birds. The scientists captured hundreds of chicks and physically removed plastic from their stomachs to give them a chance of survival.

Marine biologist Jennifer Lavers explained what was happening to the birds. She said the birds were predators that will eat anything. She said: "When you put plastic in the ocean, it means they have no ability to detect plastic from non-plastic, so they eat it." Adult birds feed the plastic to their chicks, oblivious to what they are feeding them. Professor Lavers lamented that most of the plastic is "entirely preventable". She said: "We find plastic clothes pegs and plastic tooth brushes. Those could easily be swapped out for other materials - aluminium or wood. My own toothbrush is made of bamboo." TV presenter Liz Bonnin said: "We saw...90 pieces of plastic come out of one of the chicks."