

# Plastic Investigator

The Red-footed Booby is a strong flier and good diver. It aims for fish that it spots from above the water. They love to hunt for flying fish. They will also sometime hunt at night diving for schooling squid. BUT in an ocean full of plastic, it can be difficult for the Red-footed Booby to tell a fish and a plastic cup apart. Scientists have reported that the Red-footed Booby, and other seabirds, will sometimes eat the plastic or return to their nest to feed the plastic item to their chicks. Plastic remains in the stomach and reduces space for food, which often leads to starvation and death. Chicks that survive to adulthood are smaller, have shorter wings and bills, and have a smaller body mass.

**You can help seabirds by reducing the amount of plastic that ends up in the ocean!**

For this activity, we want you and your family to become aware and informed about the various types of plastics that are in your house, and how many can be recycled.

You may have seen a number enclosed in a triangle of arrows on some plastic products. This is the resin identification code (RIC) and tells you what type of plastic it is.

Look at the Types of Plastic sheet and try to find an example of each around the house.  
*Tip: use the resin codes and examples to help you*

Record your examples in the Plastic Investigator Record sheet.

## Reflection

*Look at your record sheet. Think about why plastic is good for the item it is being used for*

*Now choose one item from your list that can be replaced by a natural material, for example instead of using plastic toothbrushes you can use toothbrushes made out of bamboo, or instead of buying soft drinks in plastic bottles you can buy soft drinks in glass bottles*

*Try not to worry about how much plastic items are on the list, we all use plastic daily and are contributing to pollution. But together we can reduce the amount of plastic that ends up in our environment and the ocean.*



# Types of Plastic



Polyethylene Terephthalate

Example: water bottles, medicine jars

Easily recyclable



Polypropylene

Example: bottle covers, plant pots

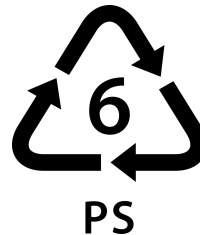
Reusable and recyclable



High-density Polyethylene

Example: milk bottles, toiletries (shampoo, lotion) bottles

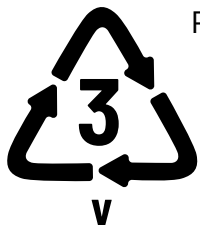
Easily recyclable



Polystyrene

Example: disposable cups, food containers, packaging

Rarely recycled, toxicity increases when heated



Polyvinyl Chloride

Example: window and door frames, pipes, guttering

Not recyclable



Other polycarbonate

Example: nylon, construction materials, fiber textiles

Rarely recycled but can be composted if PLA is next to symbol



Low-density Polyethylene

Example: bubble wrap, garbage and shopping bags

Recyclable but can tangle in recycling machinery



# Plastic Investigator Record Sheet

With the help of a trusted adult, find one or more of each of the different types of plastic in your house? Write what you found next to each resin identification code below. Not all plastic products will have the arrow symbol on them, and you may need to search online. Ask an adult to help with this.



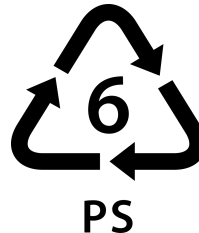
Polyethylene Terephthalate



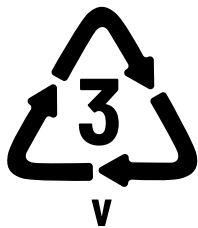
Polypropylene



High-density Polyethylene



Polystyrene



Polyvinyl Chloride



Other polycarbonate



Low-density Polyethylene

Other