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From: Steve Williams, Care2, More from this Affiliate
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Not So Healthy: Young Fish Eat Microplastics Like Fast Food

New research shows that young fish are eating tiny pieces of plastic instead of their regular food — with potentially devastating consequences.

A study published this month in the journal "Science" explains that juvenile perch larvae appear to be eating microplastics in place of their usual food sources, like free-swimming zooplankton. This hinders fish development, leaving them more susceptible to predators.

Microplastics — plastic particles that measure below 5mm — infiltrate our environments as a result of litter, such as plastic bags, packaging and other materials, that eventually end up in the sea. Microbeads — tiny plastics often found in health products, such as face scrubs and even some toothpastes — represent another major source of pollution. For this reason, a number of governments have either [banned](#) or are [considering](#) banning microbeads.

Researchers from Uppsala University in Sweden wanted to look at exactly how plastics might affect immature fish. They began by examining the impact of various polystyrene concentrations on perch.

In non-exposed waters, the perch eggs hatched at a rate of about 96 percent. This dropped to just 81 percent if large quantities of polystyrene were present. The perch that did hatch in these waters tended to be slower and smaller than those observed in cleaner bodies of water.

Image credit: Plastic Contamination

Read more: <http://www.care2.com/causes/not-so-healthy-young-fish-eat-microplastics-like-fast-food.html#ixzz4Apth92DX>



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