FATAL POLLUTION

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A Documentary (2009)
3rd Edition
Fatal Pollution

A local friend of mine told me one day: in the near future, the “Empty Quarter” will be called “Full Quarter”. Picnickers, campers, wadi-bashers, off-roaders, endurance riders leave their bags, bottles, caps, lids, plates, containers, cutlery, ropes, loops of can holders and even tyres in the desert. It is difficult to get away from trash, which does not stay just where it is thrown. It blows away with the wind penetrating the most remote desert places, clinging on trees and shrubs, lying covered by a veneer of sand, polluting the most picturesque places of the desert. It is not just an eyesore. Plastics and rubbish take a heavy toll on wildlife and livestock. Every year hundreds of animals face agonizing deaths by plastic ingestion in the seas, deserts, and even in cities. Animals are curious, especially the young ones, which sniff at trash, nibble at it and then swallow it only to choke and die. Some may survive longer until their intestines are blocked, or noxious ingredients are released into the organism. Their suffering is prolonged with excruciating pain before their death. Over the last decade many animals, which were necropsied at the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory in Dubai, died from trash ingestion, including camels, cattle, sheep, goats, gazelles, ostriches and Houbara Bustards. The author visited one place in the Ras Al Khaimah desert where owners had dragged their dead animals, which had died from plastic ingestion. I counted more than 30 carcasses and I named the place “Death Valley”. Some of the pictures shown in this document are from this valley. In the United Arab Emirates this kind of pollution has reached “epidemic” proportions. The following pictures speak for themselves.
Some people cannot read

The skips are empty. Is it carelessness or negligence?
Rubbish in the middle of Za’abeel

In the evening, careless people discard asbestos-containing material
The skip is half-empty

Labourers had a meal in the shade and left their aluminium plates behind
They have to clean up what other people leave behind

In the parking-lot of a famous beach resort in Ras Al Khaimah
A nice beach where people swim and turtles breed

This camel died from plastic ingestion
This was a picturesque spot in the desert

A camping place under an acacia
The remains of a sheep camp in the Hatta mountains

The remains of a camel feast in the Liwa
The modern acacia ‘flowers’

An animal ‘feeding ground’ at the entrance of Wadi Bih
Near a camel camp in the Jebel Ali desert

Hidden behind a hill near Hatta
Between the dunes near Al Faqa

In front of the beautiful Hajjar mountains near Shwaib
Toxic fumes further add to the pollution

At a picturesque spot near Salalah in Oman
At Khor Kalba: the only chance to clean up is to burn the rubbish

In Wadi Bih; the remains of a camping weekend
After an endurance ride; too much to dispose properly

Camel calves eat trash – the fatal pollution
So do the adults…for how long will they survive?

The camel in the middle dies from plastic ingestion
How many more will die?

Death Valley: I counted 34 carcasses pulled by their hind legs to this valley to decompose
Plastic is regurgitated

Skin, organs and bones will disappear, but the plastic in the stomach will remain for hundreds of years; a gruesome reminder
A plastic conglomerate is what is left of this cow

The agonising death: plastic trash can kill quickly when it blocks the intestines; it can kill slowly when it releases its toxins or when the animals starve to death when filled by plastic
This donkey released the plastic before it died

Bones and plastic is all that is left
Plastic ropes are used to drag the carcass to Death Valley

25 kg of plastic is found in the stomach
46 kg of solid plastic has the shape of the cow’s rumen

All kind of plastic is found in the stomach: ropes, bags, plates, cups and more
Plastic will remain for several hundred years when everything else is gone

The end
Saving an animal. But it did not survive; a plastic bag obstructed the intestine

After weeks, months and years, plastic calcifies in the animal’s stomach. This was an Arabian Oryx.
Hundreds of animals succumb to plastic ingestion every year in the UAE

Birds also die from eating trash. A plastic rod and a plastic cap killed this Houbara Bustard, and plastic killed this Albatross
A plastic carpet, 3 times the size of the USA, covers the Pacific Ocean and kills annually 1 million sea-birds and 100,000 marine mammals which erroneously mistake the plastic for fish or squid.

This brochure can hopefully contribute to stop the suffering of livestock and wild animals caused by the dumping of rubbish by careless people, so that animals, like these beautiful Arabian Oryx, can thrive.
STOP LITTERING!!!