

Microplastics discovered in an 11-year-old ice core in Antarctica

The findings suggest that plastic pollution has emerged in one of the most remote and pristine regions on Earth - Antarctica - at least 11 years ago.

Recently, researchers from the University of Tasmania have published a shocking finding, which is evidence of the existence of microplastic in ice cores obtained in Antarctica. It is worth mentioning that micro-plastic has never been previously found in surface water, sediment and snow and ice in the polar regions.

If you do not know, micro-plastic particles are plastic with a diameter of less than 5mm, can even reach nanometers that can easily penetrate into human and animal bodies, causing unpredictable harm in the long run. Microplastics are produced in human plastic use, and in fact, they are present almost everywhere on Earth, indirectly or directly causing the deaths of thousands, millions of births. things, we just haven't (or haven't) realized their existence. According to research by Heriot-Watt University in the UK, the average person in the UK can 'consume' 10,000 pieces of micro-plastic each year from indoor debris without even knowing it.

Returning to the new discovery by the University of Tasmania team, there were about 96 microscopic pieces of plastic with a diameter less than 5mm found in an ice core (1.1 meters long and 14 cm wide) that scientists collected from a site about 2 km off the coast of Antarctica, and has been stored at Hobart Laboratory, Tasmania since 2009. So on average, there are about 12 microplastics per liter of water. Of these, the most common is polyethylene, which is used in many types of plastic products today.



Micro plastic in the Antarctic ice core

The ice core is a type of ice formed around the coast and not moving. The findings suggest that plastic pollution has emerged in one of the most remote and pristine regions on Earth - Antarctica - at least 11 years ago.

As revealed by scientists, there are signs of seaweed surrounding the microscopic pieces of plastic. This confirms that molluscs living in the waters around Antarctica that have ingested algae from sea ice may be exposed to plastic. Krill is a key species in the food chain of the ecosystem of the waters around Antarctica, so the presence of micro-plastics in their body will also have a great influence on other animals in the food chain.

At the moment, it is still not possible to determine exactly where these microplastics come from, nor how they can 'migrate' to an ocean-isolated continent like Antarctica, especially when the cores This micro-plastic tape is collected on the eastern edge of the Antarctic continent, which is nearly as absent from humans as the west - where research stations are located and adjacent to routes. sea ??Traffic. Also in the future, more in-depth studies will be needed to clarify the impact of plastics on sea ice, seaweed and mollusk species.

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