

# Suunto Elementum Aqua



Suunto has been one of my principal sponsors for the last two years, and during this time they have remained the world leader for underwater depth gauges. Their accuracy, reliability and compact, easy-to-use design has ensured that the Suunto D4 and D9 are used by AIDA as official depth confirmation devices to be worn by competitors.

Recently Suunto released a new series of instruments called the Elementum range, and this includes the Suunto Aqua, for those who spend their leisure time in the liquid element. The Aqua is both a depth gauge and a luxury timepiece, and it is hands down the most elegant such instrument that a diver can strap to their wrist. Manufactured from stainless steel, and with a scratch-proof sapphire crystal face, it has a solid heft to it, without feeling awkward on the wrist. It comes with a variety of different display, strap and colour configurations, and these can all be seen on the Suunto Elementum website

<http://www.suuntocampaigns.com/Elementum/>

As a depth gauge it lacks the host of functions that the D4 and D9 are equipped with, but the Aqua is designed as a cross-over timepiece, so that unless you are in a phase of delicate training and need to be able to download your dives at a one-second sampling rate then you can keep this watch on your wrist as you pass from the water to the restaurant. The Aqua is rated to 200 meters (660 feet), and uses Suunto's super-accurate depth sensor and algorithms to achieve market-leading precision. Functions include:

- depth mode displays depth, dive time and max depth
- measures temperature on the bezel with a simultaneous °F & °C display
- stores last 14 dives (time, depth, and dive time)
- beautiful LED backlight
- time alarm

As ambassador for the brand, it's no surprise that I recommend it, but anyone who's seen me wearing my Aqua will know that I'm genuinely proud to be associated with it. If you want something with modern style, but that still distinguishes you as a diver, then you cannot look past this beautiful piece of Finnish craftsmanship.

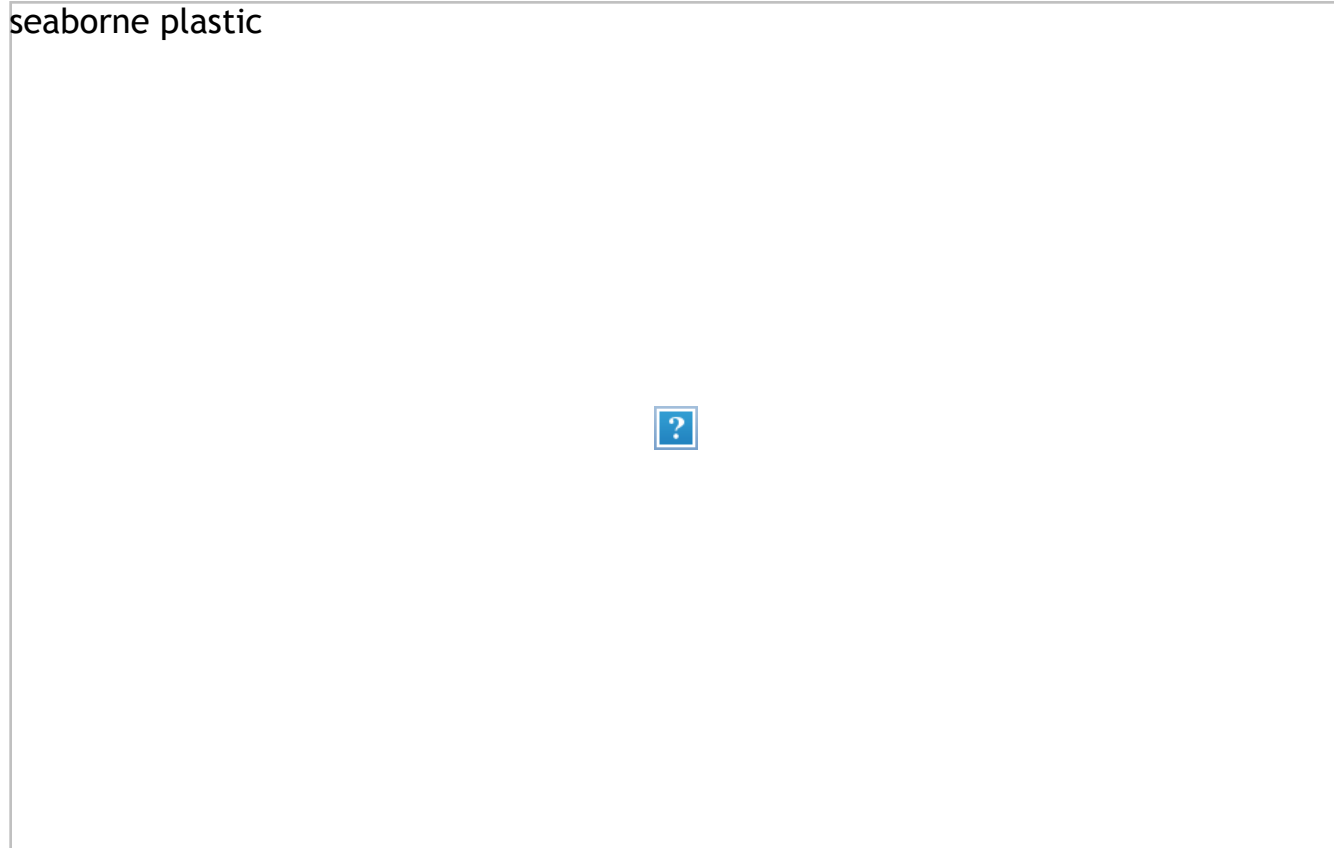


## PLASTIC SEAS

The planet's ecosystems are threatened on almost every front, and it is hard to assess which is the most immediate concern, or the most bona fide environmental organization. Often serious ecological concerns go unnoticed, just because they may not have the armageddon consequences of global warming or mass extinctions. The level of seaborne plastic is an example of this.

We have a "north Pacific rubbish patch" the size of Australia where currents have collected plastic into a giant eddy, beaches in the Caribbean have become plastic carpets and sea-creatures' digestive tracts are becoming choked with the material.

seaborne plastic

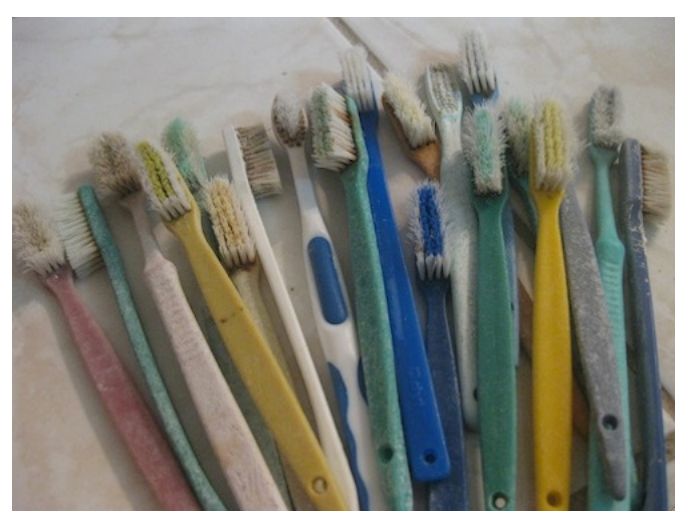


This video by Chris Jordan shows the chilling plight of Pacific albatrosses and other sea birds who are starving to death with bellyfuls of lighters, bottle caps and plastic flakes:

<http://www.chrisjordan.com/video/Midway%20960x720px.mov>

We are all familiar with turtles mistaking clear plastic bags for the jellyfish they feed on, and six pack yokes strangling sea birds, but the concern is even more holistic. Scientists are showing that no matter how small a filter is used there are even smaller particles of plastic that will get through it, raising concerns that the material could be blocking fish gills as well as filter feeders.

So where is all of this plastic coming from? Researchers cite littering from boats, as well as waste being carried out to sea from beaches and via rivers. Clean-ups, such as the worldwide effort in 1998 that collected 10.4 million items, can only remove a fraction of the larger objects. Over the last 5 years Vertical Blue has attempted to keep Dean's Blue Hole beach, one of the worst affected on Long Island, plastic-free, and during this time we have removed an estimated 1,500kg of plastic and other trash from a stretch of beach that is only 100 yards long.



As an indication of just how severe the situation is, in the space of a single week we found a staggering 21 toothbrushes floating in the blue hole lagoon! The type of toothbrush gives a good indication to where the trash is originating: of the 21 brushes, 20 of them were the 'straight and simple' design that these days can only really be found in 2nd/3rd world countries. The vast majority of the other types of items recovered, such as oil canisters, paint buckets, monofilament line & polyester netting, all point to fishing boats and coastal communities as being the main culprits, at least in the Caribbean. In central American countries such as Honduras and Guatemala, and probably large island nations such as the Dominican Republic and Haiti, water is often packaged in small half-liter plastic bags: fishermen tear off a corner with

their teeth and squirt the contents in their mouth before tossing the bag in the sea. This is probably the fate of almost all rubbish that is produced on these boats during fishing trips that can last from a day up to several weeks - after all why waste precious cargo space that could be substituted with profitable fish?

Even if this is the main cause, it is hard to really put too much blame on the people of these cultures, who have probably never been educated as to the durability of plastic and it's effect on the marine environment. Instead the blame should really rest on the shoulders of companies who ship vast quantities of disposable plastic products to countries that have no ecological practice for its disposal or recycling. After all you wouldn't give a gun to someone who doesn't know it is a weapon, so how can you justify shipping tonnes of plastic to countries who will inevitably release it into the environment?

Since this is an issue that directly affects the Bahamas, and Dean's Blue Hole in particular, Vertical Blue is adopting the seaborne plastic problem as its major cause, and over the next several years we will work to increase the awareness of the situation as well as develop and implement methods to resolve it. Any ideas or information would always be appreciated.