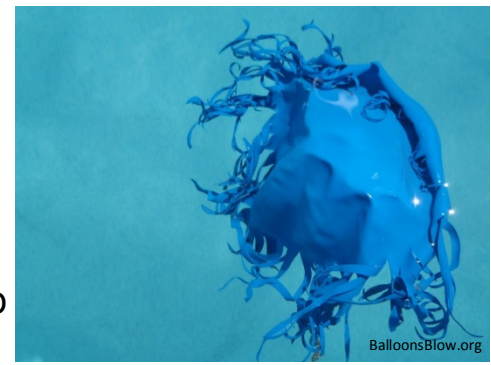


# BALLOONS BLOW... DON'T LET THEM GO!



When a balloon is let go, it will blow away, only to burst or deflate & return to pollute the Earth. They can travel thousands of miles before landing in a forest, field, lake or ocean. No ecosystem is safe. Balloon pollution is a global issue.

Many animals – marine & terrestrial, wild & domestic - easily mistake them for food or get entangled in any string. When ingested, balloons can block an animal's digestive tract & cause it to slowly starve to death. It is extremely common for sea turtles & other marine creatures to consume balloon litter because the burst remains resemble jellies. Terrestrial animals such as the desert tortoise, bighorn sheep & others, mistake them as nutrient rich vegetation. Any attached ribbon or string can entangle an animal that comes in contact with it, also causing a painful death.

The balloon industry spends millions to keep balloon releases legal at the expense of the planet & wildlife. They claim latex balloons are “biodegradable” & safe to release, yet they contain added chemicals & can take years for them to break down, offering plenty of time for an animal to encounter the litter. Mylar/foil balloons can cause dangerous power outages & spark fires. They also can take several years before breaking into microplastics.

Unfortunately, balloon releases are becoming popular with charitable events, memorials or to bring ‘awareness’. At the same time, we are becoming more aware of our personal impact on the environment.

Helium depletion is also a matter of concern. This finite element is essential in science & technology – from MRIs & ventilators, to sea & space exploration. Helium is a non-renewable resource & experts warn it should be conserved for more important applications.

There are laws concerning balloon releases in several states in the US, also in the UK & Australia. Littering is unlawful & releasing balloons is simply littering.

There are many alternatives that will not pollute the Earth or harm animals. We can opt for reusable party & advertising décor – banners, flags, ribbon dancers, pinwheels. For memorials & fundraisers, we can plant trees, gardens or build birdhouses – actions that promote life. Perhaps organize a clean-up in a loved one's honor or blow bubbles. Please choose sustainable products & be mindful of the simple choices we can make to protect the planet we all share.



For more alternatives, facts & photos, visit:

**BalloonsBlow.org**

