Coronavirus plastic waste polluting the environment

Gloves, masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) are critical for those fighting the pandemic but are also widely used by the public. Still, because they’re not always disposed of properly, environmentalists fear negative consequences for wildlife and the fight against plastic pollution.

As in the rest of Greece, residents of the coastal city are allowed out only in strict circumstances, including for short exercise and grocery shopping, but discarded gloves, wipes and bottles of sanitizer are strewn across parks, sidewalks and roads, as people try to protect themselves and others from infection.

The problem isn’t confined to the small Greek city. Similar waste is causing problems in bigger metropolises such as New York and London.

And it has even hit the uninhabited Soko Islands. A few nautical miles from Hong Kong, Gary Stokes from the conservation group OceansAsia, found some 100 masks washed up over the course of three visits to the beach.