In 1990, a person named Curtis Ebbesmeyer worked on a really interesting project involving Nike sneakers. His mother called him on the phone and told him about an article that showed that there were hundreds of Nike sneakers washing up on beaches in Seattle. Curtis, a scientist studying the ocean currents and trash at the time, was eager to get to this project. He then studied the problem and started his study on the beach where a lot of the sneakers were washing up.

He started by walking along the beach and asking about the sneakers to other people. Eventually beachcombers started calling him about the problem. Beachcombers are people who walk along the beach looking for stuff in the sand. The beachcombers told Curtis about many sneakers washing up on the shore. Since all the sneakers that were washing up on the beach were made from the same brand (Nike) he called the company. After a long period of phone calls the Nike Company told him about the problem. The company had lost five containers full of Nike sneakers off a cargo ship, containing about 80,000 sneakers in total. They had been thrown overboard off a ship called the Hansa Carrier.

The Hansa Carrier had been carrying goods to the United States when it ran into a storm in the Pacific Ocean. The storm was vicious. Winds were close to speeds near 60 miles per hour, creating really big waves. The Hansa Carrier managed to pass through the storm but had to throw 21 containers off the ship, and five of those containers had Nike sneakers. Curt knew that sneakers float so three years later Curtis had collected a lot of information on the spill. After all the beachcombers had helped him and found hundreds of running and basketball sneakers around the world. Using serial numbers he could identify where and when the sneakers were spilled from the Hansa Carrier. Later on Curt found out where the Hansa Carrier had lost the sneakers. This was a big help to his research.

Curt believes that there are ocean currents that created this drift. He knows that the sneakers had to get to some of the beaches around the world somehow and he knows that they traveled on a drift around the world to get to their final destination.

We can prevent this from happening again by carrying less containers, so if the ship encounters rough waters, containers will not fall off as much as they do now. Also, we could see if the weather is rough before we go. That way, the ship wouldn’t even sail in the first place. These are only a small amount of ideas to prevent having goods thrown overboard in the sea.
In the spring of 1990, Nike sneakers started to wash up on the shore of beaches in Oregon and Washington State. When people saw the Nikes on the beach, they took them home. However, they were not usually in pairs. So, people went to swapping conventions where they would trade sneakers to get a pair that matched.

In 1992, the Nike sneakers were found washing up on different pieces of land. (Big island at Pololu, and on Japanese beaches, which scientists predicted that the sneakers would wash ashore in 1994-1995). The Nike sneakers were found and then sold for a quarter of the actual price. Someone claimed to buy a pair of Nikes for 20 dollars! There are two ways the spill might have affected wildlife. One is that some of the shoes might have sunk to the bottom of the sea and became homes for crabs, fish, or other aquatic creatures. However, the shoes could break down, and the animals may get sick or even die because the exterior is made of plastic. Therefore, if the sea creatures ingest the plastic, it could hurt them.

We can prevent this from happening again by carrying less containers, so if the ship encounters rough waters, containers will not fall off as much as they do now. Also, we could see if the weather is rough before we go. That way, the ship wouldn’t even tilt in the first place. These are only some of the ideas to prevent having goods thrown overboard in the sea.