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DEEP DIVE INTO OCEANS



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OCEANS GUIDE



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Seventy-one percent of the Earth's surface is covered by oceans.

Our oceans are a massive life-support system, providing more than half the oxygen we breathe and serving as a primary source of animal protein for more than one billion people. Oceans contain the greatest diversity of life on Earth— from the frozen polar regions to the warm waters of the tropics. It is estimated that 91% of marine species have yet to be discovered.

Our oceans play a crucial role for more than just marine life. They help regulate global climate, mediate temperatures, and drive the weather by determining rainfall, droughts, and floods. Oceans are the world's largest store of carbon, with an estimated 83% of the global carbon cycle circulating through marine waters. Oceans connect us all, but unfortunately, they are under serious threat from overfishing, pollution, and destruction of marine and coastal habitats.

An estimated 8.8 million tons of plastic enters our oceans every year—the equivalent of a garbage truck dumping a full load of trash into the ocean every 60 seconds. The ever-increasing amount of plastic waste dumped into our oceans poses a daily threat to marine ecosystems. Species become entangled in fishing nets or six-pack rings; they ingest and choke on bottle caps, straws, or bags; and their habitats are significantly altered or destroyed by waves of synthetic garbage.

WHAT'S ON YOUR DINNER PLATE?

Many of us do not know where our seafood comes from. Who caught it? Where was it caught? Was it harvested sustainably? The truth may surprise you.

It is estimated that up to 33% of the seafood harvested around the globe is caught illegally.

Each year, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing accounts for \$36.4 billion in global financial losses. Illegal fishing not only affects the international fisheries trade, it also deteriorates fish stocks and the overall health of our oceans.

More than 30% of the world's fisheries have been pushed beyond their biological limits and are in need of strict management plans to restore them.

[Click here to learn more about illegal seafood issues.](#)

You Don't Have To Live Near An Ocean To Help Protect It



© Antonio Busiello / WWF-US

Ocean stewardship can start in your own home and with your purchasing habits.

Being an informed, smart shopper is the first step. Knowing where your seafood comes from is important. Look for the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) or the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certification labels on seafood products to make better choices when buying seafood. These certifications recognize fisheries that are working toward sustainability. Ask your retailer or restaurant if their seafood is MSC-certified or ASC-certified.

When on vacation, you might be in an area with stretches of coral reefs. Reefs are home to about 25% of all marine life on the planet and are considered a nursery of the ocean. These reefs are more than just a home for fish; they also provide coastal protection, food, and income for local communities. But our coral reefs are disappearing. Pollution, climate change, over-fishing, and destructive human interference has severely damaged these fragile ecosystems. Before shopping for souvenirs while travelling, be aware of coral products, including jewelry and decorative home goods. The corals used for your souvenir may have taken hundreds of years to grow and once they're gone, they're gone.

GET ORGANIZED

Join or create a trash cleanup at a local river or beach.



REDUCE BY REUSING

At home and at the office, check that the kitchen is equipped with reusable plates, glasses, cutlery, and bags.



RECYCLING IS EASY

You may be able to recycle or compost more than you think. When shopping, look for products with recyclable packaging. Check your local county or city website for information on what items can be recycled, and how to dispose of chemicals safely. Connect with your office's building management to make sure they are doing all they can to recycle everything.

PUT UP SIGNS

Make recycling easy for your family and coworkers by putting up signs at work and at home to let them know they are helping to reduce ocean pollution.



ASK YOURSELF

Do you really need that item? Do your best to avoid single-use plastics that often end up in nature. It's not good for people, the wildlife, or the planet.

WE CAN'T IGNORE WHAT'S HAPPENING UNDER THE SURFACE

Even though we don't see what's happening under the surface, we can't ignore our oceans. WWF's oceans work focuses on creating a productive and resilient ocean ecosystem for the benefit of people and nature. WWF accomplishes this in a number of ways—through the creation of healthy, sustainable fisheries; by expanding mangrove coverage to create resilient coastal ecosystems; by establishing ocean governance mechanisms to conserve habitats in the Arctic; by working with and empowering coastal communities; through partnerships for a plastic free ocean; and by mobilizing market forces to restore ocean health.

[Click here to learn more about WWF's Ocean initiatives.](#)

Symbolically Adopt a Species

Contributions will support our global conservation work where the need is greatest.

Click on an animal below to learn more.

[Sockeye Salmon](#) [Seahorse](#) [Dolphin](#)

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