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Protect our oceans



Our planet is mostly ocean. In fact, water covers over 70% of the Earth's surface!

Our oceans contain incredible wildlife, provide food for billions of people and help balance our climate. We might think that, given their size, our oceans are invincible. But they aren't.

Our oceans are in danger and Greenpeace is helping to protect them.



Why do the oceans matter?

Our oceans are important to all life on Earth – without healthy oceans even humans would find it hard to survive.

- They provide at least half the oxygen we breathe.
- Billions of people rely on the oceans for food.
- Many ingredients for life-giving medicines come from the oceans.
- Eight out of every ten animals rely on the oceans to survive.
- They stop the Earth from becoming too hot to grow food.

What's the problem?



Industrial fishing

There are lots of problems with industrial fishing. These are the main ones:

> Overfishing

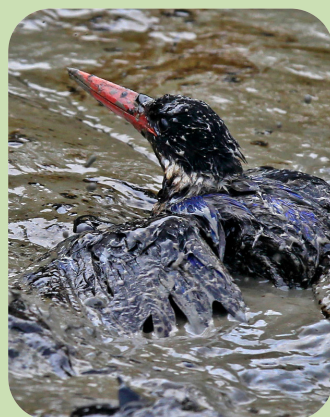
Many fishing ships are equipped with technology to track and catch vast amounts of fish. This empties our oceans of life and many species, including cod and tuna, are now threatened.

> Bottom trawling

Gigantic ships use big nets that drag along the seabed and smash up coral reefs and other fragile ecosystems. This is called bottom trawling.

> Bycatch

The nets these ships use are so big that they catch things accidentally, like turtles, dolphins and sharks, which are then thrown dead or dying back into the sea. This is called bycatch.



Burning fossil fuels

The oceans soak up carbon dioxide – a greenhouse gas released when fossil fuels are burned. But humans have burned too many fossil fuels. This means the oceans are taking in extra carbon dioxide. This makes the water more acidic and harms marine life. The Great Barrier Reef is dying because of this increasing acidity. This is called ocean acidification.

Healthy coral reef



Dying coral reef



Plastic waste

Every minute, a truck-load of plastic is dumped in the ocean! Marine animals, like dolphins and turtles, can become tangled in it or mistake it for food, causing injury and death.

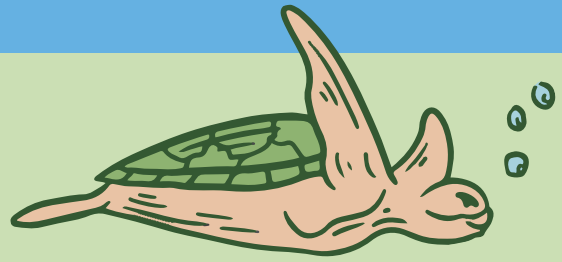


Drilling for oil

Oil is a fossil fuel. It's made from the remains of animals and plants that lived millions of years ago and can be found under the ocean floor. Companies drill this oil up which is very risky. Oil spills can happen, poisoning the water and coastlines. This makes sea creatures sick and is a health risk for people living nearby.

What's the solution?

We need to protect the oceans from overfishing, oil drilling and plastic pollution. Here is what Greenpeace is doing about it.



Global ocean sanctuaries

Only 1% of the ocean is protected from damage. But Greenpeace, along with scientists, have worked out that at least 30% of our oceans need to be protected to save wildlife and the environment. That's why Greenpeace is campaigning to create global ocean sanctuaries – a network of ocean areas where industrial fishing and oil drilling are not allowed.

Making global ocean sanctuaries is a global decision. A meeting will take place and world leaders from lots of countries will be asked to vote on whether global ocean sanctuaries should be made. Greenpeace is working hard to persuade these leaders to vote yes!

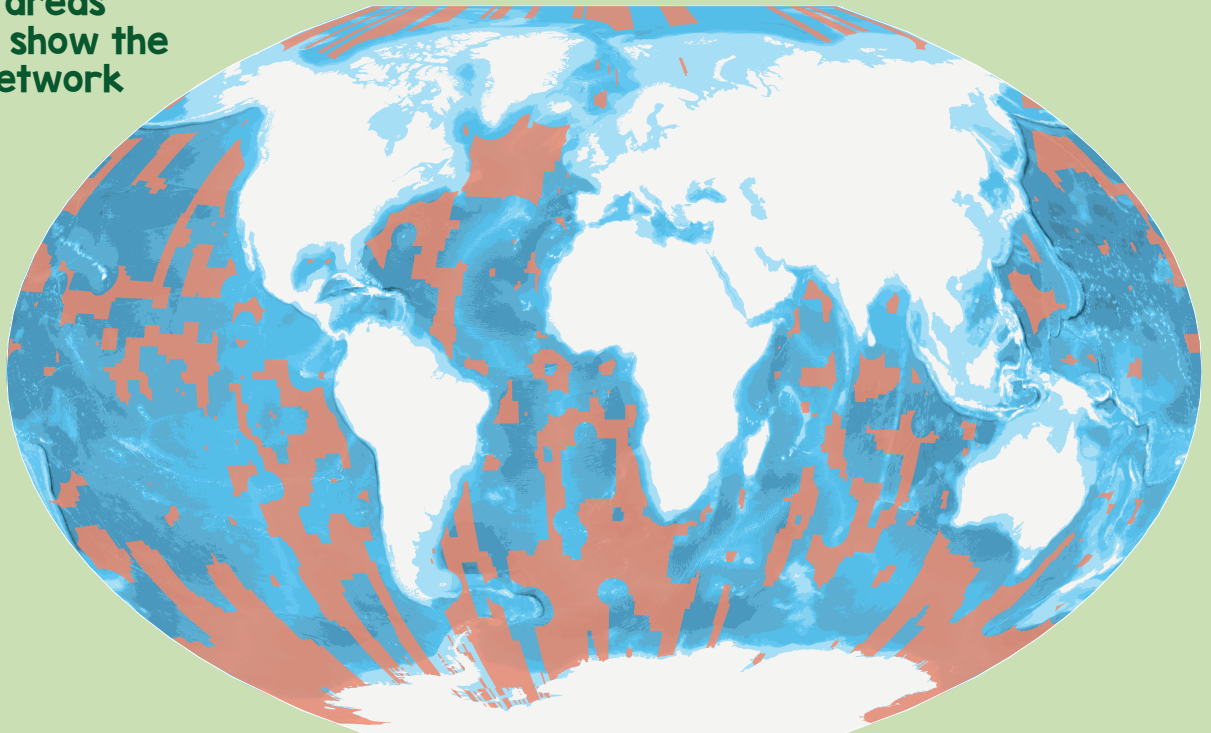


Sustainable fishing

Industrial fishing methods are destroying the oceans. But there are smaller boats that use less destructive methods. These are called small-scale, sustainable fishing boats. They're sustainable because they don't catch more fish than the ocean can replace. Greenpeace persuades governments to support small-scale fishing and challenges big companies who use unsustainable methods. For example, Thai Union is the biggest tuna company in the world and owns John West. They were fishing unsustainably so Greenpeace revealed their destructive ways to the world. After that, Thai Union promised to clean up their act and fish more sustainably.

The orange areas on this map show the proposed network of ocean sanctuaries that could protect over 30% of the global oceans.

Currently only 1% of our global oceans are protected!

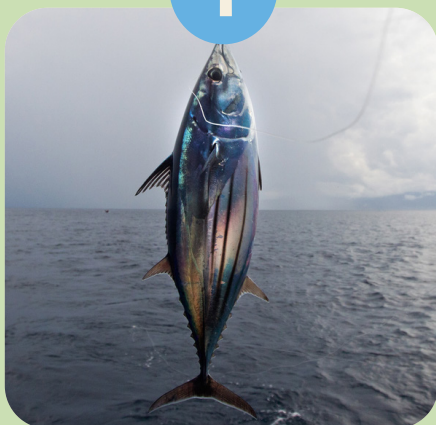


What can you do?



There are lots of ways to help protect the oceans, from eating less fish to avoiding single-use items like plastic bags. With your help, we can make sure turtles, whales and dolphins are out of harms way, with healthy oceans that are in the best position to tackle climate change. For more on this subject, check out the 'Climate Emergency' information sheet.

1



Know your fish

Ask your parents or carers if you can eat less fish than normal (or even not at all). If you are eating fish, check it has been caught sustainably.

Make sure tuna is dolphin-friendly and caught using a pole and line.

2



Share your knowledge

The easiest way to help the oceans is to talk to your friends and family about the problem and the solutions. It's important people know what's happening and how to help. Share [this link](#) with them.

Invite a Greenpeace Speaker

Ask an adult to invite a Greenpeace Speaker to talk to your class or club. They'll tell you about the challenges our planet faces and what you can do to help. Find out more: www.act.gp/speakers

What's next?

[Click here](#) to go on a journey with our turtle family and find out what you can do to support global ocean sanctuaries.

3



Use less plastic

Can you imagine a life with less plastic? We use more than we need and a lot of this pollutes our oceans. Here are some ways you can reduce your plastic waste.

- Buy loose fruit and veg from the supermarket.
- Replace disposable items with ones that you can use again and again.
- Use a reusable bag.
- Carry a refillable water bottle.
- Choose reusable cutlery, plates, bowls and cups instead of throw-away plastic ones.