



Life Below Water

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Fun facts about the ocean:

- The ocean makes up about 71% of the Earth's surface
- The oceans hold approximately 97% of all of Earth's water
- There are over 1,000,000 different species that call the ocean home
- The ocean is home to 94% of all life on Earth
- Over 80% of the ocean is still unexplored

Why is the ocean beneficial to us?

- The ocean is the main source of oxygen on Earth.
- Much of the food we consume daily comes from the oceans.
- Organisms that live in the ocean produce much of the substances we use to create medications.
- The ocean is also crucial to regulate climate and weather patterns.



The ocean needs our help!





POLLUTION IS KILLING OUR ECOSYSTEMS.

- Each year 12,000,000 tons of plastic are discarded into our oceans. That is over 26,000,000,000 pounds of plastic alone. That is more plastic than fish.
- Plastic can take hundreds of years to break down. As it breaks down, it releases chemicals which also contaminate the water.
- Approximately 100,000 sea animals are killed each year from pollution. This is mainly due to getting stuck in fishing nets, plastic bags, and many other items we discard of into the ocean.
- Oil spills, fertilizers, manure, and untreated sewage are also huge contributors to ocean pollution.

How can we help?

- The first, most important, thing we should do is reduce our plastic waste. We can do this by refusing single use plastic items such as plastic water bottles, straws, bags, etc. Instead, we should invest in reusable versions of these products.
- Another step we can take is recycling.
- Taking this idea even further, we can responsibly dispose of our trash to prevent it from making its way into our oceans.



How can we help?

- Another way to get hands on is to participate in cleanups. You can work by yourself or with others to physically remove trash from the oceans. Anything helps.
- Finally, we can advocate and teach others about the importance of our oceans, the harm pollution is causing, and why/how we should come together to keep them clean.
- Short video clips:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXlxMfsW0nk>
- https://youtu.be/Yomf5pBN8dY?si=Eb_gBfOHWMqEFxMiG





Why is this issue important to me?

- This issue is important to me because I've always seen the beach and the ocean as my happy place. It has never failed to help me relax and gives me a place to work through my thoughts and any stress I have.
- After researching this topic more and seeing for myself how much damage pollution causes, it makes me want to work harder to do my part in putting a stop to it.
- Just sitting here thinking about my actions on a daily basis, I have realized that I am part of the issue. For example, I drink about 4 plastic water bottle a day. Instead of doing this, I could easily start using my reusable water bottle.
- I am going to work on being more mindful with the products that I choose to use and start recycling. I am also going to encourage my friends and family to do the same.