Protecting Our Oceans

Campaigning to end ocean exploitation and ensure a healthy ocean future

Healthy oceans are the life support system for our planet, providing 97 percent of the Earth’s livable habitat and a home to more than 700,000 species. The oceans are vital to human health as well, providing jobs, enjoyment and food to billions of people. Half of the oxygen we breathe is generated by our oceans.

Unsustainable industrial fishing practices are destroying habitats and endangering countless species. Climate change and ocean acidification—both the result of our reliance on fossil fuels—are having more and more extreme impacts on ocean health. Throwaway products like plastic water bottles and shopping bags often end up in the ocean and stay there for generations.

Scientists say the wave of extinction facing the ocean in the coming century could be the worst since the dinosaur age. If we don’t change the way we do things—and fast—we are on track for major ocean damage and the collapse of one of the most important food sources in the world.

Fortunately, we are within reach of a world that respects our oceans, their inhabitants and the people who depend on them.

Join the Fight to Defend Our Oceans

The time to end ocean exploitation is now. That’s why we’re campaigning to protect the oceans through marine reserves. Globally, less than 1 percent of the ocean is under protection. We’re working towards establishing marine reserves in 20 percent of U.S. waters by 2020, double what the country has right now.

These reserves will preserve biodiversity, help endangered species rebound, and give marine life a fighting chance to survive the rapid changes we are causing to the planet. Marine reserves can also help replenish fish populations decimated by overfishing, meaning a more sustainable food supply for all of us in the long run.

The way we treat the rest of our ocean—under protection or not—is just as important. Today, overfishing is the status quo, bycatch kills about 63 billion pounds of marine animals every year, and human activity is disrupting the balance of marine ecosystems across the globe. The impacts on humans are equally severe. Overfishing compromises food security and the livelihoods of fishing communities.

Global tuna fisheries are particularly out of control. They are emptying our oceans of fish, harming marine life, and exploiting workers. The tuna industry has repeatedly failed its customers on both ocean sustainability and human rights. The U.S. is the largest tuna market in the world—you can be part of the solution by wielding your consumer power and only buying sustainable tuna.

We want a better future for our oceans and the people that depend on them. You do, too? Awesome! Check out the resources below to learn more about our campaign to the protect the oceans and ways you can get involved.