

## Lesson Plan 2: Taking Care of the World

When people think about habitats being destroyed, they don't often think about these habitats being *under water*. But the world beneath the waves is at risk of being destroyed every bit as much as the world *above*. Like the forests, the hedgerows, the Downs and meadows, the oceans need protection. They need our help.

The Environmental Investigation Agency sum up the problems facing not just whales and dolphins, but **all** marine life:

'The survival of whales and dolphins is now threatened by the combined onslaught of pollution, over-fishing, accidental catches and ship strikes, global climate change, ozone depletion and a host of other human-induced problems in addition to continued threats from hunting.'

Let's take a look at the first of those two problems: pollution and commercial fishing.

### Pollution

Huge tankers carrying oil often leak into our oceans. In August 2003, a Greek oil tanker ran aground off Pakistan. Eyewitnesses said there were hundreds of fish and turtles lying dead on the beaches. Who knows how many more animals and birds were killed in this and other oil spills? A local environmental advisor said that ALL marine life in that area could be destroyed.

In 1989, a tanker went aground off Alaska, spilling 42 million litres of crude oil. According to some estimates, the spill killed 250,000 sea birds, 2,800 sea otters, 300 harbour seals, 250 bald eagles, up to 22 killer whales, and billions of salmon and herring eggs. According to some researchers, the population has still not recovered.

### Fishing

Fishing is big business and means the death of millions of animals every year. Fish may be dragged along the ocean floor for hours before being hauled aboard and killed. Science has now shown us that fish DO feel pain. Huge trawlers are emptying the oceans of life at an alarming rate. Nearly one-third of all species of fish have declined in population in the last 15 years and many species may be wiped out in the next few years. But it's not just the fish who are killed by the fishing industry. Every year, an estimated 100,000 seals, whales, and porpoises and a million birds become entangled in huge fishing nets and drown.

Coral reefs take centuries to form, but all around the world they are routinely destroyed by fishing trawlers.

In pairs or groups, brainstorm 10 ways in which people can help to protect the environment and the living beings beneath the waves.

**Top Tips:**

Use the passages above for ideas, but you may also want to think about:

- Climate change
- Hunting
- Dumping polluting chemicals into the ocean
- Cyanide fishing