

Life below water

In 2015, world leaders agreed to 17 goals for a better world by 2030. These goals have the power to end poverty, fight inequality and stop climate change. Guided by the goals, it is now up to all of us! Healthy oceans and seas are essential to our existence. They cover 70 percent of our planet and we rely on them for food, energy and water. Yet, we have managed to do tremendous damage to these precious resources.

Acidification/pollution of the ocean.

One of the biggest threats to our oceans is man-made pollution. Wasted plastics and other kinds of waste, discharge from people and chemicals from the industry, eventually find their way into the ocean with bad consequences for marine life and the habitats they depend on.

80 percent of marine pollution originates on land. Land-based pollutants are contributing to ocean 'dead zones'. Dead zones is areas which can no longer sustain life because they have low oxygen. There are now 500 of these dead zones around the world.

In 2012, thirteen of the world's 20 megacities were placed along coasts. Many of these populations put pressure on the oceans by destroying the sewage. In such areas it is good to recycle so we don't ruin our sewers. That is key to improving the healthy longevity of our oceans.

Overfishing and law enforcement

During the 20th century, governments focused their efforts towards providing affordable, protein rich food and therefore promoted increased fishing. It didn't take long for species to start disappearing and by 1989, fishing reached its peak at 90 million tonnes and has been declining since.

Fun/sad fact:(When blue whale hunting was outlawed in 1966 the atlantic population was a total of 360).

In order to counter this direction a quota system needs to be implemented in more places. Taking the Icelandic quota system as an example, the total amount of fish that is safe for fishing for the coming year is calculated and then divided between different ships, these quotas can then be sold and bought. This makes it hard for smaller companies to start out but the system limits any one individual to own more than 12%. Limiting fishing to only larger companies has its benefits though, it is far easier to enforce the laws of the sea with a few big companies rather than thousands of smaller companies and entrepreneurs.

Fun/sad fact:(Illegal and unregulated fishing constitutes an estimated 11-26 million tonnes (12-28%) of fishing world-wide).

Perspectives

We don't see climate changes in Denmark in our everyday day lives. But the summer gets a little warmer and the water level rise a bit every year.

In Iceland the effects of climate change are easily visible as the glaciers melt away and migrating fish can have tremendous effect on the very essential fishing industry.

Conclusion

In more recent decades we have begun to understand that the oceans are maybe not as unending as we thought. This combined with the increase in pollution, we have a crisis on our hands.

There are small but significant changes we can all make to help reduce the plastics threatening to help our oceans. For example reducing our dependency on single-use items such as thin plastic bags, plastic water bottles and straws, or taking part in local beach clearing initiatives.

It's a small price to pay towards achieving Global goal 14 and preserving our greatest resource.

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