

FACTS ABOUT OCEANS



Where We Live

Today, about 60% of the world's population lives within 60 km of the coast. By 2030, this proportion is expected to rise to 75%.

The Great Unknown

95% of the ocean is still unexplored. We know more about the dark side of the Moon than the oceans.

Toxic Chemicals

Industrial activity releases about 300-400 million tons of heavy metals, solvents, toxic sludge, and other waste into the world's waters each year.

What Goes In

Over 80% of marine pollution comes from land-based activities.

Plastic Debris

Ocean gyres accumulate debris creating enormous ocean garbage patches, like the 'Great Pacific Garbage Patch', with litter concentrations of up to 1 million plastic particles per square kilometre.

70% of marine litter sinks to the sea floor, where as many as 690 000 pieces of plastic per square kilometre accumulate.

Oceans and Economics

90% of world trade is carried by the sea.

Fisheries and aquaculture provided livelihoods and income for an estimated 54.8 million people engaged in the primary sector of fish production in 2010, of which an estimated seven million were occasional fishers and fish farmers .

Effluent

Over 80% of the sewage in developing countries is discharged untreated into water bodies.

Coral Reefs in Danger

Approximately 20% of the world's coral reefs have been lost. An additional 20% of the coral reefs and about 35% of the mangroves have been degraded in the last few decades.

Oil Spills

Oil spills are responsible for only around 12% of the oil entering the seas each year. 36% of the oil entering the seas comes from runoff that originates in cities and industry. Accidental oil spills have devastating consequences, as was seen in the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil well blowout in the Gulf of Mexico.

Text: Michael Madsen, IAEA Division of Public Information; **Photo:** istockphoto

Sources: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Blue Carbon: The Role of Healthy Oceans in Binding Carbon (Blue Carbon report, UNEP, 2009)Blue Carbon Report; UN Atlas of the Oceans; FAO: The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2012, www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2727e/i2727e.pdf; www.un.org/Depts/los/reference_files/wod2011-pessoa-oceans_and_the_environment.ppt; US National Research Council: 'Oil in the Sea'; http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=314&page=R1; An Ecosystem Services Approach to Assessing the Impacts of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico (2013); <http://worldoceanreview.com/en/wor-1/pollution/oil/>; UN WWAP 2009, "Clearing the Waters A focus on water quality solutions"; www.unwater.org/Clearing_the_Waters.pdf; *Ibid*; (World Ocean Review, 2010); www.un.org/Depts/los/reference_files/wod2011-pessoa-oceans_and_the_environment.ppt