

Marine Protected Areas

Protecting Earth's Oceans

Heather Rising



Marine Protected Areas

Protecting Earth's Oceans

Heather Rising

Contents

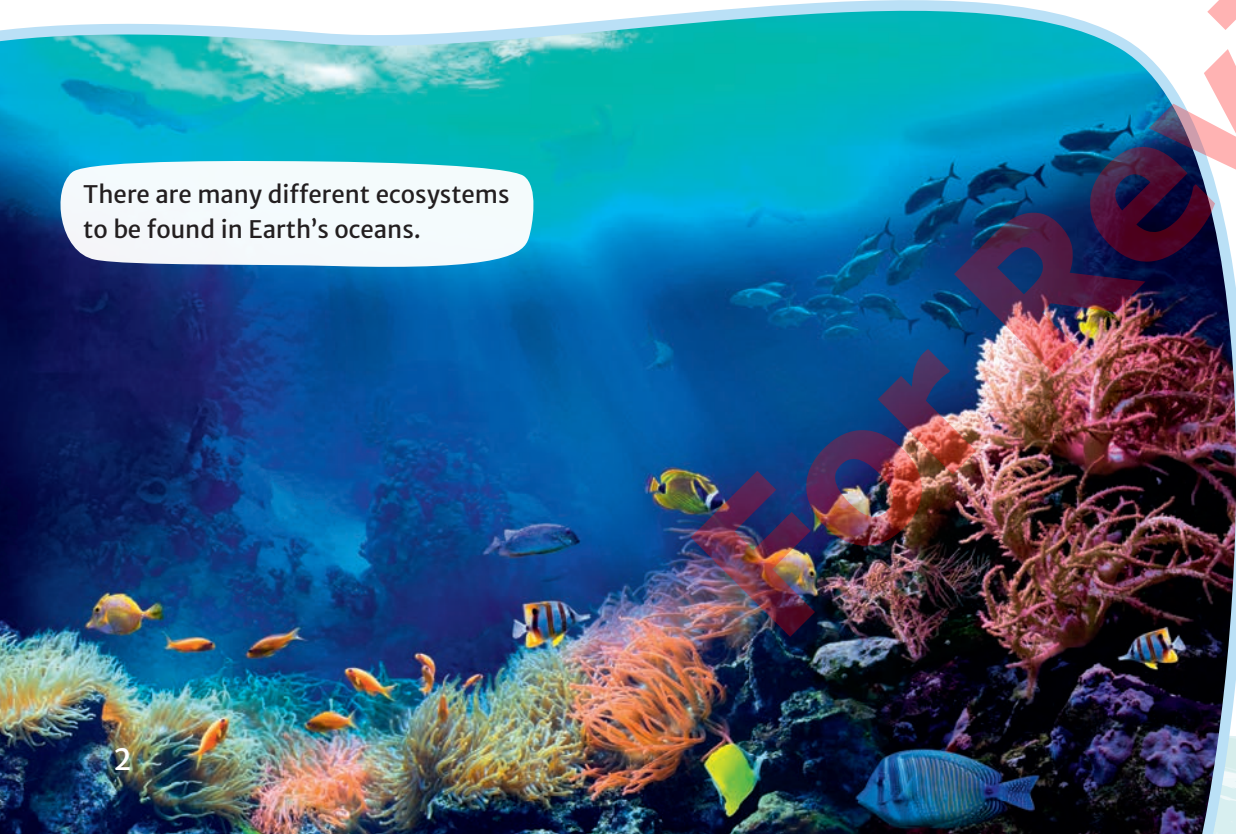
Earth's Oceans	2
Protecting Marine Resources	4
What Is a Marine Protected Area?	6
Marae Moana: A Tropical MPA	10
Tuvaijuittuq: A Polar MPA	14
Pelagos Sanctuary: A Mediterranean MPA	18
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park	22
Cooperation Between Nations	26
Working to Make Change – Why the Coral Triangle Needs Protecting	28
Protecting Our Oceans	30
Glossary	31
Index	32

Earth's Oceans

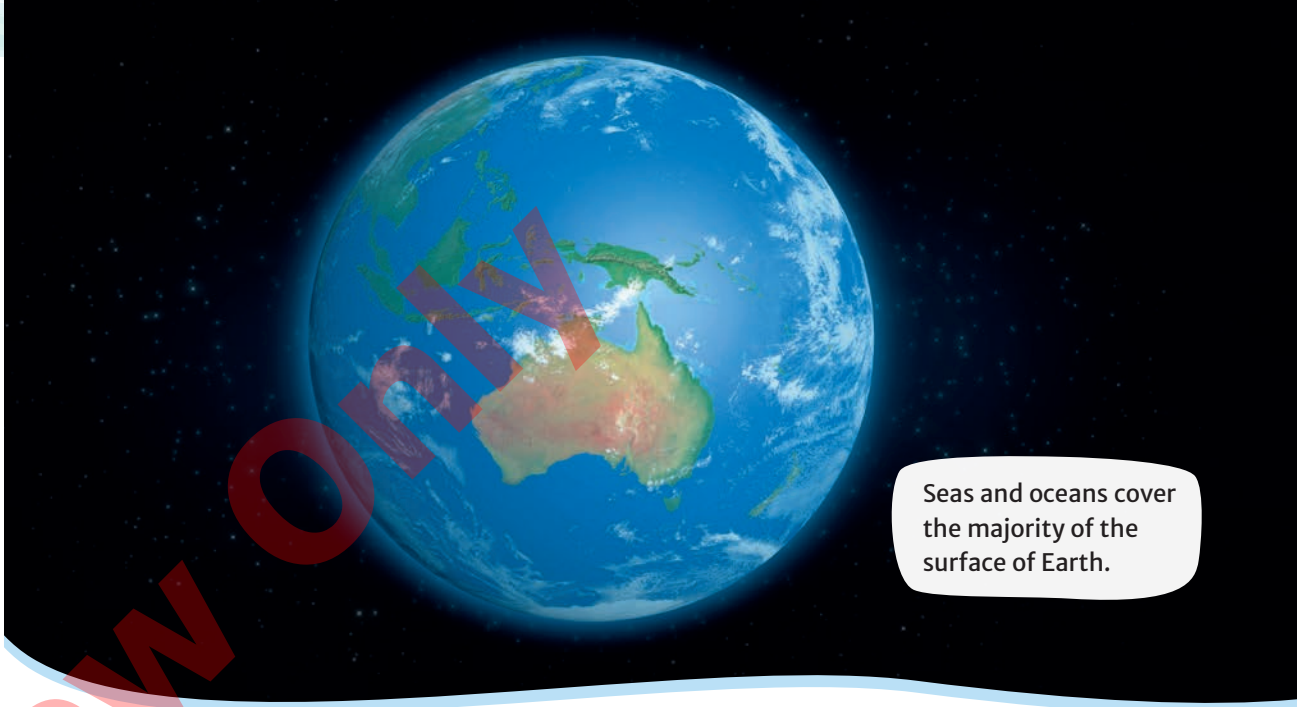
Water is necessary for all life on Earth. It covers just over 70 per cent of the surface of our planet. Around 97 per cent of the total amount of Earth's water, known as the **hydrosphere**, is found in Earth's salty oceans.

Earth's oceans seem endlessly deep, the bottom hidden from view far below. The oceans are teeming with a variety of life, and yet the deepest parts only reach to a depth of 11 kilometres.

The ecosystems of Earth's oceans need our protection to ensure they remain healthy for the future.

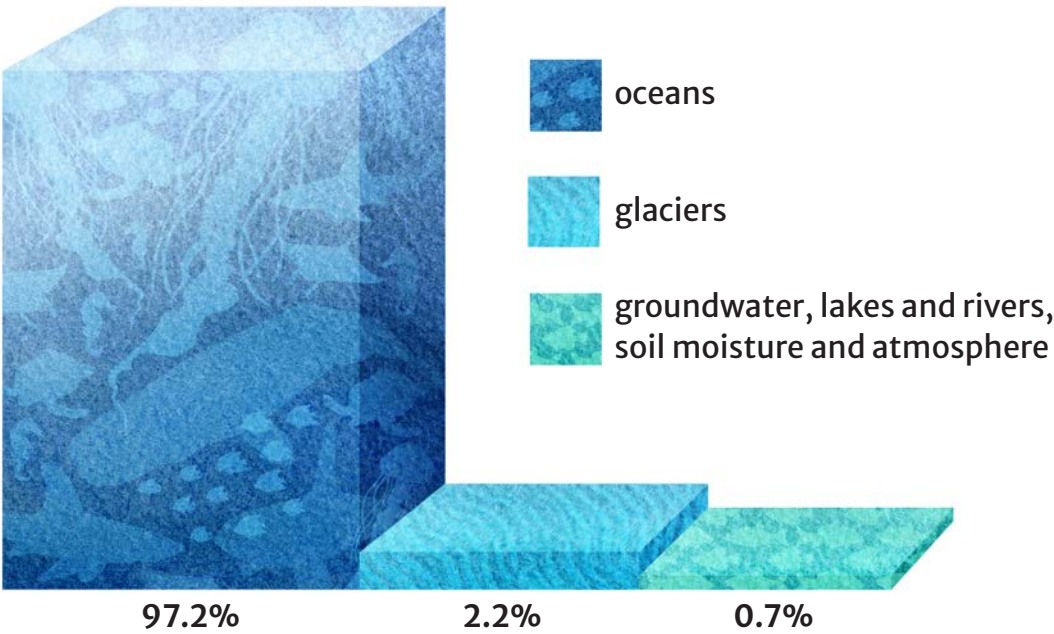


There are many different ecosystems to be found in Earth's oceans.



Seas and oceans cover the majority of the surface of Earth.

Where Earth's Water Can Be Found



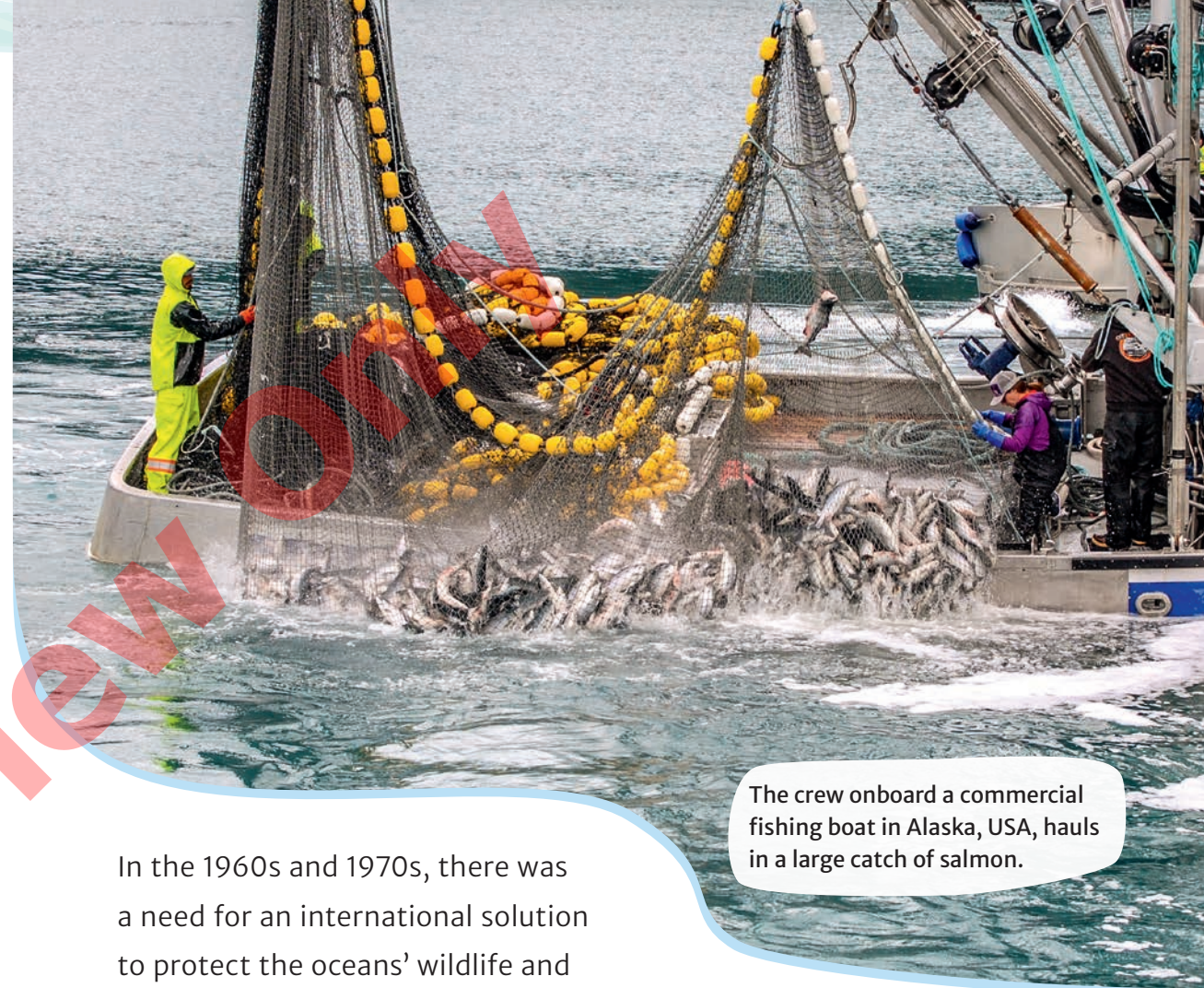
Protecting Marine Resources

Humans have always relied on the oceans for food, so people recognise the need to protect their vital ocean resources. Indigenous communities who depend on sea life for food and trade usually set limits on catches or only allow seasonal fishing. This helps fish stocks, or populations of the same fish in one area, to recover and remain sustainable.



A First Nations woman uses a net to fish in a creek in Western Australia.

In the last hundred years, technology used in commercial fishing, or the catching of fish to be sold, has advanced. The demand on the oceans' resources has also increased. Once some countries noticed that fish numbers were declining, they created formal laws to protect their oceans. But there was no way to protect areas of oceans that were outside a country's borders.



The crew onboard a commercial fishing boat in Alaska, USA, hauls in a large catch of salmon.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a need for an international solution to protect the oceans' wildlife and prevent pollution. In 1976, a process was adopted to extend environmental protection to ocean waters as far out as 200 **nautical** miles from a country's border. This step encouraged the development of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

A nautical mile is a measurement used to navigate in water and air. One nautical mile is equal to 1852 metres.

What Is a Marine Protected Area?

Marine Protected Areas are defined differently by each country. But to be considered an official MPA, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has set some common standards that must be met. First, the protected area must be clearly defined in a country's laws. Then, there must be a plan in place to manage and protect the area with the goal of long-term conservation. Cultural resources, such as traditional fishing methods or archaeological sites, and natural resources, such as the **biodiversity** of living things, must be included in the plan.

Within an MPA, countries can set different zones that allow some commercial activity, such as oil and gas exploration (the searching of new oil or gas to mine) or fishing. However, the most effective MPAs do not permit commercial fishing.

In the Heart Reef in the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland, Australia, which is part of a Marine Protected Area, even swimming and snorkelling are not allowed.

Countries can also extend MPAs to protect areas of land and water that are linked to the ocean. An MPA can protect habitats for seabirds, turtles and dune grasses by including coastal rivers, **estuaries** and mangrove forests in the rules. The laws of an MPA can also be used to help monitor and manage tourism projects, such as diving activities or new hotel construction.

One of the main goals of an MPA is to educate, ensuring local people and visitors understand what they can do to help protect the environment.



The mining of oil and gas is restricted in Lancaster Sound, part of a Marine Protected Area in Nunavut, Canada.