



FROM THE COASTLINE TO THE SEAFLOOR



AN OCEAN ODYSSEY

What if alien-like creatures weren't found in outer space, but deep down in Earth's own oceans? Creatures that can glow in the dark, change colour in an instant, or even live forever biologically! Forget science fiction. The ocean is where the science of life feels like wonder.

Covering 71% of our planet, the ocean remains Earth's greatest mystery. We have better maps of Mars than our own seafloor. Scientists estimate around 2.2 million species call the ocean home. Yet, fewer than one-tenth have been identified.

CASPER THE FRIENDLY GHOST...OR OCTOPUS?

Just a few years ago, researchers found a ghostly white octopus in the deep Pacific. It was so pale and mysterious, they nicknamed it Casper! Every year brings new discoveries. What wonders are still waiting in the depths?



LIFE BENEATH THE SURFACE

The ocean isn't just a huge mass of salty water. It's a world full of surprises. Microscopic plankton share space with giant blue whales. Coral reefs, kelp forests, mangroves, seafloors, and underwater caves form unique habitats. Together, these ecosystems support countless species. Each creature plays a vital role: filtering water, recycling nutrients, producing oxygen, and more. But surviving in the ocean is a challenge. And so, marine life has developed extraordinary adaptations over millions of years. Some fish sense their surroundings using electricity. Lobsters can regrow lost claws. Sea kraits use flattened tails to swim efficiently. Sea turtles undertake incredible underwater migrations to reach their nesting beaches. Seabirds plunge-dive with pinpoint accuracy to catch fish. These remarkable features help marine organisms thrive in even the harshest conditions. From freezing polar seas to pitch-black ocean trenches, life has found a way.

PEARL POWER!

Some oysters create shiny treasures inside their shells... pearls! For over 2,000 years, humans like Japan's ama divers have collected these tiny molluscs for food and economic gains. They are also an important part of the culture in many communities. Who knew a little oyster could be such a big deal?

A CRISIS BENEATH THE WAVES

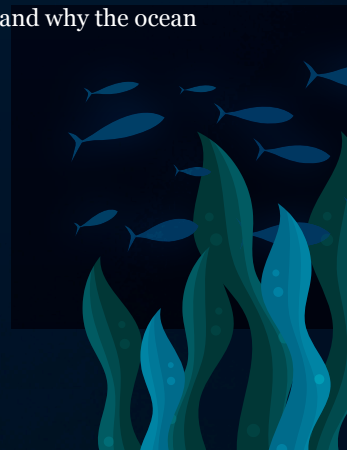
Here's the hard truth: our oceans are in trouble. Half of all coral reefs have died in just three decades. Plastic waste now outnumbers fish in some areas. Ocean temperatures are rising, disrupting migration patterns and breeding cycles.

Some species might disappear before we even discover them. The vaquita, Earth's smallest porpoise, has a surviving population of less than ten individuals. We're on the verge of losing something irreplaceable.

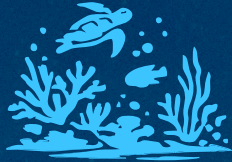
This matters to everyone, even if you live far from the coast. Oceans regulate weather patterns, act as carbon sinks, and produce oxygen for every other breath you take. When the ocean suffers, we all feel the consequences.

In India, WWF-India works to conserve one of the world's most diverse marine and coastal ecosystems, which support extraordinary biodiversity and provide livelihood and food security to millions. Its Oceans & Coasts programme focuses on sustainable fisheries, protection of threatened species and habitats, tackling plastic pollution, and enhancing coastal resilience through science, policy, and community partnerships.

The 2026 marine theme reflects WWF's work to protect our blue planet. It helps young people understand why the ocean matters and inspires them to care for it.



THE WILD WISDOM GLOBAL CHALLENGE 2026



MARINE DIVERSITY AND DISTRIBUTION

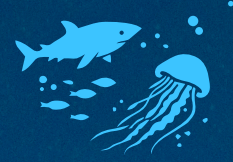
Major marine groups; global biodiversity hotspots (Coral Triangle, Great Barrier Reef, Mesoamerican Reef, and others); endemic and rare species; species richness patterns; Indigenous and coastal community knowledge.



WORLD BENEATH THE WAVES:

Ocean Ecosystems, Habitats and Interdependence

Coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass meadows, tidal marshes, kelp forests, open ocean, deep sea, polar oceans; food chains/webs; ecosystem services (oxygen, carbon storage, storm protection, and more); species interactions.



LIFE FUNCTIONS UNDERWATER

Anatomy and Life Processes of Marine Organisms

Basic anatomy across major taxa; respiration, feeding, buoyancy, movement; sensory systems (electroreception, echolocation, magnetic navigation, and more); growth and development.



ADAPTATIONS AND BEHAVIOUR

Camouflage, colour change, bioluminescence, regeneration; social structures, schooling, diving, communication; migration; navigation strategies.



CHALLENGES TO OCEAN HEALTH

Climate change impacts (ocean warming, acidification, coral bleaching); pollution (plastic, chemical, noise, oil and more); habitat loss and degradation; species population declines; overfishing, illegal fishing and bycatch; invasive species.



HUMAN-OCEAN INTERACTIONS & CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP

Human-ocean relationships, cultural, and livelihood connections; sustainable use of marine resources; marine protected areas and ecosystem management; global ocean governance and international frameworks (UNCLOS, CBD, FAO Code, Barcelona and OSPAR Conventions, BBNJ, CCAMLR), WWF-India's marine conservation initiatives, community-led conservation; technology and innovation in marine conservation.

