

SAVE OUR SEAS

A large fishing vessel is shown at sea, surrounded by a massive flock of birds, likely seabirds, flying around the ship. The scene is set against a dark, overcast sky, suggesting a dramatic or urgent atmosphere. The ship's structure, including its deck and masts, is visible, and the water appears dark and choppy.

WE HAVE A PROBLEM:

- The high seas are under assault from industrial over-fishing, pollution and global warming.
- 75 percent of the world's fisheries are over fished.
- Our burning of fossil fuels is turning the seas to acid, potentially killing plankton on which other species, such as salmon and baleen whales, depend.
- Across the planet, entire underwater ecosystems, such as coral reefs and estuaries, are dying.

SOLUTION:

- Establish a global network of marine reserves to protect the most important areas of our oceans.
- Overhaul international fisheries law to close loopholes, reduce catch limits and stop devastating techniques such as bottom-trawling, which is best described as clear-cutting the ocean floor.
- The U.S. must curb its global warming emissions and sign the Stockholm Convention, which globally bans the most toxic chemicals.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Tell Congress to push for a network of protected marine reserves, off-limits to the fishing industry.
- Demand that the U.S. champion a more precautionary, ecosystem-based management of fisheries.
- Tell Congress to ban the release of toxic pollutants that wash into the sea from rivers and storm drains, and airborne pollutants that end up in the sea.
- Ask where seafood comes from and how it was caught before you buy. Is it from a destructive fishery that uses bottom-trawling, results in a lot of bycatch or impacts other species in any way?

"The oceans are in trouble; the coasts are in trouble; our marine resources are in trouble. These are not challenges we can sweep aside."

Admiral James Watkins,
Chairman of U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy

TAKE ACTION TO SAVE THE OCEANS



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The Issue

Humankind is defiling the oceans. From tropical corals killed by global warming to polar bears made infertile by industrial pollution of the Arctic, the blue three-quarters of our planet is suffering. Despite various international agreements, oceans continue to be a dumping ground for a frightening array of pollutants such as industrial discharges, pesticide runoff from agriculture, sewage and oil spills. "Dead zones" of oxygen-less water spread and fish die. As if global warming wasn't bad enough, our burning of fossil fuels is slowly acidifying the oceans by increasing the amount of carbon dioxide in the water, potentially stopping corals, shellfish and plankton from growing. Equally, noise pollution from seismic testing for oil and Navy sonar appears to be disorienting and hurting many species, and causing whales to beach. Meanwhile, vast factory ships vacuum up entire fisheries, often with unforeseen consequences. For example, in the Bering Sea, Steller sea lions and Northern fur seals are in decline, possibly because their food source is being overfished.

The Solution

Concerted and far-reaching action is urgently needed. A significant first step would be a worldwide network of marine reserves to protect the most important areas of the oceans. Also essential is a change in how fisheries are managed. An approach that looks at the whole ecosystem, rather than just one species of fish at a time, is critical to protect our oceans. The U.S. must become a world leader rather than a laggard; the Bush administration could start by signing the Law of the Sea treaty and taking global warming seriously. It should also immediately ratify international agreements such as the Stockholm Convention, which would stop chemical contamination of the oceans.

The Opposition

Powerful interests are blocking efforts to save the seas. The oil, fishing, chemical and shipping industries are among the worst offenders, along with their close friends in the Bush administration. Fishing industry representatives dominate U.S. oceans policy, with unique conflict-of-interest exemptions allowing them to sit on fishery management councils and to vote against conservation measures. But national governments around the world also need to start enforcing national and international laws; existing, binding international agreements are frequently flouted with impunity while governments instead bicker over who has the right to overfish which stocks.

What You Can Do

SEND A MESSAGE: Call Congress at 202-224-2131 and ask them to establish a network of marine reserves, adopt a holistic approach to managing fisheries, ratify the Stockholm Convention and cut global warming pollution.

SHOP SMART: Ask where seafood comes from before you buy it in restaurants and stores. Did it come from a destructive and unsustainable fishery that bottom trawls, or results in the destruction of other species?

GET INVOLVED: On campus or online at:
www.greenpeaceusa.org/getinvolved

Greenpeace Victories



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- ♦ In August 2005, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission votes for the first time to limit factory fishing in the Chesapeake Bay.
- ♦ In 1993, the London Dumping Convention permanently bans the dumping at sea of radioactive waste worldwide.
- ♦ In 1989, the United Nations agree to a worldwide ban on high seas large-scale driftnet fishing.
- ♦ In 1986, the International Whaling Commission enacts a moratorium on all commercial whaling and in 1994 it designates the Southern Ocean as whale sanctuary.

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