

# How water pollution effects marine life?

[Environment](#), [Pollution](#)



For years man has been polluting our vast resource of oceans, not expecting to ever cause harm to them. Unfortunately, they were wrong. Our oceans and other waterways have become a poisonous playground of garbage, chemicals, and sewage. The effects of this ignorance has had devastating affects on the marine life and their habitat. This affects the habitat for marine life by destroying their homes. In doing so the intricate balance between marine animals and their homes can alter our oceans forever. Our very existence depends on the oceans.

“ Without oceans, Earth would be too hot and there would not be enough air to breathe. ” (Hogan 10) The immediate importance to stop the destruction of our oceans is clear. Our oceans are not only crucial to our climate, but also provide us with food, jobs, and much loved recreation. The effects of man’s abuse can be seen on a daily basis, from the disappearance of long existing sea life such as whales, to garbage washing up on the shore, to the disastrous oil spills that cost millions of dollars each year to clean up. In some areas the neglect is already so great that complete clean up is impossible.

Pollution is the introduction of harmful contaminants that are outside the norm for a given ecosystem. Common man-made pollutants that reach the ocean include pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, detergents, oil, sewage, plastics, and other solids. Many of these pollutants collect at the ocean's depths, where they are consumed by small marine organisms and introduced into the global food chain. (oceanationalgeographic. com) The most polluted body of water on Earth is the Mediterranean Sea. Factories

and ships dump over 300, 000 tons of oil, toxic waste, and raw sewage in the Mediterranean each year. (Hogan12)

Even though most European countries have been working since 1975 to clean up the sea they still are living along the most polluted waters on Earth. With each year of pollutants being dumped into it the water has darkened and the sea floor is covered with deadly slime. Plastic pollution has become a major problem throughout the world. Plastic nets, plastic garbage, and plastic medical wastes are killing millions of marine mammals, turtles, and fish. Animals may become tangled in the plastic debris or may eat it and die. Many governments have banned the dumping of plastics in oceans. (csshome. com)

There are other pollutants that affect our oceans like sediment and thermal pollution. These pollutants are mostly found in the United States. Sediment destroys spawning and feeding grounds for fish, reduces fish and shellfish populations, destroys pools used for resting, smothering eggs and fry, fills in lakes and streams, and decreases light penetration, thus endangering aquatic plants. (csshome. com) Thermal pollution refers to heating or cooling the water which changes the biota in the water. This can harm or kill organisms that rely on the water's ecosystem.

It can effect the way fish eggs will hatch or the fish will grow. It may even kill all living life unless they adapt to it. Scientist have counted some 400 such dead zones around the world. (ocean. nationalgeographic. com) Oil spills are another huge pollution problem that effects not only marine life but the whole ocean. Tankers spill anywhere from three to six million tons of oil into the ocean every year. It can take anywhere from two to ten years for aquatic

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life to recover from a spill. (csshome. com) These spills have caused severe devastation not only to marine life but the our country's economy and livelihood of many people.

Chemical pollution occurs every day all over the world. Factories are pouring deadly chemical waste into our waters. Some are dumped directly and others end up their eventually because they are poured into rivers which eventually end up in our oceans. This toxic dumping has caused severe abnormalities in our marine life and has cause almost all marine life in the White Sea off the coast of the Soviet Union to completely disappear.

In Washington state some company presidents have been thrown into jail for breaking very strict pollution laws. A final type of pollution, toxic runoff, is much harder to control than pollution form factories and sewage plants. Toxic runoff is the wash off of fertilizers, pesticides and weed killers that wash off farmers fields and into our rivers and eventually into our oceans. Some problems of this type of pollution is that fertilizer runoff can cause some ocean plants to grow out of control and eventually crowd out other plants which obviously has a direct effect on the food chains of our oceans. (Hogan 20) Now that the water is so polluted people want to clean it up and change the bad affects it has had on our world's oceans.

There are many countries who are trying to clean up all their polluted waters, but one big problem is it is very costly. So they designed rules and organizations to help clean up and stop polluting. Lawmakers have made several acts to help stop pollution. The acts are the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Endangered Species Act, Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act, and the National Environmental <https://assignbuster.com/how-water-pollution-effects-marine-life/>

Policy Act. All of these acts were set up for saving animals in the water or cleaning up the water. They are now starting to fine or arrest anyone who is caught dumping in the ocean.

If hindsight is 20/20 surely man would have made better choices about ocean dumping. It is apparent today that our society's ignorance of many years has caused a lasting and extremely costly deadly effect on our earth. Together we must all work to keep the oceans clean and safe not only for the animals that live these waters but for ourselves as well. The oceans and seas of our world don't belong to just one country or one person, but rather they are all connected making everybody responsible to protect and prohibit the continuous destruction of marine life and their habitat.