

14 LIFE  
BELOW WATER



<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-14-life-below-water.html>

## Goal 14: Life Below Water

The world's oceans – their temperature, chemistry, currents and life – drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for humankind. How we manage this vital resource is essential for humanity as a whole, and to counterbalance the effects of climate change.

Over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods. However, today we are seeing 30 percent of the world's fish stocks overexploited, reaching below the level at which they can produce sustainable yields.

Oceans also absorb about 30 percent of the carbon dioxide produced by humans, and we are seeing a 26 percent rise in ocean acidification since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Marine pollution, an overwhelming majority of which comes from land-based sources, is reaching alarming levels, with an average of 13,000 pieces of plastic litter to be found on every square kilometre of ocean.

The SDGs aim to sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems from pollution, as well as address the impacts of ocean acidification. Enhancing conservation and the sustainable use of ocean-based resources through international law will also help mitigate some of the challenges facing our oceans.

## Facts and figures

**75%**

The ocean covers three quarters of the Earth's surface and represents 99 percent of the living space on the planet by volume.

**200,000**

The ocean contains nearly 200,000 identified species, but actual numbers may lie in the millions.

**40%**

As much as 40 percent of the ocean is heavily affected by pollution, depleted fisheries, loss of coastal habitats and other human activities.

**30%**

The ocean absorbs about 30 percent of carbon dioxide produced by humans, buffering the impacts of global warming.

**3 billion**

More than 3 billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods.

**US\$3 trillion**

The market value of marine and coastal resources and industries is estimated at US\$3 trillion per year, about 5 percent of global GDP.