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## **“THE OCEAN: LIFE AND LIVELIHOODS”**

No matter where we live, the ocean influences all of us. On the other hand, the action of over 7 billion humans adds up to influence the ocean.

The ocean provides us with the necessary resources to survive: oxygen, water, and food. Even if you don't eat seafood, fishmeal is used to feed poultry and pork, as well as to organically fertilize crops for millennia. Fish and other seafood are vital for good nutrition. The ocean is also a source of minerals, energy resources, and medicines.

The ocean provides us with jobs and stimulates the economy. Fishing, travel and tourism, and research are all industries that provide jobs for thousands of people all around the world. Trade is possible through transportation over the ocean.

Beyond the necessities, the ocean also provides humans with the privilege to partake in leisure activities on the water. Anywhere from sports fishing, to sailing, to water skiing, people partake in ocean sports. The ocean can also be a source of relaxation for people or it may provide inspiration for art. The possibilities that the ocean gives us are endless.

There are some forms of pollution that humans cause but cannot see. About 70% of the earth is water but there are no countries or governing bodies to build laws for the middle of the ocean. It's these unclear marine geopolitical boundaries and jurisdictions that create loopholes for problems such as unsustainable fishing. If some countries have loose regulations that allow for unsustainable fishing, while others are strict about their regulations, that a conflict in the protection of large fish species, like tuna, occurs.

Everyone is aware of the pollution that falls into the ocean but most focus on the macro pollutants such as large pieces of garbage. Some of the biggest threats from human interference are pollutants that we cannot see: micro plastics and noise.

When plastic enters the ocean, it does not disappear over time. Instead, it breaks down and becomes micro plastic that is smaller than krill. Micro plastics are almost unidentifiable from regular microorganisms to humans and organisms in the ocean that relies on microorganisms as their food source certainly cannot tell.

While the threat to the ocean's health is critical, it's not yet irreversible. We have the potential to create real change, everyday in our homes and globally through international cooperation. Everyone is responsible for the ocean, and every bit counts. Individual and collective action is needed to secure a sustainable future.

One of the ways you can make a difference in your daily life is to choose sustainable food options. Sustainable means taking what you need but leaving enough of the resource for future generations to meet their needs, adopting green chemistry practice and new materials; this includes banning hard-to-manage substance like polystyrene & non-biodegradable materials.