

Ocean Threats Image Reel



Climate change



Climate change is causing a rise in both atmospheric and sea temperatures, causing many negative effects to our planet, like rising sea levels and extreme weather events.

Oil industry



Drilling for oil and gas can pose serious threats, from construction of platforms, transporting of goods, creating pipelines and destructive oil spills.

Oil spill



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Marine litter



📷 Fish amongst marine litter - Rich Carey via Shutterstock



📷 Grey seal pup, Norfolk - David J Martin via Shutterstock

Litter items can cause harm to all sorts of marine life. Animals can become entangled in litter, causing injury, reduced mobility and even death. Ingestion of litter, particularly plastic, is very problematic for marine life who are unable to digest it.

Wind farms



📷 Offshore wind farm - Nuttawut Uttamaharad via Shutterstock



📷 Aerial view of wind farm - Joel Arbage via Unsplash

Construction of wind farms can directly damage marine environments and migratory species, and cause noise pollution.

Shipping



Shipping can be associated with different kinds of pollution: noise pollution, emissions, oil spills, container spills, dumping of rubbish at sea, and chemical pollution. It can also directly damage the environment through anchoring, shipwrecks, and contact with large marine mammals.

Container spill



In 1997 sixty-two containers fell off the cargo ship Tokio Express after it was hit by a rogue wave off the coast of Cornwall, including one container filled with nearly **five million pieces of Lego**, much of it sea themed. In the months that followed, beachcombers started to find Lego washed up on beaches across the south west coast. Among the pieces they discovered were octopuses, sea grass, spear guns, life rafts, scuba tanks, cutlasses, flippers and dragons. **The pieces are still washing up today.** (Content courtesy of *Adrift: The Curious Tale of the Lego Lost at Sea*)

Fishing



Fishing trawler - NarisaFotoSS via Shutterstock

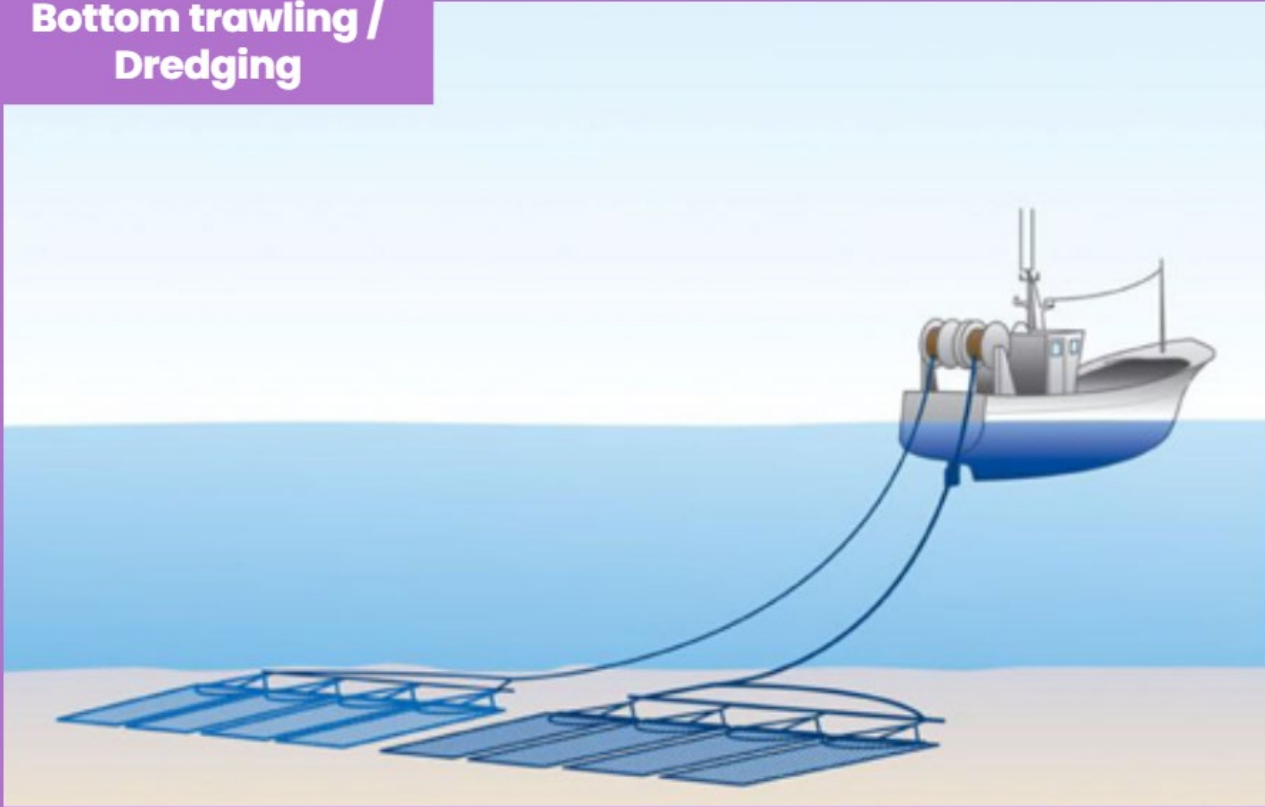


Bycatch - Ivan Sarenas via Shutterstock

Some fishing methods – like bottom trawling and dredging – involve scraping heavy machinery along the seafloor, which can be very destructive to marine habitats. During fishing, animals accidentally caught along with the ‘target species’ are known as bycatch.

Bottom trawling

Bottom trawling /
Dredging



Bottom trawling, or dredging, is a fishing method that involves scraping heavy machinery along the seafloor, which can be very destructive to marine habitats.

Aquarium trade



Coral reef species make up the majority of the aquarium trade. Collecting these species in the wild can be very destructive to the habitats and non-target fish. Some fish that have been targeted are at risk of extinction.

Medicines



Red Sea coral reef - Francesco Ungaro via Unsplash



Sponge - NOAA via Unsplash

Many medicines are derived from natural sources in the ocean, and many marine plants and animals are being studied to find new medicines. Healthy seas with healthy species are required to be able to derive medicine from the sea. If resources for medicines aren't harvested sustainably, this could contribute to a decline in habitat health.

Dredging



📷 Dredging on the north Norfolk coast - Simon Annable via Shutterstock

Sand and gravel is dredged from the seafloor to provide materials for construction, coastal defences, and to increase the depth of shipping channels. Dredging physically damages seafloor communities of plants and animals where the material is removed and where it is deposited.

Coastal development



Coastal development on land reduces areas of natural coastal habitats. This reduction not only directly reduces biodiversity, but also reduces vital functions these habitats provide, like helping protect land from erosion and helping to filter nutrient runoff from land.

Tourism



© Andre Mouton via Pixabay



© Natasha Ewins

Many people use beaches and coastal waters for recreation and tourism, and this tourism is an important livelihood for many people in the UK and benefits the economy. However, activities on the ocean like boating can discharge oil, damage seabed habitats through anchoring, and cause noise pollution.