

# One Ocean Fact File



## Planet ocean

We're so used to talking about planet Earth, but the ocean covers 70% of Earth's surface, so we actually live on **planet ocean**.

There is only one ocean. We might give different parts of it different names, but it's all the same ocean. It is not separated by borders – some marine species migrate huge distances across the world, and currents circulate around the ocean supporting our climate system. The ocean is interconnected and what happens in one area of the ocean will affect other areas. For example, litter washes up on the beaches of uninhabited islands from thousands of miles away.



## The five areas of our ocean

➤ The **Arctic Ocean** is the most northerly part of the ocean and is characterised by lots of ice and cold temperatures.

➤ The **Atlantic Ocean** is the second-largest area of the ocean covering  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the earth's surface. The Atlantic is an elongated area of the ocean stretching north to south, with temperatures varying from  $-2^{\circ}$  to  $28^{\circ}$ .

➤ The **Pacific Ocean** is the largest area of the ocean and covers  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the earth's surface. The Pacific contains the deepest part of the ocean, the Mariana Trench, which is 11,000 metres deep.

➤ The **Indian Ocean** is the smallest and warmest area of the ocean.

➤ The **Southern Ocean** encircles Antarctica and is home to cold water-loving species of whales, penguins and seals.



Island in the Pacific Ocean  
© Pierre Lesage



Adélie penguins  
© Gregory Smith

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## Ocean or sea?

Seas are the smaller, more enclosed sections of the ocean that are close to land.

The area of the ocean between the east coast of Great Britain and Europe is known as the North Sea. The west coast of the UK is exposed to the North East corner of the Atlantic Ocean. The body of water between the islands of Ireland and Great Britain is known as the Irish Sea, and the area between southern England and France is the English Channel.



### From coast to ocean

The UK is an island nation surrounded by the sea. We define the word 'coast' as the area where land meets the sea. The UK has around 7,723 miles of coastline, made up of sandy bays, rugged shores, caves and cliffs. Beneath the waves are varied landscapes of undersea cliffs, caves, plains and dunes.



## Why is the ocean important?

- The ocean is a **diverse habitat** and is home to 50–80% of all life on Earth
- It plays a major role in the **water cycle**, and it regulates our **climate** and **weather** systems
- Marine plants and algae produce over 50% of the **oxygen** we breathe
- Marine habitats help to store **carbon**, which is vital in our fight against climate change
- Coastal habitats help to **protect coastal communities** and towns from storms and flooding by reducing wave energy
- **Seafood** provides a source of food and protein for millions of people
- Millions of people have **jobs** in marine industries
- The ocean is important for our **health and wellbeing**



Seagrass habitat  
© Benjamin L. Jones