

FACT SHEET: WHY DO THE OCEANS MATTER?

- 1 Over 700 million people depend on fishing for their livelihoods.
- 2 Around 70 per cent of the world's people live within 60 kms of the sea. And around 80 per cent of all tourism takes place in coastal areas.
- 3 Around the world, approximately one billion people rely on fish and seafood for their main source of protein.
- 4 Many medical treatments have been developed from resources that are found in the sea. These have been used to treat asthma, arthritis and several types of cancer.
- 5 The sea is full of tiny microscopic organisms called phytoplankton. They absorb carbon dioxide and help to give out around half of the oxygen that we need to breathe.
- 6 Wave power is creating more renewable energy. It is thought that Scottish waters could generate around 10 per cent of Europe's wave power in the future.
- 7 The oceans are part of the water cycle. Water evaporates from the ocean surface and rises as water vapour. When this meets colder air, it condenses to form clouds and rain.
- 8 The ocean absorbs some of the sun's heat and carries it around the globe in ocean currents. This helps to regulate the climate of our planet.
- 9 The oceans provide a home to an incredible variety of wildlife, from the largest animal that has ever lived on the Earth, the blue whale, to the tiny krill that they eat.
- 10 The oceans provide transport routes. Around 90 per cent of all trade between countries is carried by ships.

