

Prince's plea to stop plastic pollution

theday.co.uk/princes-plea-to-stop-plastic-pollution-4 9 June 2025



Drowning: Every day, roughly 2,000 bin lorries' worth of plastic enters the world's rivers, oceans and lakes.

Can we save our oceans? Prince William wants to help the world's biggest and most important ecosystems before it is too late.

What's happening?

Oceans are one of the most amazing and mysterious **habitats** on our Earth. They hold incredible life and have fed us for thousands of years.

But now the oceans are changing into huge, empty deserts. Around one-third of their most important **species** could die out.

That is the warning that **Prince William** gave on Sunday for World Oceans Day.

Find out more

The threat to the oceans comes from many sources. Here are two reasons to worry:

1. Plastic problems. Some 11 million tonnes of plastic waste end up in the oceans every year. Animals can get caught in plastic or eat it.

2. Oxygen out. As the planet warms up, the sea loses some of its absorbed **oxygen**. Fish depend on oxygenated water: as the oxygen level falls, they begin to die out.

So should we lose hope? Perhaps not. Here are two more reasons to be cheerful:

1. Well-again whales. In the 20th Century, almost 3 million whales were killed by the **whaling** industry, leaving most species nearly **extinct**. But then in 1986 a public campaign managed to bring about a worldwide ban on most whaling. Today, whale populations are growing.

2. Tech tricks. New technology may also step in to save us. In Japan, scientists have developed a new kind of plastic that fully breaks down in seawater.

Can we save our oceans?

Some say

Yes! History shows us that quick action can save key habitats. With a mixture of science and action from politicians, we can save our oceans.

Others think

No! The oceans are already at a tipping point. We might be able to save some species, but others cannot be brought back from this deadly place.

Some people say

"It is a curious situation that the sea, from which life first arose should now be threatened by the activities of one form of that life."

Rachel Carson (1907 – 1964), US marine biologist

Empty heading

What do you think?

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Are you worried about the oceans?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: How powerful is public opinion?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - You are a top adviser to the leader of your country. What do you suggest they do to save the oceans?

5. Express

What do others believe? - In groups, write a one minute speech calling on the world to save the oceans. Perform your speech.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Write a poem inspired by the ocean.

Glossary

Habitats - An animal's habitat is the place that they live in.

Species - A set of animals or plants with similar features. Members of the same species can breed with each other.

Prince William - The son of King Charles III, and the next in line to the British throne.

Oxygen - An element that is vital for life on Earth. It makes up 21% of our atmosphere.

Whaling - The hunting of whales.

Extinct - A species that no longer has any living members.