

OCEAN ACTIVITY KIT FOR KIDS



DAVID SUZUKI FOUNDATION OCEAN KEEPERS



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Foundation

SOLUTIONS ARE IN OUR NATURE

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Hosting an Ocean Celebration for children

Hosting an ocean celebration is the perfect opportunity to introduce children to the magic and wonder of the ocean. It's a good way to teach them about it, inspire them to protect it and allow them to explore how oceans contribute to all our lives. This guide provides resources, crafts, games, experiments and food suggestions for an ocean celebration that will appeal to children of any age.

How to use this kit

This kit is designed to provide you with a variety of activities to create and host a kid-focused ocean celebration.

The crafts and games are suited to a wide range of children's abilities and can be altered to meet the capability, size and ages of your group. For larger groups of children, simpler crafts are often more manageable. In smaller groups, even young children can accomplish more difficult crafts. The games are designed to be played with groups of any size.

Active games: This section has running or moving games suited for a range of ages. Some of the games require materials and preparation.

Science and experimentation: Experiments are a great way for children to explore their environment while having fun. An adult should demonstrate the experiments to younger children.

Arts and crafts: These activities give children something to take home at the end of the celebration and help them work on their fine motor skills while learning.

Story time: This section has a list of ocean-related stories that can be used to provide some downtime, introduce the theme or introduce a storytelling period so children can contribute their ocean stories.

Foods: Food is a central part of any celebration. This section includes a few ways to make ocean-themed lunches or snacks.

Wide space activities: These activities are suited to a larger outdoor location and require some preparation. They are more suited to older children but can be fun with teams or families if you are having a family celebration.

Resources: This section provides website links and a book list for information about the ocean. These websites can be used to gather information before your event or to show photos to children during the event.

Planning your ocean celebration

If possible, your ocean celebration should be held outside near the ocean. However, a local beach, park or waterway are great places to hold events because they allow children to directly connect with their local environment. If the weather is bad you can host the celebration indoors too.

From this kit you should choose the activities you think are most suited to the children in your group, and that will fit within the time you've allotted and are within your skills. Some activities require preparation time and materials, but some don't require any at all.

Be sure to have enough adults to supervise the number of children you have attending, especially near water. Always scope out your event venue ahead of time to see if there are garbage and recycling facilities, bathrooms, picnic tables, wheelchair access, etc., to meet your group's needs.

Whenever possible, use recycled materials, choose sustainable food options and try to avoid excessive packaging and garbage. Remember, whatever you bring to the beach or park should go out with you again. For some handy green tips for hosting a party check out Thrifty and Green:

www.thriftyandgreen.com/blogs/growing-up-green/10-tips-thrifty-green-birthday-party

Hint: If you don't have the materials needed for a craft or game, try borrowing from friends to reduce waste. For example: If you need scissors, ask parents to send some with their children instead of buying them.

Active Games

OCTOPUS

This game can be used to start a conversation about octopuses and to get everyone moving around.

Materials and preparation: None.

Playing area: An open space to run, as would be needed to play tag. Could be played indoors if you have enough space.

GAME EXPLANATION/RULES

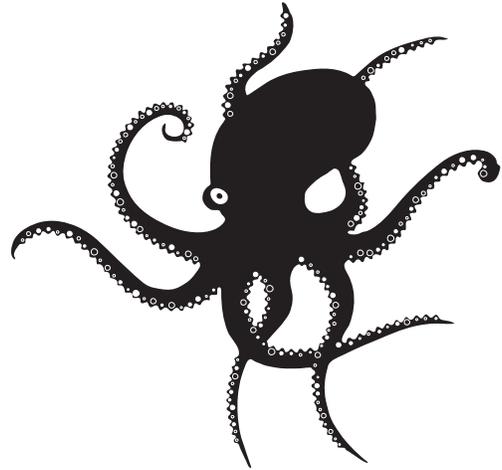
The children pretend to be fish trying to escape from a big octopus. Designate the “ocean” area - this is the area safe for the children to run within.

Choose one player to be the octopus. The other children are the fish and must swim from one end of the ocean to the other. All the children start at one end of the playing area, and the octopus yells, “Swim, little fishies!” The fish try to swim across the ocean without being tagged by the octopus. If a fish gets through, it is safe. Fish that are tagged become the octopus’s tentacles and must help catch the other fish. The tentacles join hands to make the octopus grow. Younger children can be given a few minutes to practise miming fish and octopuses to help them understand how these animals move.

In larger groups you can start with more than one octopus. Children will enjoy flapping their tails, making fish faces and waving their tentacles as they move through the ocean.

Octopus facts

- » One of the largest octopuses in the world (Giant Pacific Octopus) lives in B.C.
- » Octopuses use “jet propulsion” to move through water, using their muscular bodies to push water through a narrow siphon.
- » Octopuses can squeeze into very small cracks and holes and can change colours to blend into their surroundings.
- » Octopuses use their eight tentacles to capture prey and move around the ocean floor.
- » Octopuses have beaks like parrots, which they use to break the shells of prey.
- » When octopuses need to make a quick exit they use ink stored in their bodies to create a black cloud in the water, blinding predators while they escape.
- » For more octopus facts: www.vanaqua.org/learn/aquafacts/invertebrates/octopuses-and-squids.



WHERE THE WIND BLOWS

This mixer game allows children to learn about their combined impact on and experiences with the ocean. This game offers a good opportunity to start the conversation, especially with children who do not think they have any connection to the ocean.

Materials and preparation: None.

Playing area: Space to stand in a circle indoors or outdoors.

GAME EXPLANATION/RULES:

The children all stand in a circle with one person in the centre. (This could be an older child or an adult.) The person in the centre makes a statement about how he or she has connected with the ocean or something related to the ocean (e.g., I have taken a ferry). Then, all the children who have been on a ferry have to switch places with another person in the circle. The statements continue for as long as you wish to play the game. The caller can also choose to make one special statement ("Swim in the ocean!"). When this statement is called, everyone has to change places with someone else in the circle, regardless of whether they've swum in the ocean. Below are a variety of sample statements.

Statements:

- » Swim in the ocean*
- » I have been to Vancouver Island / Haida Gwaii / Bella Coola / Saltspring Island
- » I have been on a ferry
- » I have been to the aquarium
- » I have seen a whale
- » I have seen a whale on TV
- » I have eaten salmon
- » I have eaten oysters
- » I have seen a bear
- » I have seen salmon spawning
- » I have explored tide pools
- » I have been fishing
- » I have eaten sushi
- » I have collected seashells from the beach
- » I have been on a boat
- » I have seen crabs scurrying on the sand
- » I have made sandcastles on the beach

STORM SONG

This song emulates a storm with the natural symphony of waves, wind and sometimes thunder that occurs on our coasts.

Materials: None.

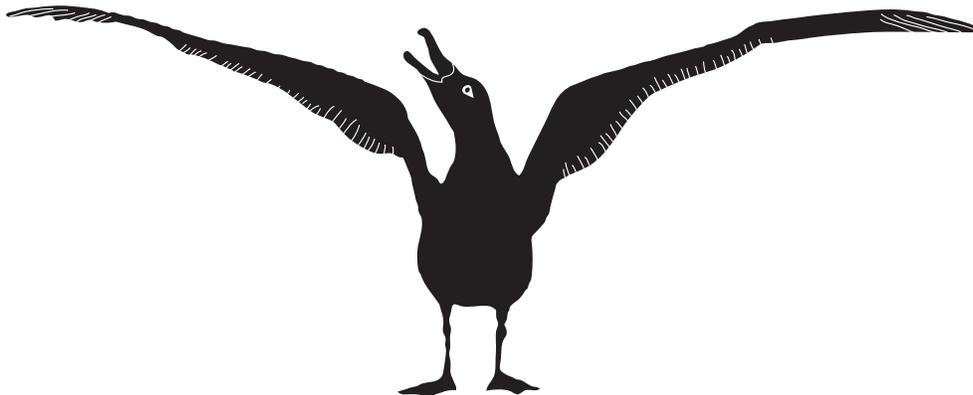
Preparation: Have an adult print out or memorize the order of the actions.

Playing Area: Space to sit in a circle indoors or outdoors.

GAME EXPLANATION/RULES:

Sitting in a quiet circle, children perform a song that progresses from light rain through to a storm. The leader starts the action and, without speaking, changes from one action to the next in order. As the children see the leader change actions, they follow along. The game can be played without speaking, but the leader could state what happens with each change ("The breeze grew louder.") if the children need direction.

- » Start still and quiet.
- » A gentle breeze begins to blow. (*Rub fingers together.*)
- » The breeze grows louder. (*Rub palms together.*)
- » A gentle rain starts to fall. (*Tap fingers on palms.*)
- » The rain falls harder. (*Tap palms on thighs gently.*)
- » Finally, thunder claps. (*Stamp feet.*)
- » Reverse back through the actions, dropping one noise at a time until all is quiet.



FINDING TWINS

This game allows children to learn about different creatures and activities related to the ocean. It can be tailored to ocean animals or ocean-based activities (a port, kayaking, fishing) in your area.

Materials: Recycled paper or cardstock with ocean-themed words or photos printed or drawn on them.

Preparation: Write or draw specific examples of sea creatures, activities or ocean habitats on recycled cardboard.

Examples:

- » starfish
- » coral reef
- » kelp bed
- » canoeing
- » swimming
- » fishing
- » scuba diving
- » seals
- » orcas
- » salmon
- » sailboat
- » surfer
- » octopus
- » waves

Make two tags for each word on recycled cardstock or cardboard. The children will need to hold these without letting other children see them. For smaller children, use photos or sketches instead of words. If you have a group with an odd number of children, make one set of three.

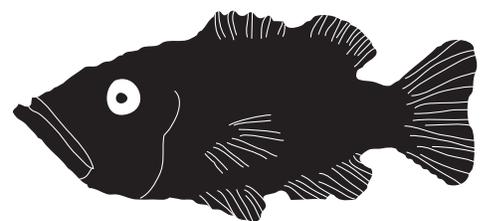
Playing area: Indoors or out, provided there is enough space for children to move around easily. Children do not need to run for this game.

GAME EXPLANATION/RULES:

To start the activity, distribute tags to the players and advise them not to share what is written.

Ask the group to spread out in the playing area.

Tell the group that each person must make a noise or movement associated with her or his word or picture. Each person must find his or her partner by watching what other people are doing. Allow smaller children to talk about their items rather than just making a noise or action. When they find their twin, they can then watch until everyone else has found theirs.



MAKING A WEB

Materials:

- » Ball of yarn or string, long enough to crisscross the circle like a spider's web at least the same number of times as there are children in your group. The string is likely to end up in a big knot so buying yarn that can be reused for future crafts is a good idea.
- » Recycled paper or cardstock.
- » Markers/pencil crayons/crayons.
- » Safety pins or tape.

Preparation: Before you begin the activity you might want to have a quick brainstorm. Ask one child in your group to name an ocean animal. Ask another child to name another animal the previous child's animal eats or is eaten by. Ask another child where one of those animals lives.

Briefly talk about how things in nature depend on each other, and the different relationships such as food chains and animal habitats that exist around our oceans. For example:

- » Orcas eat seals
- » Seals eat salmon
- » Salmon eat herring
- » Salmon live in the open ocean
- » Herring lay eggs on kelp
- » Urchins eat kelp
- » Sea otters eat urchins
- » Herring eat zooplankton
- » Humpback whales also eat zooplankton

Give each child a cardstock or piece of paper, then have the children write their names and choose an ocean item (plant, animal, habitat or other related item) to draw on their card. If you are short on time or are working with very young children it might be helpful to prepare these ahead of time.

Playing area: Indoor or outdoor space, big enough for your group to stand in a circle.

GAME EXPLANATION/RULES:

Ask the children to stand in a circle and place their cards in front of them. You might want to go around the circle so everyone knows what ocean items the other children have on their cards.

Start with one child. Have her consider her item and how it relates to the other items represented in the circle. For example, if the child has a salmon on her card she may choose to throw to a child with eagle on his card. Eagles eat salmon (i.e., an eagle is a predator to salmon). Use vocabulary you are comfortable with and that suits the age level of your group.

Child 1 (salmon) starts the web by holding onto the end of the string of yarn and throwing the ball of yarn to a linked child (eagle). Then the second child throws the ball to an ocean item she is connected to while holding on to their place in the yarn. Gradually this will form a web representing the connections in the ocean.

For older children, having one child drop all the yarn he holds in his hand allows discussion about how changes to an ocean ecosystem affect the rest of the ecosystem, which is represented by the web. For example, if the salmon drops all its connections to show that salmon are disappearing from the web, the web quickly begins to collapse as this affects seals, smaller fish and the rivers around the ocean.

Science and Experimentation

SAND EXPERIMENT

Materials:

- » Sand – about two tablespoons per child (or pair), preferably gathered from several different areas (for example, near a river, lake or beach or different areas on the same beach or along a local gravel road).
- » Black paper.
- » Magnifying glass or microscope.
- » White vinegar.

Preparation: Gather the supplies and, if indoors, spread newspapers on the surface to aid with cleanup. Sprinkle some sand on the black paper. Try to spread it thin enough that you can see individual grains of sand.

EXPERIMENT:

Have the children look at the grains of sand through the magnifying glass. Try it again with different types of sand. Use dry sand farther away from the water, wet sand from the shoreline or even sand from a sandbox. Notice the different shapes, sizes and colours of the sand.

Put a bit of vinegar on the sand and ask the children to watch with the magnifying glass what happens.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN:

At first glance, sand may look like it is all one colour. When you start to look at individual grains of sand, you will see the many colours, shapes and sizes of the different grains.

Sand found in North America is mostly quartz. Pink beaches usually get their colour from tiny bits of coral and other animals. Small, jewel-like coloured grains are usually bits of broken glass that have been smoothed by the sand and waves.

If some of the sand grains give off tiny bubbles when you add the vinegar, they were once part of a living being. Sand particles can be bits of coral, shells or bone, all of which contain calcium carbonate. Vinegar reacts with the calcium carbonate to form carbon dioxide, which causes the bubbles you can see. Rocks, bones and coral become tiny sand particles through repetitive rubbing by waves on other rocks and sand.

SEAWATER FLOAT

Materials:

- » Large glass
- » Warm tap water
- » 1 whole raw egg
- » Salt (1 cup)
- » Teaspoon

Ask children if they have ever swum in the ocean (which is salt water). Ask if they think there is any difference between swimming (or floating) in salt water or fresh water, like in a lake or pool.

EXPERIMENT:

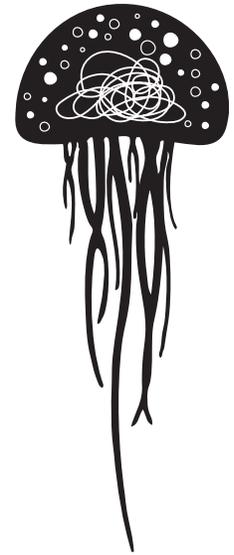
Fill the glass about half full with warm water.

Carefully slip the egg into the glass. (It should sink to the bottom.)

With the egg in the glass, add one teaspoon of salt and stir gently. Keep adding one teaspoon of salt at a time until the egg floats to the surface.

Have groups explain what they observed. Ask them how this would affect swimmers in the ocean. You might need to explain that salt is denser than water (salt weighs more than water in the same amount of space) and that adding salt makes the saltwater solution denser than regular water. This density means it is easier to float objects in salty water than fresh water. The density of the saltwater solution is what gives the egg buoyancy, making it easier to float.

For more information on water density: www.infoplease.com/cig/science-fair-projects/objects-float-better-salt-water-fresh-water.html



OCEAN CURRENTS

Materials:

- » Newspapers
- » Rectangular pan
- » Water
- » Food colouring

Preparation: Spread out several layers of newspaper to protect the work surface or work on a picnic table or lawn.

EXPERIMENT:

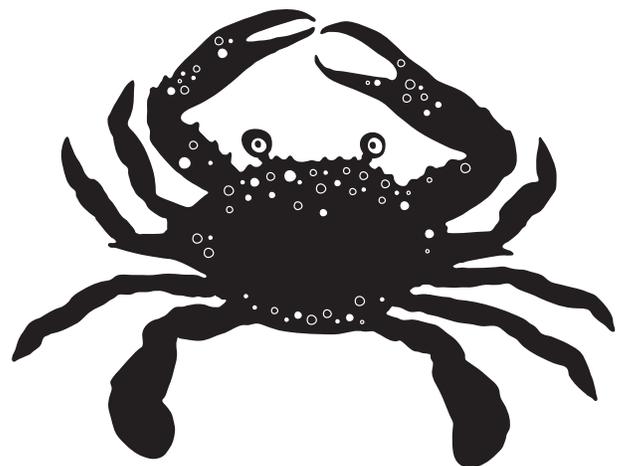
Fill the pan halfway with water.

Have children take turns blowing across the surface of the water. What happens if they blow gently? What happens if they blow hard?

Put a drop of food colouring into the water at one end of the pan. Have children blow from that end of the pan. What happens to the coloured "current"?

You can talk about how much the wind affects ocean life.

Ocean currents affect the weather, climate and living conditions for people, plants and animals on Earth. Currents are caused by wind, salinity (how salty the water is), variations in water depth, water temperature and the rotation of the Earth. Currents act s of like rivers within the ocean moving the water around the globe. Temperature differences in water cause water to move (e.g., hot water rises, cold water sinks). For more ocean current information: www.oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/learning/player/lesson08.html.



Arts and Crafts

COLOUR WASHING

Materials

- » Wax crayons
- » Blue watercolour paints or blue food colouring
- » Small containers to hold water
- » Wide paintbrushes or sponges (the children will be painting across the entire page)
- » Plain white paper (not construction paper)
- » Newspaper
- » Old shirts or aprons

Preparation

Spread out newspaper to protect painting surfaces. Children might need old shirts or aprons depending on age. Mix a few drops of blue food colouring in about one-quarter cup of water if you don't have watercolour paints. If you're using food colouring, test a few stripes on your paper to check your ratio of colour to water to ensure the colour shows.

INSTRUCTIONS

Have each child colour an underwater scene on a piece of plain paper using wax crayons. Using paintbrushes and blue watercolours (or food colouring), brush across the entire drawing in long strokes, adding a wash of blue to the ocean scene.

For an example see: www.shirleys-preschool-activities.com/magic-drawings.html

Hint: your household recycle box is full of all sorts of supplies waiting to become craft projects. If you're looking for some other recycled supplies, check with friends or local recycling centres.

OCEAN DIORAMA

Materials:

- » Shoebox or other small box. (This is a great opportunity to reuse a box, and you could ask children to bring their own if you cannot collect enough.)
- » Bits of scrap paper, pipe cleaners, coloured tape or other recycled materials in bright colours
- » Cereal box or similar cardboard
- » Toilet paper or paper towel rolls
- » Blue paint or markers
- » Coloured markers
- » String or yarn
- » Scissors
- » Glue or tape

INSTRUCTIONS

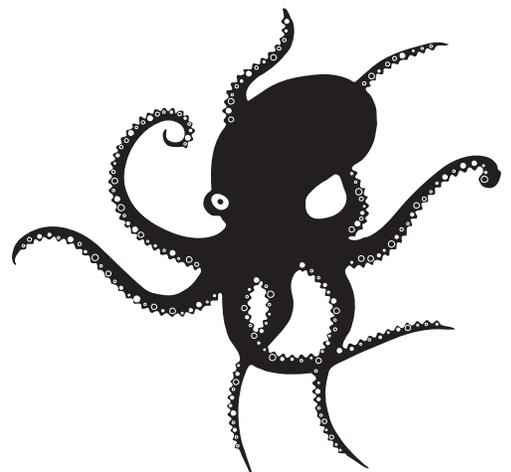
Paint or use markers to colour the inside of the box blue, except for the bottom side, which will be the floor.

Paint the floor of the box a sand colour or use brown paper to cover it.

Draw (or create with scrap paper) whales, octopuses, fish and other sea creatures to hang inside the diorama. Pasting these onto thin cardboard will make them stiffer. Attach small strings and, with adult help, punch holes in the top of the diorama to hang the creatures. Animals can be precut for smaller children to colour.

Create other ocean features to decorate. These could include the hull of a boat passing over, a scuba diver, rocks, sand and sea stars.

For an example see: www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/Oceandiorama.shtml



SOCKTOPUS

Materials:

- » One clean unmatched sock per child.
(You could ask each child to bring a sock or purchase them at a thrift store – the crazier the pattern the better.)
- » Sharp scissors
- » Felt
- » Yarn
- » Markers or buttons
- » Stuffing – old fabric scraps or polyester stuffing
- » Glue gun (if using buttons for eyes) or needles and thread to sew them on
(Hot glue and glue guns should be handled or supervised by a responsible adult.)

Instructions:

Stuff the toe of the sock with stuffing, then tie some yarn around the sock below the stuffing to make the octopus's head. Use felt, buttons or markers to glue or draw eyes on your octopus. Have an adult use sharp scissors to cut the bottom of the sock into strips (or tentacles), cutting almost all the way up to the head.

For an example: www.thegoldjellybean.com/2012/07/sock-octopus-craft-for-kids.html

Alternatively, you can use an old toilet-paper roll to make an octopus by simply cutting the roll about two-thirds of the way up seven times to create eight tentacles. Use markers and other materials to decorate.

See the game Octopus for some interesting facts about octopuses.

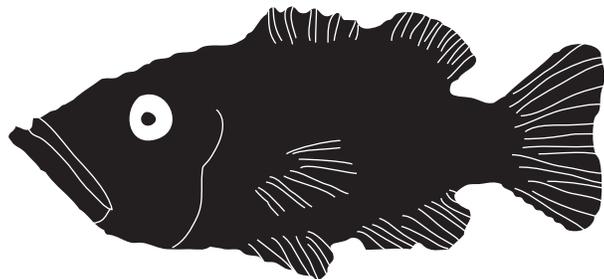
Hint: These little creatures can be reminders to children to protect the oceans during their everyday activities. See www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/healthy-oceans-blog/2013/08/seven-things-you-can-do-every-day-to-protect-our-oceans for a list of ideas, or come up with your own.

Story Time

Reading a story can be a great way to introduce the ocean theme, settle children down from active games and provide them with an opportunity to tell their own ocean stories. Below are some options for ocean stories based on the Pacific Coast.

- » *Far from Shore*, Sophie Webb
- » *A Pacific Alphabet*, Margriet Ruurs and Dianna Bonder
- » *Water Sings Blue*, Kate Coombs
- » *Sockeye's Journey Home*, Barbara Gaines Winkelman
- » *Salmon Forest*, David Suzuki and Sarah Ellis
- » *Moonsnail Song*, Sheryl McFarlane
- » *Tuk and the Whale*, Raquel Rivera
- » *O Is for Orca: An Alphabet Book*, Andrea Helman

Hint: Some libraries also have story time kits that include a story, puppets, music CDs and other resources related to the theme!



Snacks

Always check for allergies in your group before serving food, particularly seafood.

SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD TASTING

Sample some sustainable seafood. Discuss with children what makes this food sustainable. Sustainable seafood is seafood fished or farmed in a manner that can maintain or increase production in the long term, without jeopardizing the health or function of the web of life in our oceans. For sustainable seafood information and recipes see: www.davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/eat-for-healthy-oceans/recipes

You can also sign the David Suzuki Foundation pledge to eat sustainable seafood, and receive seasonal sustainable seafood recommendations and recipes directly to your inbox.

OCEAN-SHAPED SNACKS

Use cookie cutters to make ocean-themed shapes for sandwiches, cucumber slices, apple slices, cheese slices, etc.

Hint: If you want to serve an ocean-themed cake for your party, find a cake-pan rental company. Renting a pan costs far less than buying a new one.

LUNCH OCEAN SCENES

Put a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, cheeses and other lunch items out and have the children create an ocean scene using them. You could also put out ocean-themed cookie cutters for them to use.

Hint: Using a reusable tablecloth, cloth napkins and reusable plates helps reduce waste. Ask children to bring their own mugs and water bottles (labelled!) to use during the event - less mess and no worries about whose cup is whose.

Wide Space Outdoor Activities

SHORELINE CLEANUP

When you are outdoors holding your ocean celebration, be sure to bring some shopping bags to pick up any garbage in the area. Remind children not to pick up anything sharp or dangerous and instead to ask an adult for help. Gardening gloves or a spare plastic bag (to use as a glove) may be advisable if there aren't any nearby hand-washing facilities.

Plastic is an issue for sea animals. Plastic bags can look like jellyfish to turtles. Containers can look like fish. Nets and loops of plastic can get tangled around seabirds and animals. Plastic breaks down very slowly so plastic used for packaging, disposable toys and fishing lines and nets remains in the ocean and contributes to ocean garbage patches. For more info see: www.plasticoceans.net

The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup needs volunteers. The website has many ways to get involved and they'll provide you with materials for cleaning up your local beach or shoreline: www.shorelinecleanup.ca

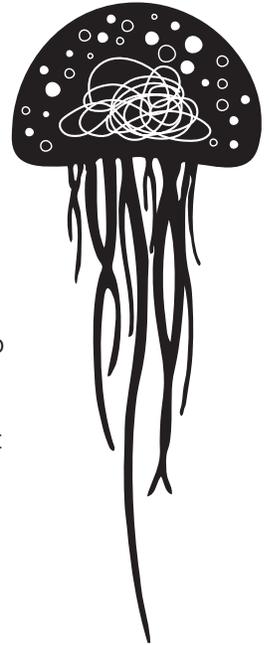


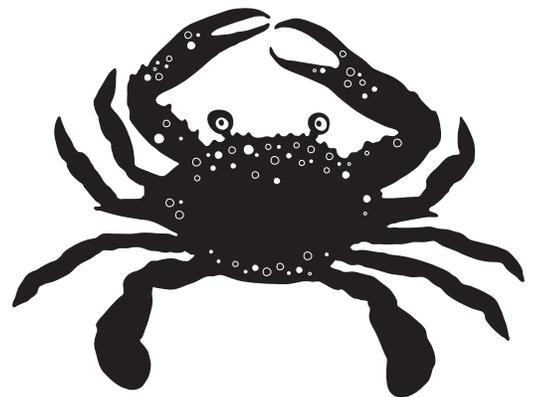
PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT

Preparation: Have the children bring a digital camera. Print a list of beach and ocean-themed items for each individual or pair. Alter the list to suit your group's location.

Instructions: Instruct each individual or pair to walk along the beach and collect photos of the listed items.

Example list:

- » Heart-shaped rock - rocky beaches provide homes for crabs, limpets and barnacles.
- » Green seaweed - seaweed provides hiding places for sea creatures.
- » Brown seaweed - some seaweed is edible and is used in sushi, crackers and as a snack food.
- » Mussel shells - sea otters and seagulls like to snack on mussels, which have blue shells.
- » Motorboat - motorboats are required to stay more than 100 metres away from orca pods.
- » Kayak - kayaking is good exercise and an active way to explore the islands and inlets on the B.C. coast.
- » Purple rock - coloured rocks are made of different minerals. Purple rocks are often volcanic.
- » Tide pool - tide pools are home to intertidal species that live with great changes in water temperature and depth every day.
- » Crabs or crab shells - crabs use their claws to crush shellfish and pull the meat out.
- » Litter (pick this up, please!) - garbage can look like dinner to many sea animals and can make them sick because they cannot digest it.
- » Seagulls - seagulls drop seashells onto the rocky shore to crack open the shells.
- » Freighter - freighters transport goods all around the world, and sometimes carry sea creatures from one part of the world to another, which can damage local habitats.
- » Cruise ship - cruise ships bring passengers from all around the world to explore the beauty of B.C.'s coast.
- » Fish - some rockfish on the B.C. coast live to be more than 200 years old.
- » Pier / wharf - often the supports and floats on piers and wharves become home to shellfish and seaweed that can be visible when the tide goes out.



Resources

This section includes websites and books that you can use to provide information and facts to children about the oceans, sea life and activities that we do on or around the ocean.

WEBSITES

These websites provide a broad range of information about the oceans, including marine mammals, ocean habitats and details on tides and ocean water, as well as ongoing ocean research.

- » www.davidsuzuki.org
- » www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/panther-lounge/2013/05/best-pacific-ocean-stories-contest-winners
This website is full of ocean stories and has great videos about the ocean.
- » www.oceanservice.noaa.gov
- » www.onr.navy.mil/focus/ocean/default.htm
- » www.seawifs.gsfc.nasa.gov/OCEAN_PLANET/HTML/education_marine_life_factsheet.html
- » www.neptunecanada.com/news/cool-stuff.dot
- » www.vanaqua.org/salmonales
This website is all about salmon.
- » www.vanaqua.org/learn/aquafacts
This site has facts about different aquatic life.
- » www.kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/activities/new/ocean
- » www.kidsblogs.nationalgeographic.com/2011/12/16/care-for-the-ocean
This video talks about why we should care for the oceans.
- » www.bbc.co.uk/science/earth/water_and_ice/ocean
- » www.openoceans.org/Ocean_Web_Cams.html
This site has a list of ocean-themed webcams from around the globe. These offer views of different ocean environments and marine mammals.
- » www.neptunecanada.com/news/live-video/reefcam.dot
This website has webcams located off the West Coast of Vancouver Island.
- » www.crd.bc.ca/parks/events/documents/FeelingCrabby.pdf
The Capital Regional District (Victoria, B.C.) offers “Feeling Crabby”, a crab exploratory program. It offers hosted workshops and an online teaching guide to learn about crabs and look for them at your local rocky beach.

BOOKS

Libraries and bookshops often have an array of books on the ocean. A few notable titles include:

- » *Ocean: The World's Last Wilderness Revealed* published by Dorling Kindersley
- » *Eyewitness Ocean* by Miranda Macquitty
- » *Safari Beneath the Sea* by Diane Swanson
- » *Marine Life of the Pacific Northwest: A Photographic Encyclopedia of Invertebrates, Seaweeds and Selected Fishes* by Andy Lamb and Bernard Hanby
- » *Beneath Cold Seas: The Underwater Wilderness of the Pacific Northwest*, by David Hall

Hint: Ask your librarian to help you choose books, videos and/or other materials to best suit the age, interests and reading levels of your group.

"We are one brief generation in the long march of time; the future is not ours to erase.

So where knowledge is limited, we will remember all those who will walk after us, and err on the side of caution"

~Lines from the David Suzuki Foundation's *Declaration of Interdependence*, written for the first United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992.



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