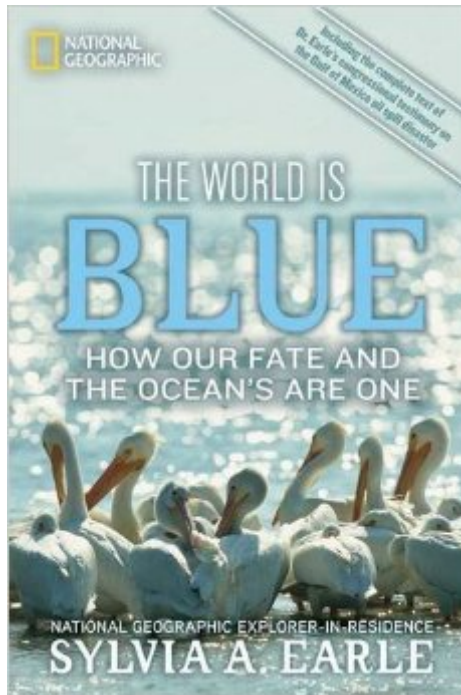


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The World Is Blue: How Our Fate And The Ocean's Are One



Synopsis

This book tie-in to National Geographic's ambitious 5-year ocean initiative "focusing on overfishing" is written in National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence Sylvia Earle's accessible yet hard-hitting voice. Through compelling personal stories she puts the current and future peril of the ocean and the life it supports in perspective for a wide public audience.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sylvia Earle is a planetary hero. In this book she shows how the carnage going on in our oceans is going to have massive global consequences. One reason this has become a giant, planet-threatening problem is that, by its nature, what happens deep under the ocean surface is invisible to humans. This book makes the invisible visible. Until we devoured or polluted most of it out of existence, the oceans used to teem with life of the most spectacular, beautiful kind imaginable. Life that is an integral part of the global eco-system we need to sustain us. The World is Blue celebrates that life and sets out her dream for the creation (at large scale) of 'Marine Protected Areas' in order to give the oceans a chance to recover. With a major movie due out early next year, and Sylvia Earle's TED Prize wish being developed by many supporters, the global 'blue' movement is gathering pace. Maybe it's not too late.

Sylvia Earle is the most qualified individual on earth to promote saving it. She understands that the ocean is the source of most of the oxygen we breathe, most of the water we drink (rain water) and a

large part of the food we eat. She systematically outlines what man has done to the ocean over the last 100 years and the implications for a dire future if we continue on this blind path. Her book is more than a wake up call. We have known about the damage we are doing to the ocean for decades. We take all the different species of fish and crustaceans, etc. from the ocean and return to it our trash. It is not a bottomless sea that can continue to take this abuse. Dr. Earle has summarized the facts and they are irrefutable. We can choose to continue to ignore them or we can take action. Dr. Earle has a wish and is asking the world to create Marine protected zones in the Ocean. Right now less than 1% of the ocean is protected. She believes that if we can raise that to 10%, 20% or more, we can save the ocean and our planet. Everyone needs to understand the facts that she presents in this book. Everyone needs to finally take action and support an organization of your choice, one that is trying to protect the oceans. We spend a great deal of time and money on studying global warming and even more sending rockets into space. Global warming is real and we need to understand it. And understanding how the Universe was created might prove valuable in as yet unknown ways. Why can't we create the equivalent to NASA for our oceans. My wish is what if we spent that money studying the planet we live on and the oceans in particular? We have seen and explored more of the moon than we have of our own planet. It won't matter 50 years from now whether we found water on the moon or not if we are struggling to survive on this planet because our life support system, the oceans, are dying.

Sylvia Earle's *The World is Blue* is the kind of book that serves well as an introduction to the concept of Oceanspace. Indeed, it is more than just an introduction. It is a pail of cold water thrown upon anyone still asleep to the fact that humanity is committing suicide -- and in the process, is despoiling the habitat of many other species who are just trying to do their day job. I would recommend this book to anyone who hasn't thought about the subject before. Maritime analysts and marine biologists might find it a bit of a bore, but one can't please everyone. Earle was the former Chief Scientist for the U.S. NOAA in 1990 and her work reveals this pedigree in many ways. Her writing is clean and straightforward; she provides plenty of interesting personal anecdotes to liven up what might otherwise be a dull litany of sins and penances; she seems particularly enamored of the authority of international and national organizations without any clear idea of how to resolve the problem and limits of power; and she supplies ample statistics and information to back up claims of destruction and unsustainability. With respect to the latter, we have seen the pernicious political ramifications of poor factchecking. Get one trivial detail wrong, and large swaths of humanity will promptly disregard your message no matter how important, as if they themselves had never made a

single mistake in their life. It is moderately worrisome to me, then, that at random I found a claim (p.139) that a thousand years ago there were fewer than 300,000 people on Earth. Oops. It was actually 300 million. Whoever was Earle's factchecker was must now commit seppuku, preferably with a sushi knife, to atone for this shame. Thousands, millions, what's the difference? Well the difference is that when you write a book about sustainability or unsustainability, you have to get the numbers right. Because in the final analysis, sustainability is a simple equation of (consumption per capita) x (total population) = (total consumption). Overfishing is a total load problem. Pollution is a total load problem. Humanity is a total load problem. Anyhoo. I haven't checked all the other numbers and I don't intend to. I don't even claim the necessary expertise to do so. One slip of the pen does not a spilled inkwell make. I will just assume that all the other facts and factoids in the book are reasonably accurate and move on to the next subject: compliance. "There oughta be a law!" or its international equivalent, "There oughta be a treaty!" holds no water today. Or it's a leaky hull, let's put it that way. You make a law, you make a treaty, you better damn well back it up with military/police force. Otherwise it's just grand kabuki theatre on a planetary scale. I find no fault at all with Earle's recommendations on what to do to conserve marine life. Mysteriously absent are the recommendations on what to do when people and nations, some of them armed, refuse to cooperate. Maybe Earle just doesn't want to go there because she knows the answer.

As a geologist and oceanographer, I agree with Sylvia wholeheartedly about the state of the oceans and the need to save it. This book gives the lay reader an excellent introduction as to why we need to save the oceans and perhaps some easy steps in how to start the process (voting with our pocketbooks by being selective about what we purchase and eat, for starters). I don't think she was as hard-hitting as she could have been, or as detailed, but I think this was appropriate to introduce folks to the plight of the ocean, its plants, and critters. I hope Sylvia continues delving into more depths in future books: the plight of plankton, how climate warming can drastically affect ocean circulation and why that matters, curbing world population growth, the effects of the oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico during the spring and summer of 2010, the effects of container shipping on climate and the oceans.....etc. An excellent introduction and I hope it will spur many people into action. The choices each one of us makes does affect the planet.

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