



# Underwater Worlds

## DISCOVERY ACTIVITY

### ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

- To describe how human actions impact aquatic animals, with particular focus on plastic pollution
- To explain how humans can live in harmony with aquatic animals
- To recognise that aquatic animals can also feel and perceive things just like land animals
- To identify different aquatic animals and their needs

### RESOURCES

- Printable 'five welfare needs' spinner
- Collected plastic objects - including some of the objects listed in the game on page seven.

Due to the topics covered in the Compassionate Class programme, it is important to consider how different children may react. For more information on creating a safe teaching and learning environment, see guidance on pages five to seven of the Teacher Overview downloadable at: [rspca.org.uk/ccresources](https://rspca.org.uk/ccresources).

These activities could be delivered in the same lesson or spread over a few sessions, depending on the needs of your students. We have not specified timings to allow for flexibility for different settings.



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## INTRODUCTION

Start by asking the class: What under water animals can you name? These are called 'aquatic' animals. Do these animals have the same thoughts and feelings as those that live on land?

Record their knowledge at the beginning of the session on **slide two** or a whiteboard. Use it as a baseline assessment which can be re-visited at the end to see what they can add when asked the same question.

Using **slides 3-8**, explore some different underwater environments. You may be able to think of some others. These slides may prompt memories or knowledge that the children may not recall without the visuals.

Children may think of water as a home for fish, but remember to include mammals and the more unusual creatures such as crocodiles, manatees, sea horses etc.

As an activity for the more able, you could use the internet to research and print out what type of animals live in the various environments.



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## STIMULUS

### Short animation about Kenny the Crab

As a class, watch the animation about Kenny the Crab.

After they have watched, ask children how the crab might be feeling. Allow a few minutes for children to share what they noticed, before asking the prompt questions. You could create a word bank in advance and ask children to listen out for the words as they watch. Talk through the meanings of the words using the animation to help.



## PROMPT QUESTIONS

- Have any of them seen a crab before? What is their natural habitat?
- What can we do to prevent animals like Kenny the Crab from getting into situations like this?
- What do you think the crab would say about plastic if he could speak to you?

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## DISCUSSION

**Slide 10:** This is a discussion slide. Aquatic animals can look very different to the animals we see on land, but they can feel things like fear, pain, happiness, sadness, and many other emotions – even fish! (Introduce the word ‘sentient’ if appropriate).

**Slide 11:** Human activity can have a negative impact. Discuss plastic pollution. Refer back to Kenny the Crab and what was found in his rock pool. Again, you may want to research this online in more detail.

**Slide 12:** Global warming can ruin the homes of some of the sea life. Coral can die – it is where most of the tropical fish live!

**Slide 13:** What looks like good fun for us when we go on holiday can have terrible consequences for the animals. Should we be selfish like this? Should animals provide us with entertainment?

(For those children with higher language abilities it might be a good place to talk about how the animals are taken from the wild or bred just for the tourist trade.)

Owning an aquarium of fish can be rewarding but it’s a big responsibility. Fish aren’t simple creatures to look after — they have very specific needs and require focused and regular care. Did you know that if you own or are responsible for pet fish, you must know and meet all their needs?

To extend this, look up how to **look after tropical fish in a tank**.

## PROMPT QUESTIONS

- Do animals need to look like us to feel the same things that we do?
- Do aquatic animals have the same needs as land animals?
- When you visit beaches, lakes, or rivers, what can you do to keep the environment safe for the animals that live there?
- If you have an aquatic animal as a pet, what do you think you need to do to keep them happy and healthy?

**SLIDES  
10-13**

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## DISCUSSION

**Slide 14:** Discuss what this family on the beach can do to keep Kenny's rock pool safe for him? Go back to the film and pause it when you come to the rubbish that has collected in it. Point out each piece of rubbish and talk about how you can dispose of it safely. Ask them if they would put it in the pool. If not, why not? What might happen to the creatures in there if it was left? Explore taking it home if there are no bins or if they are so full you can't fit anything more into them.

**Slide 15:** We are not going to explore all five welfare needs because some can be combined but looking at a few of them can help the children see if aquatic animals in captivity can have these needs met.

For ease, we are just going to compare two types of captive underwater 'animals': fish in an aquarium at home and dolphins in a sea life centre. You may have the opportunity to extend this to other underwater life and should do so if you feel it is appropriate and would suit the levels of those in your class.

Discuss how the animals are kept and how they would live in the wild. Go through the next slides and see if the welfare needs apply to each situation and if they are being met.

**Slide 16:** Would a warm dry bed work for these under water creatures?

Dolphins don't need a bed but do need space to 'rest'. Sometimes they swim slowly while sleeping. They need the space of an ocean to do this freely. A holding tank does not provide this space. This need is not adequately met.

Tropical fish just need a space to sit on the floor of the tank. Fish can sleep appropriately in this environment.



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## DISCUSSION (CONTINUED)

**Slide 17:** Safety from danger. In captivity there are no predators so they don't need to hide. However, being alert and keeping a watch out is part of natural behaviour and swimming for long distances is part of this behaviour.

Tropical fish need somewhere small to hide away in to feel safe and these can be artificially provided in a tank.

**Slide 18:** The variety of food and the techniques needed, distances travelled etc for both species cannot be replicated in captive environments. However, using the right kind of specialist food can help in a tank. The water has to be carefully prepared. For those more able, look into how hard it is to actually keep a tropical aquarium.

**Slide 19:** Natural behaviour. Hunting for food, playing together and swimming large distances and being social with the whole pod cannot be met in caged environments. Tropical fish often live in huge schools and again, this is not replicated. They also swim over large areas of reefs with different plant life to hide in and to eat.

**Slide 20, 21 and 22:** Talk through the RSPCA's views on captivity.

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## GAME

If you can bring out examples of litter this may help consolidate what they are learning. Go over each item and talk about how long it takes to decompose. This word may have to be explained. **A video to show something decomposing** may help.

This video shows food decomposing in a compost bin. Once children understand what we mean by this, we can generalise to other products and play the next game. Show the picture, let them guess and then show the following slide for the answer.

### Slide 25 and 26:

Sweet wrappers: 1-3 months. Roughly about as long as a school summer holiday.

### Slide 27 and 28:

Plastic bags: 10-20 years. About your life, twice!

### Slide 29 and 30:

Shoes: 50 + years. About the age of your Grandma or Grandad.

### Slide 31, 32, 33 and 34:

Drinks cans, plastic straws, cups and bottles. All between 200-500 years. That's roughly the life of one of your grandparents, 6 times over!

## OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

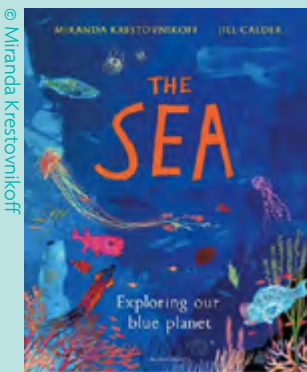
Use the internet to watch some clips showing how amazing wild aquatic animals can be. There are so many to choose from but make sure they are wild pictures like whales jumping, or octopuses showing off their many shape changing talents! Pick a clip with as much or as little scientific information as you need to enhance the consolidation of what life underwater can look like.

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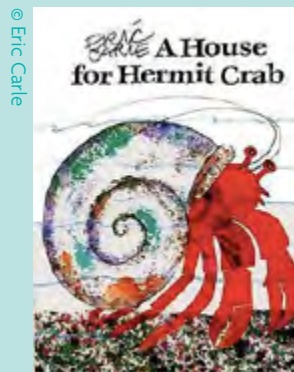
## EXTENSION RESOURCES

To take the learning from this discovery session further, you could explore our suggested extension resources.

### Books and TV



**The Sea, exploring our blue planet**  
by Miranda Krestovnikoff



**Eric Carle's 'A House for Hermit Crab'**



**Blue Planet and Blue Planet 2 documentaries**

### Online Resources

Explore the needs of fish: **Environment**, **Diet**, **Company** and **Health and Welfare**.

Discover **how littering can affect animals**.

Ask pupils to compare and contrast photographs of beaches, and brainstorm how humans can impact aquatic creatures, using one of the National Geographic activities: **Healthy Beaches** or **How people affect ocean animals and plants**.



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## EXTENSION RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

### **Crustacean Compassion**

Lead a discussion with the pupils around whether crustaceans deserve the same animal welfare rights as other animals.

### **Keep Britain Tidy**

Talk to the students about how litter picking can make a big positive impact on the environment.

## FURTHER CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- Host a litter pick at rivers, lakes or a green space near the school. Once the pupils have completed the litter pick, ask them to write down their experiences, what they saw and how it made them feel
- Think about how your school can reduce plastic use in the school and create a campaign. It could start with looking at the plastic used in the classroom and how that could be reduced. Then help your class to deliver an assembly around how plastic waste can harm the environment, and how the school can reduce the amount it uses
- Research interesting facts about aquatic animals and ask students to create their own Top Trump cards. You can find templates online

## WHAT NEXT?

If this is your first Discovery activity, pick another stimulating activity to complete with your pupils.

If you've already completed at least two Discovery activities, choose an Advocacy activity that will provide your pupils with an entry for the Compassionate Class competition.



# Advocacy Activities

## IF YOU LIKED THE 'UNDERWATER WORLDS' DISCOVERY ACTIVITY, WHY NOT TRY THESE ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

### VISITING WILDLIFE TOP TIPS

**Working individually, the children need to imagine they are arranging a trip for them and their friends to the beach. But before they go, they have to make sure everyone who might be going on the trip understands how to respect their surroundings and make sure they don't disturb the habitats of the animals living there.**

- Design a poster that you can display around the school which lists the top three things to do that will make sure you do not harm the environment at the beach e.g. take litter with you, don't touch any plants or creatures you see
- Share what you include on the posters with other classes in an assembly

### MY DREAM HOME

**Imagine you are an aquatic animal living in the wild, being interviewed by a television reporter about your dream home.**

- One of the pupils can be the reporter, and can come up with questions to ask the animal about their dream home
- The pupil who is playing the animal must share what their home would look like, whether they want neighbours, what they would and wouldn't like stocked in their underwater fridge

### AQUATIC ART

**Using litter that you have collected, create an art installation of an aquatic animal. It should include lots of types of plastic of all different sizes and shapes.**

- Display at school and invite the wider community to raise awareness of plastic pollution