

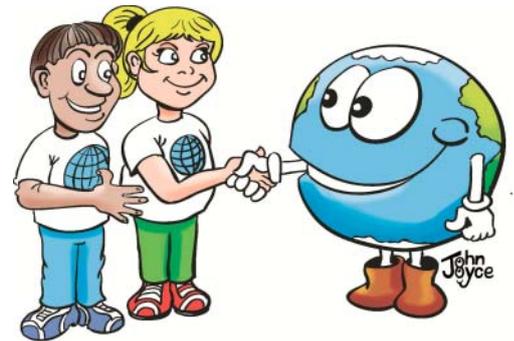


# Black John - the Bogus Pirate

## Black John the Bogus Pirate

By John Joyce

### The Ocean & Humans are Totally Interconnected



**Avast there, Mateys! Today we come to possibly the most important of the Seven Principles of Ocean Literacy, which states that the oceans and humans are totally interconnected. In simple terms, this means that actions we take on the land have an effect on the Ocean which, in turn, can have an effect on us.**

While many of us know that caring for the Ocean is a 'good thing' to do, most of don't know just how vital it is to keep the Ocean healthy. This is because the Ocean is our 'life support system' here on 'Spaceship Earth' and, if that life support system were to fail, life on Earth as we know it would cease to exist.

The Ocean provides us with food – in the form of fish and shellfish. It also helps us transport goods and passengers all around the world by way of ships. The Ocean is a source of recreation and enjoyment – from tourism, beachcombing and sunbathing, to more active pursuits like sailing, swimming, surfing and SCUBA diving. Many medicines come from animals and plants that live in the Ocean, which is also a limitless source of ideas and inspiration for artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers and storytellers of all kinds. The Ocean is also a source of energy – be it from offshore drilling for oil and gas below the seabed, to the harnessing of tidal and wave power to generate electricity.

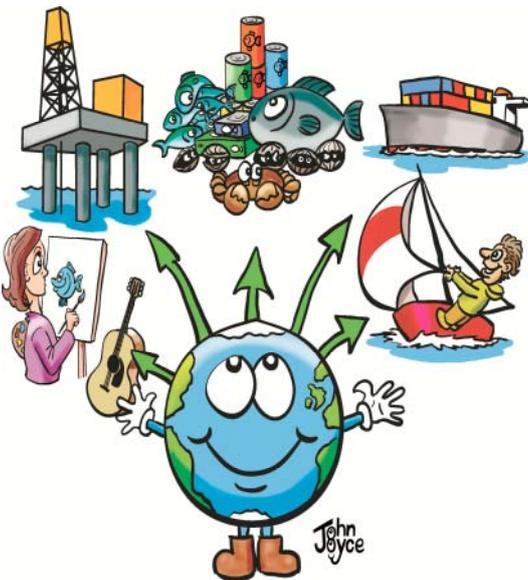
On a much larger scale, ocean currents help regulate our climate by transporting warm water from the Equator to the North and South poles and cooler water back again to the Equator. Seawater also evaporates to form rainclouds, which then transport freshwater far inland to fill rivers and water crops.

Importantly, the Ocean is home to trillions upon trillions of microscopic plants called 'phytoplankton' which – like plants on land - absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and give off oxygen – enough for every second breath that you take!

The problem is, that we humans often forget or ignore the facts that the Ocean is not limitless and that our activities on land and at sea can effect its ability to support life on Earth.

Unregulated industrial fishing not only reduces the populations of commercial fish species such as cod, herring and mackerel – sometimes to dangerously low levels - but also other fish species trapped in fishing gear as 'by-catch'. Untreated sewage and other industrial wastes pumped into the Ocean can not only poison marine life with toxic chemical, but also in breaking down, use up the oxygen in seawater, making it impossible for marine life to flourish.

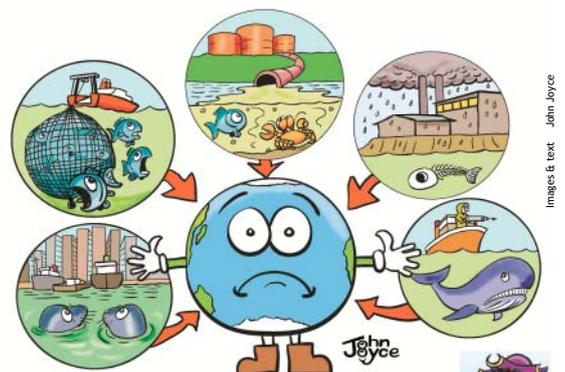
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Large quantities of carbon dioxide, released into the atmosphere from burning oil, coal and wood combine with rainwater to create carbonic acid which, in turn, flows into the Ocean – increasing its acidity and reducing its ability to support life.

Humankind has also killed off most of the larger animals in the Ocean through unrestricted whaling and fishing, while human developments on shore have changed beaches where marine birds and mammals come ashore to breed. In short, we are being careless with our planet's 'life support system'.

And like astronauts whose life support system has failed, we could find ourselves in serious trouble aboard 'Spaceship Earth'! Unless we change our ways, become 'Ocean Literate' and realise the true interconnectedness between ourselves and the Ocean, we could be in serious trouble in years to come.



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