

Scientists warn of massive ocean extinctions

June 27 2011, By Sandy Bauers

When we think of mass extinctions, we think of the dinosaurs. Nothing that could happen in the modern era, right?

But a panel of [marine scientists](#) who met earlier this year in Oxford, England, have concluded that the world's oceans are facing an unprecedented loss of species. As the London Independent reports today, "The seas are degenerating far faster than anyone has predicted, the report says, because of the cumulative impact of a number of severe individual stresses, ranging from [climate warming](#) and sea-water acidification, to widespread [chemical pollution](#) and gross overfishing."

They concluded that the negative impacts are greater than predicted, and that mass extinctions could occur within one human generation.

The scientists were brought together by the International Programme on the State of the Ocean (IPSO) and the International Union for the [Conservation of Nature](#) (IUCN). Click on both links for more information from those groups and a copy of the report.

"The world's leading experts on oceans are surprised by the rate and magnitude of changes we are seeing," says Dan Laffoley, Marine Chair of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, senior advisor on Marine Science and Conservation for IUCN and co-author of the report. He was quoted in a press release. "The challenges for the future of the ocean are vast, but unlike previous generations, we know what now needs to happen. The time to protect the blue heart of our planet is now, today and urgent."

One of the threats that hit home for because it shows how all of us affect what's going on in the oceans: "New science also suggests that pollutants including flame retardant chemicals (in foam and plastics) and synthetic musks found in detergents are being traced in the Polar Seas, and that these chemicals can be absorbed by tiny [plastic particles](#) in the ocean which are in turn eaten by [marine creatures](#)."

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Citation: Scientists warn of massive ocean extinctions (2011, June 27) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-06-scientists-massive-ocean-extinctions.html>

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