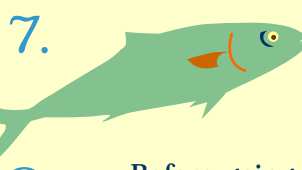




TAKING ACTION FOR FISHERIES

Fisheries issues affect us all in some way. Because of that, there are many ways that each of us can help in solving the problem. Actions we take can range from simple consumer choices to a more active role in community decision making to more responsible activities at the workplace. Read on for a list of 24 actions and choices that you can take personally to help.



1. If you find anything like oil or sewage leaking into a stream or lake, report it to your local department of natural resources or department of environmental protection.
2. Help protect water quality in your community by working with a nonprofit group or government agency in your community to plant trees along stream banks. Trees help improve water quality in streams by preventing soil from washing away into streams, where the soil can clog the stream and cloud out light.
3. Organize a group of students or co-workers to help clean up a waterway near your school or workplace. Rivers and streams can get polluted with litter. Regular cleanup efforts can improve habitats for fish and other aquatic life.
4. If you live in a coastal area, organize a group of students or co-workers to help clean up a beach near you. Regular cleanup efforts can improve habitats for fish and other aquatic life. The Center for Marine Conservation (CMC) organizes a Coastal Cleanup every year. Since the program began in 1986, more than 1 million volunteers have collected more than 27 million pounds of trash. Find out more about CMC's Coastal Cleanup by calling 1-800-CMC-BEACH or by visiting CMC's Web site at www.cmc-ocean.org.
5. Celebrate in some other way than releasing helium balloons, particularly Mylar balloons that don't break down like latex ones. The balloons can end up in rivers, streams, and ponds where mammals, reptiles, and birds may eat them and become sick or even die.
6. Recycle your motor oil. Just 1 gallon of oil—the amount from a small car engine—can pollute up to 1 million gallons of freshwater and can create an 8-acre oil slick. To find a recycling location near you, ask the manager of your local gas station, or contact your county or state department of environmental services.
7.  When you go fishing, never throw used fishing line in the water. Birds and other aquatic animals can get tangled in it and can even die. If you see old line or other litter in the water, pull it out and dispose of it properly.
8. Before going out on a fishing trip, find out the current fishing regulations in the area you'll be visiting. Respecting fishing regulations helps species that are in decline to recover more quickly.



**BIODIVERSITY
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Saving Life on Earth is a traveling exhibit developed by World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Find out more at www.biodiversity911.org.

9. Try not to use fertilizers containing phosphates and nitrates on your lawn, garden, or field. If they wash into streams and ponds, they can cause an overgrowth of algae that, when it dies and decays, uses up oxygen necessary for aquatic animals and plants to survive. Instead, use organic fertilizers such as compost and manure.
10. Help reduce water pollution by recycling your glass bottles and jars, as well as your metal food cans and anything else containing tin, either at your curbside or at a recycling center. Ask your school or employer to do the same. Processing recycled glass produces 50 percent less water pollution than processing raw materials does, and it helps keep a lot of bulk out of landfills. Reusing the materials in tin cans produces 76 percent less water pollution than using new materials does.
11. Help protect wetlands by buying and collecting Federal Duck Stamps, available at post offices and National Wildlife Refuges. More than three-quarters of the seafood we eat begins life in these habitats, but they're critically endangered worldwide. Duck Stamps have provided the funds to protect nearly 4 million acres of wetlands in the United States.
12. Become involved in decisions that might affect wetlands in your community. More than three-quarters of the seafood we eat begins life in these wildlife-rich habitats, but they're critically endangered worldwide. If you learn of plans to drain or fill wetlands in your community, find out more. Let decision makers know about the many benefits wetlands offer, including recreational opportunities, water quality improvement, and habitat for economically important species.
13. Participate in or organize a special event or wetlands activity during the month of May to celebrate American Wetlands Month. Wetland cleanups, tours, speakers, and festivals can all help raise awareness about wetlands and the ways they support biodiversity.
14. If you own a fish tank, look for the certification label from Marine Aquarium Council (MAC) when buying tropical fish. Many tropical fish are taken from coral reefs using poisonous chemicals that harm the reefs. MAC monitors fish collection to be sure it's sustainable and environmentally friendly and then certifies fish that have met council standards.
15. Try to buy salmon that is caught in the wild instead of salmon raised on a farm. Salmon farming can create ocean pollution and threaten the health and genetic integrity of wild salmon. Salmon caught in the wild in Alaska is probably the best choice, because Atlantic salmon is heavily fished. If you're not sure where a piece of salmon is from, just ask. Store and restaurant managers may not know, but if enough customers ask, they'll have more incentive to find out.
16. When shopping for seafood, look for products that have a Marine Stewardship Council label, because these products have been certified as environmentally safe. The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is an independent organization created by conservation groups and the fishing industry to certify fisheries that are operating sustainably. To find out more about the MSC, visit the council's Web site at <www.msc.org>.
17. Before you buy, use a seafood shopping guide to learn which seafood is best for biodiversity. Guides are available from the National Audubon Society <www.audubon.org>, Monterey Bay Aquarium <www.mbayaq.org>, and other groups.



18. Organize a storm drain stenciling project in your neighborhood. Signs on storm drains remind residents that the water washing down storm drains winds up in local waterways, where it can affect biodiversity. Clean Ocean Action <www.cleanoceanaction.org> organizes several storm drain stenciling weeks every year.
19. Become a volunteer water quality monitor. Help collect water quality data for a water body in your community. Visit the EPA's Volunteer Monitoring Homepage <www.epa.gov/OWOW/monitoring/vol.html> for more information. And if you live in a coastal area, visit the National Estuary Program's Volunteer Monitoring page <www.epa.gov/OWOW/estuaries/guidance/contents.html> for information and ideas.
20. Adopt your watershed. A watershed is an area of land that catches rain or snow that drains into a water body like a pond, marsh, stream, river, or the ocean. Everyone lives in a watershed, and everyone's actions affect the watersheds and the biodiversity in them. You can locate your watershed and find out about groups that are helping to protect it (or find out how to start a group of your own) at the EPA's Adopt Your Watershed Web site <www.epa.gov/adopt>.
21. If you have a septic system, properly maintain it to avoid polluting water with nutrients and pathogens. Inspect your septic system annually, and pump it regularly. A three-bedroom house with a 1,000-gallon tank should have its tank pumped every three to five years. Smaller tanks should be pumped more regularly.
22. Clean up after your pets when you take them for walks. The nutrients and pathogens that are found in pet waste can contaminate streams, rivers, or estuaries when it washes down storm drains.
23. Become involved in planning and zoning decisions that affect your local waterways. Encourage officials to consider how developments will affect your local rivers and streams, especially those projects that could increase the amount of sediments in your waterways. If you live in a coastal area, you might promote ideas that help limit coastal erosion and overdevelopment.
24. If you live in a coastal area, consider participating in your local National Estuary Program's Citizen Advisory Committee. The National Estuary Program (NEP) brings together local, state, and federal government officials with interest groups and the general public to make decisions about estuaries. To find out more about the NEP, visit the program's Web site at <www.epa.gov/nep/nep.html>.

