



Whale song

What is happening?

Whale song is lower than it used to be in five types of whales. Scientists think that this is because the whales' environment has changed.

How do we know this?

- Scientists have measured the pitch and loudness of whale calls at six sites in the Indian Ocean over seven years.

Why is this important?

- It could indicate that something in the ocean has changed. If we understand what is happening, we will have more chance of protecting the animals and plants that live there.
- The number of whales in the ocean has increased (since whaling was banned in 1986). This is good news. If the whales are closer together, they don't have to sing as loudly to communicate. Producing quieter sounds also seems to lead to lower-pitched sounds.
- An increase in carbon dioxide gas in the atmosphere has made the oceans more acidic. This enables sound to travel further in the sea. This might be why whales don't have to sing as loudly and they have become lower-pitched than they used to be, but it's not good news for all animals. Acidic water is known to be damaging to some animals and plants living in the ocean.

KEY FACTS

Sound

Sound waves are caused by vibrations and can travel through solids, liquids and gases. Pitch describes how high or low a sound is.

Oceans

There are many sounds in the oceans coming from the animals that live there and human activities (e.g., large ships, drilling for oil, gas and minerals).

Whale song

Whales 'talk' to each other using clicks, whistles and squeaks. Their calls can travel hundreds of kilometres.

Dr Emmanuelle Leroy is one of the scientists who carried out this work. She records whale song to find and track whales. Whales may be very large but they are hard to find in massive oceans!



What else can you find out?

- How do different animals communicate using sound?
- How are our oceans changing?
- Use the QR codes to find out more about marine biologists and what they do.

Link 1: <https://video.link/w/nMeTc>

Link 2: https://pstt.org.uk/application/files/7916/2851/6348/Marine_biologist_-_Dawood_Qureshi.pdf



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