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Climate change threatens fish populations

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19 November, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Climate change threatens fish populations

A new report from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) shows how fish populations are in serious danger from global warming. The report "Are we putting our fish in hot water?" describes how climate change is increasing the water temperature in rivers, lakes and seas. This means there is less food and oxygen available for fish. It also means the fish may not grow fully and may have fewer offspring. Some fish cannot reproduce if winter temperatures are not cold enough. Warmer water means fish could mass migrate to cooler areas. Some species will become extinct if temperatures rise even by one or two degrees.

WWF director Andrew Lee said climate change increases the pressure on fish populations that are already being cut by over-fishing. He said: "We must act urgently to reduce both carbon dioxide emissions and fishing...to protect fish populations." He added fish "are one of the world's most valuable biological, nutritional and economic assets." Forty percent of people in the world rely on fish for their main source of protein. Dr. Richard Dixon of WWF Scotland said: "If we fail to secure deeper reductions in greenhouse gas emissions we will increase the pressures on fish and the billions of people that depend on them."

Source: http://www.wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/int_hotfish_ma.pdf

WARM-UPS

1. I'M A FISH: You are now a fish. Spend one minute thinking about your life as a fish. Walk around the class and talk to the other "fish" about being a fish. What do you do all day? What do you worry about? What are your plans for the weekend? What do you think about global warming and hotter water?

2. EXTINCTION: If the world becomes warmer, many species will become extinct. How would your life change if these creatures disappeared? How would the world change?

- Shellfish
- Frogs
- Sea fish
- Dogs
- Elephants
- Chickens
- Ants
- Pigs

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

WWF / fish / hot water / temperatures / rivers / lakes / seas / oxygen / winter / cool areas / fishing / economic assets / protein / Scotland / greenhouse gases

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. FISH: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with fish. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. FISH CHAT: Student A is a fish. Student B is a fisherman/woman. Role play a conversation between the two. Change partners often. Students A may also talk with each other and "compare notes". Students B may do the same.

6. FISHY OPINIONS: Do you agree with these opinions on fish and fishing? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Humans will become extinct if fish become extinct.
- b. Fish will never disappear. There will always be enough fish to feed the world.
- c. Reports and conferences will not change government actions to help fish.
- d. Most people think fish will survive and the problem of over-fishing will disappear.
- e. The USA Government is acting criminally in not cutting CO2 emissions.
- f. In many ways, people are the same as fish.
- g. Hobby fishing should be banned to help protect fish populations.
- h. The fishing industry will find new ways to breed enough fish for us to eat.

7. FISH JOKE: What do you call a fish with no 'eyes'? (See "Answers" section to find out.)

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A new report says global warming will kill all fish within ten years. | T / F |
| b. A WWF report recommends putting fish in hot water. | T / F |
| c. Some fish cannot reproduce if the water is too warm. | T / F |
| d. A two-degree rise in temperature will make some species extinct. | T / F |
| e. A WWF director said over-fishing is not a problem. | T / F |
| f. The director said fish are valuable economic investments. | T / F |
| g. Nearly 14 percent of people depend on fish for basic food. | T / F |
| h. Billions of people will suffer if greater pressure is put on fish. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| a. serious | rely |
| b. hot water | move |
| c. offspring | reduced |
| d. migrate | resources |
| e. extinct | trouble |
| f. pressure | C02 |
| g. cut | history |
| h. carbon dioxide | grave |
| i. assets | strain |
| j. depend | children |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. in serious danger | water temperature in rivers |
| b. climate change is increasing the | in greenhouse gas emissions |
| c. less food and oxygen | fully |
| d. fish may not grow | main source of protein |
| e. fish could mass migrate | being cut by over-fishing |
| f. fish populations that are already | from global warming |
| g. act urgently to reduce both | of people that depend on them |
| h. rely on fish for their | available for fish |
| i. fail to secure deeper reductions | to cooler areas |
| j. pressures on fish and the billions | carbon dioxide emissions and fishing |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Climate change threatens fish populations

A new _____ from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) shows how fish populations are in _____ danger from global warming. The report "Are we _____ our fish in hot water?" describes how climate change is increasing the water temperature in rivers, lakes and seas. This means there is less food and _____ available for fish. It also means the fish may not grow _____ and may have fewer _____. Some fish cannot reproduce if winter temperatures are not cold enough. Warmer water means fish could _____ migrate to cooler areas. Some species will become extinct if temperatures rise even by one or two _____.

WWF director Andrew Lee said _____ change increases the pressure on fish populations that are already being _____ by over-fishing. He said: We must act _____ to reduce both carbon dioxide emissions and fishing...to protect fish populations." He added fish "are one of the world's most _____ biological, nutritional and economic assets." Forty percent of people in the world _____ on fish for their main source of _____. Dr. Richard Dixon of WWF Scotland said: "If we fail to secure _____ reductions in greenhouse gas emissions we will increase the pressures on fish and the _____ of people that depend on them."

degrees
oxygen
serious
mass
report
offspring
putting
fully
protein
urgently
rely
climate
billions
valuable
deeper
cut

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Climate change threatens fish populations

A new report from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) _____ how fish populations are in serious danger from global warming. The report "Are we putting our fish in hot water?" describes how _____ change is increasing the water temperature in rivers, lakes and seas. This means there is less food and oxygen available for fish. It also means the fish may not grow _____ and may have _____ offspring. Some fish cannot reproduce if winter temperatures are not cold enough. Warmer water means fish could _____ migrate to cooler areas. Some species will become extinct if temperatures _____ even by one or two degrees.

WWF director Andrew Lee said climate change increases the _____ on fish populations that are already being cut by over-fishing. He said: We must act _____ to reduce both carbon dioxide emissions and fishing...to _____ fish populations." He added fish "are one of the world's most valuable biological, nutritional and economic _____." Forty percent of people in the world rely on fish for their _____ source of protein. Dr. Richard Dixon of WWF Scotland said: "If we fail to _____ deeper reductions in greenhouse gas emissions we will increase the pressures on fish and the billions of people that _____ on them."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'hot'** and **'water'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "GLOBAL WARMING" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about global warming and fish.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- serious
- hot
- oxygen
- offspring
- mass
- degrees
- pressure
- cut
- act
- assets
- source
- billions

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think about fish being in danger of extinction?
- c. Is it just fish that are in hot water because of climate change?
- d. Are you interested in new reports on climate change?
- e. Do you think fish populations will survive by migrating to cooler waters?
- f. Would temperature change make you think about moving house?
- g. What should governments do to stop over-fishing?
- h. What would happen if a few fish species became extinct?
- i. Don't you think people could eat tuna or chicken if some fish disappeared?
- j. When was the last time you were in hot water?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think we still have time to save the fish populations?
- d. How bad would it be if all salmon disappeared from the world?
- e. Do you ever get tired of hearing about another environmental report?
- f. What would it mean for the economy of your country if some fish species became extinct?
- g. Do you think governments are more worried about losing votes from the fishing industry than losing the fish populations?
- h. George W. Bush thinks scientists will find a way of reducing CO₂ and industry can continue polluting. What do you think?
- i. Which do you think is more important, the car industry or the survival of catfish and salmon?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

FISH ROLE PLAY: Should companies cut pollution levels to help some fish breathe a little better and have more offspring?

Team up with classmates who have the same role as you. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and "strategies" before the role play begins. Introduce yourself to the other role players.

Role A – MARINE ENVIRONMENTALIST

You believe many fish species will disappear soon. If CO2 emissions are not drastically cut, many fish species will quickly become extinct. It will be too late to save many fish species. Warmer seas and rivers will be deadly for humans. Scientists will not be able to replace the food caused by the death of the oceans and rivers.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY CO2 SHOULD BE CUT TO HELP FISH.

Role B – CAR COMPANY EXECUTIVE

You are angry with environmentalists telling us the world will die. Millions of species have died over the years. It's natural. Most fish populations will migrate to where they can breed. Fish are not stupid. Cutting CO2 emissions will harm industries, which provide incomes and food to millions of families.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY FISH WILL BE OK.

Role C – FISHERMAN

You are not worried about your future. You have seen no change in the number of fish you catch each year. There will always be plenty of fish. The oceans are too big to be changed by global warming. You think scientists produce reports just to become famous.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY FISH WILL BE OK.

Role D – A FISH

You are Chief Fish Officer of the Atlantic Fish Against Global Warming Society. You know things are getting serious. Icebergs are melting, rivers are drying up, millions of your cousins have disappeared because of over-fishing. You heard it is because of humans' stupidity and greed. Let the humans know what is really happening in the oceans and rivers.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY CO2 SHOULD BE CUT TO HELP YOU.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

Discuss what should be done about saving fish populations.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the WWF report. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. RESPONSIBILITIES: Who is responsible for saving the fish populations? Write down a few of the responsibilities of the following people:

- George W. Bush
- The CEO of a worldwide supermarket chain
- You
- The boss of a fishing union
- The CEO of General Motors
- The owner of a sushi restaurant.

Explain what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

4. LETTER: You are a fish. Write a letter to the organizers of the UN Climate Change Conference. Tell them about how global warming is changing your environment. What should they do to help save fish populations and the whole world? Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

FISH JOKE:

fish

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. F c. T d. T e. F f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. serious	grave
b. hot water	trouble
c. offspring	children
d. migrate	move
e. extinct	history
f. pressure	strain
g. cut	reduced
h. carbon dioxide	CO2
i. assets	resources
j. depend	rely

PHRASE MATCH:

a. in serious danger	from global warming
b. climate change is increasing the	water temperature in rivers
c. less food and oxygen	available for fish
d. fish may not grow	fully
e. fish could mass migrate	to cooler areas
f. fish populations that are already	being cut by over-fishing
g. act urgently to reduce both	carbon dioxide emissions and fishing
h. rely on fish for their	main source of protein
i. fail to secure deeper reductions	in greenhouse gas emissions
j. pressures on fish and the billions	of people that depend on them

GAP FILL:

Climate change threatens fish populations

A new **report** from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) shows how fish populations are in **serious** danger from global warming. The report "Are we **putting** our fish in hot water?" describes how climate change is increasing the water temperature in rivers, lakes and seas. This means there is less food and **oxygen** available for fish. It also means the fish may not grow **fully** and may have fewer **offspring**. Some fish cannot reproduce if winter temperatures are not cold enough. Warmer water means fish could **mass** migrate to cooler areas. Some species will become extinct if temperatures rise even by one or two **degrees**.

WWF director Andrew Lee said **climate** change increases the pressure on fish populations that are already being **cut** by over-fishing. He said: We must act **urgently** to reduce both carbon dioxide emissions and fishing...to protect fish populations." He added fish "are one of the world's most **valuable** biological, nutritional and economic assets." Forty percent of people in the world **rely** on fish for their main source of **protein**. Dr. Richard Dixon of WWF Scotland said: "If we fail to secure **deeper** reductions in greenhouse gas emissions we will increase the pressures on fish and the **billions** of people that depend on them."