

Chapter 6 Preview | Katie Auth

The Oceans: Resilience at Risk

Are we pushing beyond the limits of the oceans' capacities?



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"TAKING URGENT AND CONCERTED ACTION TO IMPROVE OCEAN HEALTH IS AN IMPERATIVE, NOT BECAUSE SAVING WHALES AND CORAL REEFS ARE NOT WORTHY PURSUITS IN AND OF THEMSELVES (THEY ARE)... BUT BECAUSE OUR LIVELIHOODS AND OUR LIVES DEPEND ON THE SEA."

Most humans spend little time in or on the oceans, but our lives are profoundly shaped by their condition. That condition is increasingly dire. Overfishing is compromising the oceans' ability to supply the protein on which roughly 3 billion people depend. Ocean waters also function as a major sink for human-caused carbon emissions and the heat they trap in the atmosphere, but the rate of absorption of both heat and emissions may be slowing. And carbon absorption is changing the acidity of ocean waters, which in turn imperils vital marine organisms and even the marine food web itself.

State of the World is available for purchase at www.worldwatch.org/bookstore/state-of-the-world



As our negative impact on the oceans has grown, so has our understanding of the myriad ways in which the health of the marine environment determines our own.