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## Film Review

# Seaspiracy: A metaphor for our lives

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Our world is changing in very challenging ways that threaten to be overwhelming. We are facing massive overpopulation, depletion of natural resources, and climate change. Any of these alone may eliminate our very existence. Combined, the prospects look grim indeed. I find it deeply saddening to see the general lack of awareness, much less serious concern, about these issues. The selfishness of the majority of people who seek only their immediate benefits, without caring for other people, not to mention the general welfare of our planet, is mind-blowing to me. It does not bode well for the future of human existence, nor for the existence of all other life on this planet, that humanity as a whole has not been able to curb its selfish abuse of the environment.

[Seaspiracy](#) is a film that highlights these issues poignantly. It details how people around the world are devastating the creatures in the oceans that produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide, sustaining life of all the beings on our planet.

The director of this sobering film, Ali Tabrizi, has been fascinated by the wonderful world of creatures in the waters of the sea. He created a documentary about the ecology of the oceans. He was quickly disillusioned about his romantic vision of this world and the relationships of people to life beneath the waves. He presents the survey of a broad spectrum of ecological issues.

Among the many ecological challenges, he found beached whales, as well as dolphins and other sea creatures killed by swallowing plastic garbage discarded in the oceans. The tragedy is not only in the loss of these creatures, but also in the fallout associated with their disappearance in massive numbers. The whales, dolphins and other sea life fertilize the waters with their biological wastes. These wastes support the lives of phytoplankton, the microscopic plants that produce oxygen which sustains these microscopic beings. In this process these

microscopic plants absorb four times the carbon dioxide produced by all the creatures in the amazon forests which generate 85% of the oxygen we breathe.

Tabrizi alerts us that protecting these creatures is essential to maintaining a sustainable environment and supporting all life on our planet. If these creatures die, so do humans and all other creatures on our planet who are dependent on breathing oxygen and drinking fresh water.

He found that there are enormous garbage patches in the oceans, collectively estimated to weigh 150 million tons. This plastic garbage deteriorates into micro-particles, worsening the negative effects of the plastic. These micro-particles are eaten by sea creatures – large and small – and by humans and other animals who eat the sea creatures whose bodies are polluted with them.

The Japanese set up many shows of dolphins who are trained to perform various tricks for entertainment parks. They claim that this is what the dolphins are hunted for. The slaughter of thousands of other dolphins is carried on out of sight of public observation. Anderson managed to film these. He estimated that for every dolphin on display in the entertainment parks, another twelve were slaughtered.

This film highlights many saddening aspects of the degradation of our world's environment, showing humanity's destruction of our planet. Here are some of the many details he discusses:

- The Japanese herding large groups of dolphins into shallow bays, where they were slaughtered. The film crew had to be careful in taking their photographs and videos, avoiding observation by the Japanese, who followed them everywhere they went.
- He reports a single bluefin tuna fish can bring \$3,100,000. This is hard to believe, but is confirmed by internet references. Tuna usually sells for up to \$40 per pound, though the price can fluctuate to more than \$200 per pound (Tuna prices).

***This film catalogues many other depredations by humans on the environment. For instance:***

- Sadly, only 3% of Pacific blue fin tuna remain alive today, using the 1970 figures for tuna as a baseline.
- Even more distressing, they found that these slaughters were providing dolphin meat for marketing.
- Anderson also found that shark fins were being sold in enormous quantities in Japan. Various species of sharks have been reduced to between 80% and 99% of their 1970 population levels. Without sharks, small fish are not driven to the surface, where seabirds can catch them. As a result, populations of sea birds have also been drastically reduced.
- Tens of thousands of dolphins have been killed over the years by being caught and discarded from nets used to catch fish for food.
- Many Caribbean coral reefs are devoid of fish.
- Dr. Sylvia Earle, oceanographer National Geographic; Deep Ocean Exploration & Research, points out that since the mid-1900's, humans extracting wildlife from oceans. Approaching end of commercial fishing [UNCLEAR]

- In the 1830's 1-2 tons of halibut were caught daily by every fishing boat. Today there are catches of only [???]tons per year.
- Fish moving up and down promote circulation and mixing in the oceans, equal to winds, currents, tides
- There are over 4,600,000 commercial fishing vessels worldwide.
- Marine vigilante conservation group Sea Shepherd has rammed individual fishing ships, eliminating 13 of them.
- Commercial fishing is one of the greatest threats to whales and dolphins, killing over 300,000 whales and dolphins annually. Earth Island Institute tracks these slaughters and has identified only limited numbers of fisheries that are genuinely dolphin safe.
- Fishing nets and fishing gear constitute an enormous part of the plastic pollution of our oceans.
- Commercial fishing is far more damaging to ocean ecology than oil pollution.
- Corals are depleted when there are no fish to excrete wastes that feed the corals.
- Sea life moving up and down in the oceans create water circulation exceeding all other contributors to water circulation.
- Trawling devastates sea life.
- About 93% of worldwide CO2 is stored in the oceans by marine vegetation, algae and corals. With losses of this sea life, CO2 is released into the atmosphere.
- 25 million acres of ocean forest are lost to trawling damage annually.
- There is no established definition of sustainability.
- Worldwide fishing subsidies are 35 billion dollars, more than is used to combat world hunger.
- 1 in 3 imported fish are caught and sold illegally.
- An estimated 24,000 fishermen die annually, having to go far out to sea for their catch.
- 2.7 trillion fish are caught every year, equaling 5 million / minute.
- Sylvia Earle, PhD, predicts oceans will be empty of sea life by 2048.

These and many more aspects of our planet that is being devastated by human beings are clearly documented in this most sobering film, which alerts us to multitudes of ecological problems that threaten the existence of all life on our planet.

Seaspiracy

<https://www.netflix.com/watch/81014008?trackId=14277281&tctx=-97%2C-97%2C%2C%2C%2C>

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