

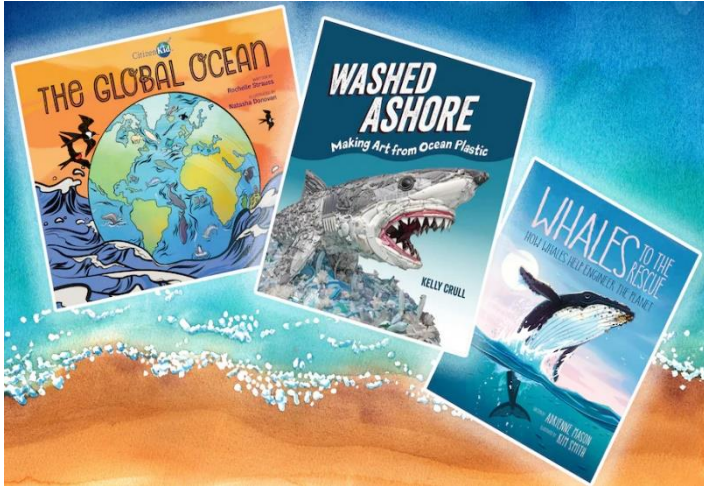
The Washington Post

New books encourage deeper understanding of the ocean

Authors suggest ways for kids to get involved and help undo the damage.

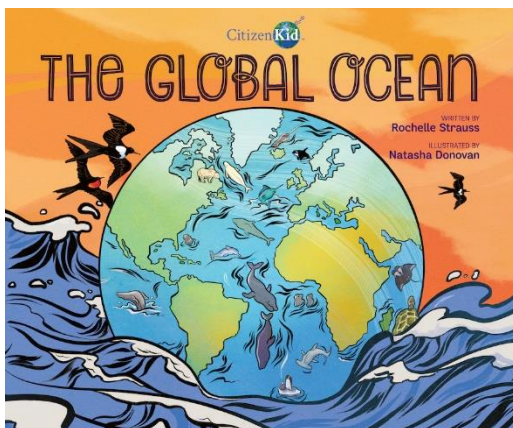
By Abby McGanney Nolan

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(The Washington Post illustration/Kids Can Press, Millbrook Press)

Life on Earth started in the ocean more than 4 billion years ago, and the ocean has sustained all living things since then. But now Earth's water needs relief from various threats so that our planet can again become a healthy place to live. These new books present three clear messages: that we are all connected by Earth's oceans, that we must understand the damage that's being done to them, and that we must act now, before the problems become too big to fix.



[The Global Ocean](#)

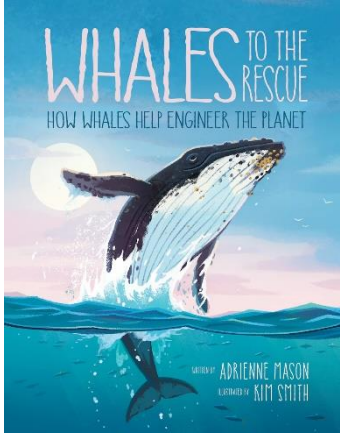
Written by Rochelle Strauss; illustrated by Natasha Donovan

Ages 8 to 12

Author Rochelle Strauss says that the Earth's five oceans are not separate from one another. They flow together, holding 97 percent of Earth's water. After explaining ocean currents and the central role of "the global ocean" in the water cycle, Strauss compares these processes to the human heart: "All life relies on this constant circulation of water, just as you need your beating heart to keep the blood pumping through your body."

But just because it's huge and powerful doesn't mean that the ocean can protect itself from all that humans have thrown into it and taken out of it. Along with releasing excessive carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, people have damaged coastal habitats, taken too much marine life out of the ocean and let too many man-made products (such as plastics, fishing equipment, and chemicals) into it.

Throughout the book, Strauss offers solutions. Some are easy, such as using cold water for laundry so that fewer tiny plastic fibers from your clothes go down the drain and end up in the ocean. (Warmer water causes the fibers to break down.) Other solutions are part of the challenging but fascinating realm of scientific innovation. For example, a British university student recently addressed two problems at once by creating a biodegradable plastic from fish products that would otherwise be thrown away.

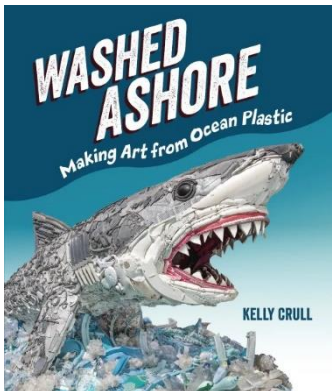


[Whales to the Rescue: How Whales Help Engineer the Planet](#)

Written by Adrienne Mason; illustrated by Kim Smith
Ages 8 to 12

For more than a century, humans hunted whales with ships and harpoons and sold their blubber, baleen and meat for substantial profits. Whales of various species were pursued with such intensity that they nearly became extinct.

Adrienne Mason's book (to be published September 6) explains why we need to help whales live and multiply. "As they swim and dive and eat and poop," she writes, "whales are working as ecosystem engineers." Traveling between different depths and over thousands of miles, they help maintain the chemical balance of the ocean.



[Washed Ashore: Making Art From Ocean Plastic](#)

By Kelly Crull
Ages 6 to 10

From the fierce shark on its cover to the swirling ocean at its end, "Washed Ashore" shows us that what we throw away can be made into art that surprises and educates us.

About 15 years ago, Angela Haseltine Pozzi started noticing a lot of plastic trash on the beach near her home in Oregon. With the help of hundreds of volunteers, [she began making large sculptures of animals out of the plastic junk](#) (ranging in size from bottle caps to tires) that had been collected.

In this book, author-photographer Kelly Crull features 14 of Pozzi's sculptures, describing each animal and the threats they face, including jagged-edged plastics, abandoned fishing nets and microplastics that get passed along the food chain.

Krull mentions many ways to keep plastics out of the ocean, such as avoiding single-use water bottles and participating in beach cleanups. He also encourages readers to follow Pozzi's example and get creative in protecting the ocean.