
REVIEWS OF BOOKS OR OTHER MEDIA

New Book for Elementary and Middle Grades Highlights Ocean Literacy Principle 6

David Christopher

University of Delaware, US
dmchrist@udel.edu

Using stunning photography and real stories of people and groups working in ocean conservation, *Planet Ocean: Why We All Need a Healthy Ocean* inspires young readers to help spread conservation messages and take action to help the ocean.

Keywords: book review; planet ocean; ocean literacy

Planet Ocean: Why We All Need a Healthy Ocean is a recently released book by Patricia Newman with photographs by Anne Crawley. Targeted to children in grades four through eight, his new book highlights how people and the health of the ocean are linked. A quote by Anne Crawley featured on page 7 above of an image of two young divers sums up the mission statement of this book:

“I know how important the ocean is to our lives, how fragile it is, and how much we’re changing it. I want kids and teens to speak up for our ocean.” – Anne Crawley

Throughout this book, Newman uses Crawley as our guide as we visit three very different parts of the ocean: the Coral Triangle, the Salish Sea, and the Arctic. Crawley is an award-winning photographer and filmmaker who has traveled the world. She uses images to connect people to the ocean and urges them to become “a voice for the sea.” At each stop on the journey, we learn how environmental changes in the ocean are directly affecting the livelihood and culture of individuals and communities that live in these areas. However, the author does not focus just on the negative. For every environmental concern, Newman also tells us about how individuals and groups are working to address the environmental issues facing their communities. For instance, in the chapter about the Coral Triangle, Newman discusses several of the issues facing coral reefs, including climate change and marine debris, and how these issues are having an impact on both the corals and the people in the area. The author then shows us how people are addressing these challenges through stories like one about the children of the Pintu Kota Kecil in Indonesia, who, every Sunday, go to the beach and pick up the plastic and trash that has washed ashore. This debris then is turned into 3D printer filament, ecobricks, toys, bowls, and other items. Many of these are then sold in local gift shops.

The final chapter of this book goes more in-depth into people’s, especially young people’s, ability to foster change through stories about individuals taking action. Like Elizabeth Zajackowski, an 18-year-old in Edmonds, Washington, who successfully lobbied her local city council not to drive bridge pilings into a popular local dive spot.

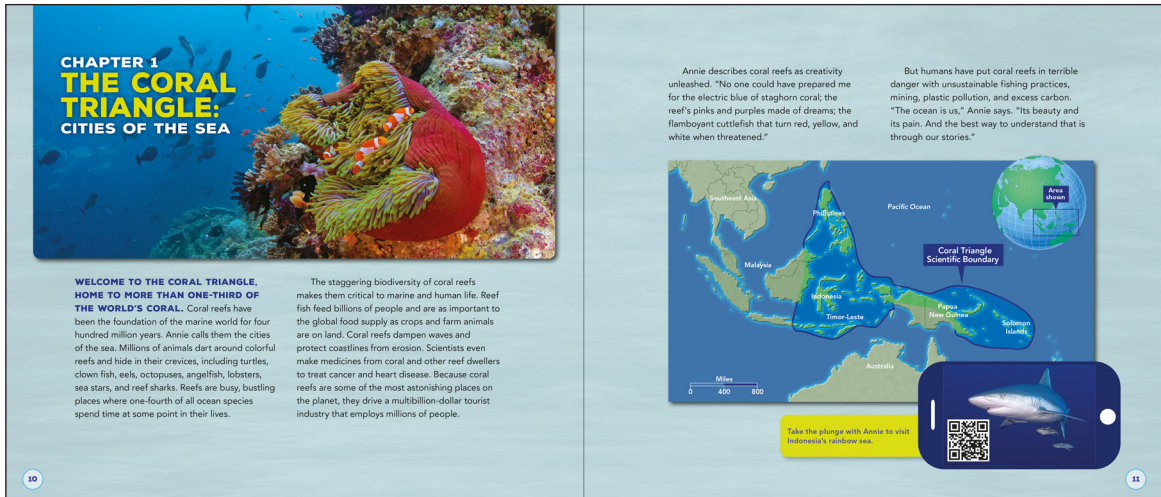
The book concludes with a guide to digital storytelling and tips for environmental action. The book itself is a model of the power of using pictures and video to tell a story. Throughout the book, the text is accompanied by Crawley’s stunning photography. Crawley shares with us beautiful imagery of ocean life, of issues facing the ocean, and of the people taking action. Throughout the book QR codes take the reader beyond the book to videos that highlight these ocean stories. The images and videos help build a connection between the reader and the aquatic world.

Overall, I enjoyed this book. It is a great example of “Ocean Literacy Principle 6: The ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected.” Newman and Crawley highlight many of the issues facing the ocean and how those are caused by and are affecting people and communities. They also provide us with inspiring stories of how individuals and groups are addressing these problems. To quote the author, “By helping the ocean, we help ourselves. Planet Ocean is us.”



Patricia Newman (far right) and Annie Crawley (center right) behind the scenes with Meg Chadsey, the Ocean Acidification Specialist for Washington Sea Grant. Photo Credit: AnnieCrawley.com OurOceanAndYou.com.





Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

How to cite this article: Christopher, D. (2021). New Book for Elementary and Middle Grades Highlights Ocean Literacy Principle 6. *Current: The Journal of Marine Education*, 35(1), pp. 31–33. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/cjme.66>

Submitted: 03 September 2021 **Accepted:** 03 September 2021 **Published:** 01 November 2021

Copyright: © 2021 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

[u] *Current: The Journal of Marine Education* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Ubiquity Press.

OPEN ACCESS 