

OCEAN & SEA FACTS

Deepest Point In The Ocean

The deepest part of the ocean was first pinpointed in 1951 by HM Survey Ship Challenger in the Marianas Trench in the Pacific Ocean. On January 23, 1960, the US Navy Trieste vessel descended to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, and on March 24, 1995, the Japanese probe Kaiko recorded a depth of 10,911 m (35,797 ft), the most accurate measurement yet taken. Our highest mountain, Mount Everest in Nepal, at a little over 29,000 feet would be completely swallowed by the ocean at that point.

Largest Island

Discounting Australia, which has an area of 7,682,300 sq km. (2,966,200 sq miles) but is usually regarded as a continental landmass, the largest island in the world is Greenland, with an area of about 2,175,600 sq km (840,000 sq miles).

Largest Ocean

Excluding adjacent seas, the Pacific Ocean represents 45.9% of the world's oceans and covers 166,241,700 km² (64,186,000 miles²) in area. The average depth is 3,940 m (12,925 ft). The ocean was first given its name, which means "peaceful" in 1520 by the Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan. Across its greatest length it measures 17,700 km (10,998 miles). The Atlantic Ocean is the second largest ocean and covers around 80 million sq km. It was named after the Atlas Mountains in North Africa.

Smallest Ocean

The Arctic Ocean, with an area of 9,485,000 sq km (3,662,000 sq miles), is the smallest ocean. It has a maximum depth of 5,450 m (17,880 ft). The Arctic Ocean is not completely enclosed by land, however, and so is sometimes referred to as an arm of the Atlantic. It is also connected to the waters of the Pacific Ocean by the Bering Strait.

Thickest Ice

The greatest recorded thickness of ice is 4.78 km. (2.97 miles), measured by radio echo soundings from a US Antarctic research aircraft. Antarctica is 97.6% covered in snow and ice. The huge continent has no indigenous inhabitants.

Highest Waterspout

The highest waterspout recorded was on May 16, 1898, off the coast of Eden, New South Wales, Australia. A theodolite reading from the shore gave its height as 1,528 m. (5,014 ft.).

What are The Seven Seas?

A phrase often used to emphasise extensive travel with its origins in the early history of global sea voyages. Some ancient civilizations used the phrase to describe the seven large bodies of water that were known to them at the time. Historians generally think that these were the Indian Ocean, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Adriatic Sea, Persian Gulf, Mediterranean Sea, and the Red Sea. The modern world recognises more than 50 seas worldwide.

The Saltiest & Warmest Sea.

The Red Sea has 41 parts salt per 1,000 parts of water. The Red Sea is also the warmest sea where temperatures regularly range from 68 degrees to 87.8 degrees Fahrenheit.

Why is the Sea Salty?

Over billions of years fresh water flowing across the land has dissolved salt out of the rocks and has carried these mineral deposits out to sea. The salt remains in the sea as water doesn't flow out of the ocean basins, and water evaporating from the sea to form rain leaves the heavier minerals behind. Seawater also picks up salt from the oceanic crust.

Undersea Riches

There are massive mineral reserves on the oceans' floors. These range from sand and gravel, to manganese, nickel, copper, cobalt. Surveys have found that there are higher concentrations of diamonds in the oceans than on land, with deposits off the Skeleton Coast of Namibia being particularly plentiful. There are also huge untapped reserves of methane that could be used as fuel.

Home is Where the Sea Is

99% of the living space on the planet is in the oceans and seas. Only 3% of our water is fresh water.

Largest Animal

The Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) is the largest known animal ever to have lived, in sea or on land. This species of whale can reach 33.5m (110ft) in length and weigh 200 tons, equivalent to 50 fully grown elephants. The blue whale's blood vessels are so broad that a full-grown trout could swim through them, and are supplied by a heart the size of a small car.

Largest & Fastest Fish

Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*), are among the largest and fastest marine fish. An adult can weigh as much as 680kg (1,500lbs) and swim up to 55 miles per hour. Prized as sushi in Japan, Bluefins are also among the most valuable fish with individual fish having carried a price tag of as much as \$20,000 at U.S. docks.

Oldest Life

It has been estimated that life began in the oceans 3.4 billion years ago, far longer than the mere 400 million years the first land dwellers evolved.

Deepest Concentration of Life

A recent study of a deep sea community found 898 species across more than 100 different specie families in an area half the size of a tennis court. Incredibly over half of these were new to science. At great depths from 3,700m (12,139 ft) the abyss begins, a point where sunlight can no longer penetrate and only sea creatures that have evolved to handle total darkness, extreme pressure and often levels of minerals that would be totally lethal to animals on land. They are kept alive by a process called chemosynthesis which enables them to convert energy from chemical reaction.

Deepest Dive By A Mammal

The deepest dive by a mammal was made by a Bull Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) off the coast of Dominica, in the Caribbean, in 1991. Scientists from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute recorded the dive to a depth of 2,000m (6,500 ft). The dive lasted one hour 13 minutes. The greatest depth reached by a penguin was recorded in 1993 in the Ross Sea where an Emperor penguin had dived to 534m (1,751 ft)

Largest Creature Never Observed In Own Habitat

The *Architeuthis dux* is often known as the Giant Squid. Because scientists do not know exactly where in the sea it lives, they have never been able to study it. Specimens have measured up to 18m (59 ft) in length and 900 kg (1,980 lb) in weight.

Short Facts

- ❖ Sharks have to keep swimming to stay alive, even when they're asleep.
- ❖ Killer Whales are in actual fact not biologically classified as whales. They fall within the dolphin family.
- ❖ Dolphins need to come up for air about every two minutes.
- ❖ Whales and Dolphins are classified as mammals, but sharks are fish.