

## Reading Part 4

Read the text and answer the questions. Use a maximum of five words for each question.

### Marine species under threat

The great predators of the sea – tuna, swordfish, marlin and others – could be on the way out, according to two Canadian researchers who have been surveying fish catches from ocean areas across the globe. They warn that not only are numbers in decline, but also the variety of species in any one area.

The research, which appeared recently in *Science Quarterly*, gives conservationists further reason to demand the creation of international marine parks, which are protected so that fish populations can breed and recover. They see no other solution.

The research also showed that warm sea surface temperatures make some fishing grounds richer than others. Fishermen realize this and concentrate on those areas, therefore depleting the stock from a much larger area.

Maurice Barker and Robin Beauchamps started their 2003 research by considering one species only, and they showed that shark populations in the North Atlantic had fallen by 90% in 15 years. They then went on to investigate data from fisheries for the past 50 years to discover that catches were becoming less diverse. Where fishermen might once have caught 10 different species, they now haul in only half that number. 'It's not yet extinction. It's local fishing, out of species,' Dr Beauchamps said. 'Where you once had a range of species in dense numbers, now you might catch one or two of a certain species.' However, for some species of commercial fish, it might already be too late. Cod catches are in sharp decline, the Atlantic halibut has virtually disappeared and bluefin tuna catches are now strictly controlled.

The two men started with analyzing the catches of fishing boats called long-liners which have baited fishing lines up to 60 miles long. The data from these catches were matched with those from other records over the last half a century. The results were depressing.

'This is the great joy of science' says Dr Barker. 'It's like solving a giant puzzle and seeing the star-filled night sky for the first time although the stars are actually fading. It's both beautiful and tragic at the same time.'

He stresses that it is vital to reach international agreement on monitoring the protected areas of the ocean. 'We have the means and the opportunity to make a difference. It's so important to keep as many pieces of the puzzle as we can before we destroy it.'

1. Which two aspects of sea life are giving concern?

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2. Where did the researchers make their findings public?

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3. Which fish was the initial focus of the Canadians' previous research?

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4. By how much do researchers now say varieties of species have decreased?

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5. Which fish species has practically vanished?

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6. What period of time do the figures on catches cover?

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7. What is essential for the protection of the seas?

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