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Humanity's noisy impact on marine animals to be focus of UN-backed meeting



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With noisy human activity on the world's oceans possibly disrupting the well-being of marine creatures, perhaps reducing their ability to find food, seek out mates or avoid predators, the United Nations is hosting a meeting to launch a decade-long investigation into the problem.

“Many marine species rely mainly on sound as a source of environmental information, in much the same way as human beings rely on their eyesight,” the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) said today of the meeting, to be held at its Paris headquarters from 30 August to 1 September.

“Although very little research exists to prove any links, there is a growing suspicion that increasing noise levels, and some sounds in particular, are altering the behaviour of marine animals and perhaps even reducing their capacity to perform normal life functions such as finding food, seeking out mates or avoiding predators.

“Evidence suggests, for example, that several whale species have raised the volume of the squeaks, clicks and moans by which they communicate with each other.”

In light of the growing concern, fuelled by the increasing industrialization of the oceans, leading marine scientists and representatives from the private sector and military establishments will use the meeting to plan the decade-long International Quiet Ocean Experiment (IQOE) aimed at

filling the considerable knowledge gaps so that management of ocean noise can be more informed and effective.

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