

The Depth of the Ocean

The East Pacific Rise, is an unassuming address in the Pacific Ocean, The name barely describes the place, indistinguishable on the broad expanse of unbroken sea. To the person gazing from a ship, the water –warm, clear, and seemingly empty, gives no hint of the strange and exotic world concealed in the depths. The near freezing, sunless realm of the deep sea has long been considered one of earth's most hostile environments, inimical to life itself, yet 400 miles off the coast of Mexico, on the seafloor at Nine North, there lies a lush and vibrant oasis teeming with animals, to the uninitiated, the environment is forbidding and the animals odd, but it was here in the hot springs of the deep sea that earth's first life may have emerged.

Nine North can be a violent place, wracked by earthquakes and erupting volcanoes. Here the planet is giving birth; its youngest seafloor is being formed. Draped over the young rocks are mats of bacteria that ancestors are almost as old as earth itself. Young and old are partners here at nine north, and at hundreds of other hot springs found throughout earth's ocean. There earth's primordial life forms and its youngest, newest ocean floor together nourish communities that continually shatter our assumptions about what sustains life. They are a living reminder of how little we really know about the waters that cover two thirds of our planet, and how much life and the forces that give birth to the ocean are linked. In recent years much interest has been focused on biodiversity, the richness of nature, and the exhilaration of understanding intricate and ingenious life forms.

As human beings have populated the lands of the earth, we have pushed out other forms of life. For a time, it seemed to some that our negative influence must stop at the ocean's edge, but that has not proved to be so. By overfishing the living bounty of the seas and by flushing the wastes and by-products of our societies into the oceans, we have managed to impoverish, if not destroy, living systems there as well. The world's ocean covers 70 percent of the earth's surface and, when depth is considered, contains nearly one hundred times more inhabited space than the continents. One thing we do know is that there is a broader spectrum of life forms in the ocean than on land. It is more likely that many species have not been noticed or identified because marine ecosystems are so vast, varied and unexplored compared with terrestrial ecosystems.

Reading Test:

Fluency: ____/5 Pronunciation: ____/5 Understanding: ____/5 Meaning: ____/5

Comments: _____

Q. Write and learn the spellings of the underlined words in the text.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

Q. Write the meanings of the following words in the spaces provided.

a. uninitiated _____

b. impoverish _____

c. ingenious _____

d. intricate _____

e. primordial _____

f. terrestrial _____

Q. Answer the following questions to the text 'The Depth of the Ocean' in full sentences.

a. What is the East Pacific Rise and where is located?

b. How does the writer describe 'Nine North'?

c. What process is taking place at 'Nine North'? Why is it significant?

d. Why has research been focused on the ocean and its properties recently?

e. How have humans harmed the oceans environment and its species?

f. Why is it possible that many species have not been identified or recognised?

g. What do scientists now believe is the depth and diversity of the ocean?
