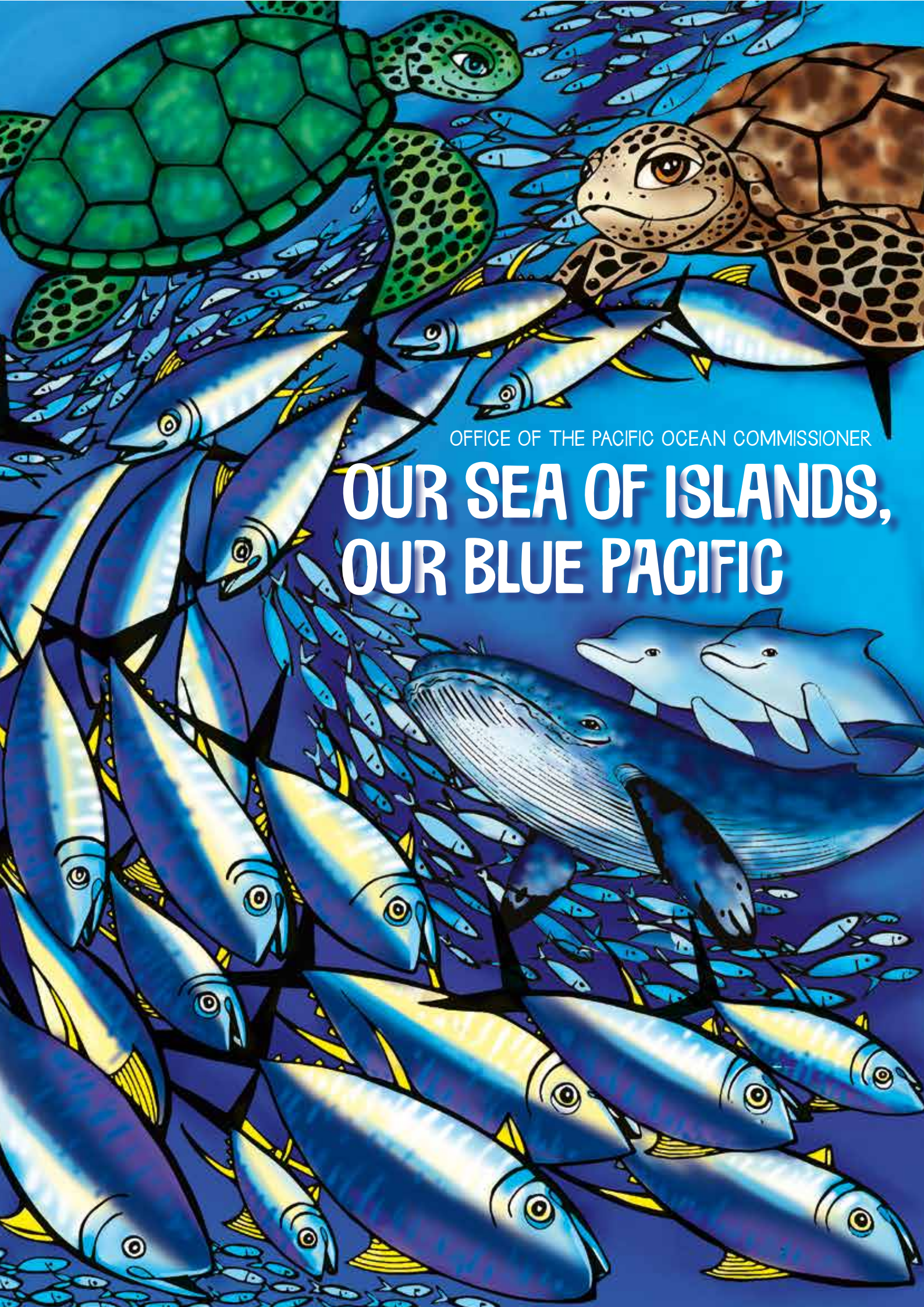




OFFICE OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN COMMISSIONER

OUR SEA OF ISLANDS, OUR BLUE PACIFIC



This book is an educational and advocacy tool of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, for the children of the Pacific region and beyond.

IT IS NOT FOR RESALE

The Pacific Ocean Commissioner is a mandate of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders. That role is held by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General. The Pacific Ocean Commissioner is supported by the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, which is currently housed at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

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OUR SEA OF ISLANDS, OUR BLUE PACIFIC

ILLUSTRATED BY PENELOPE CASEY







Dear children of the ocean,
We come from a region that is proud of its Ocean and many resources.
We are known to the world as the people of the ocean.
But the ocean we know, love and depend on is under many threats.
As guardians of the Blue Pacific,
we must always watch over and take care of it.
For our Ocean is more than just a vast body of water.
It is our heritage. It is our life.
It connects us across many islands and peoples.
We must know and respect it.
We must act now and continue to do so.
The Ocean is in us and it is everything to us.
We are the Ocean.

Meg Taylor, DBE
Pacific Ocean Commissioner and Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General



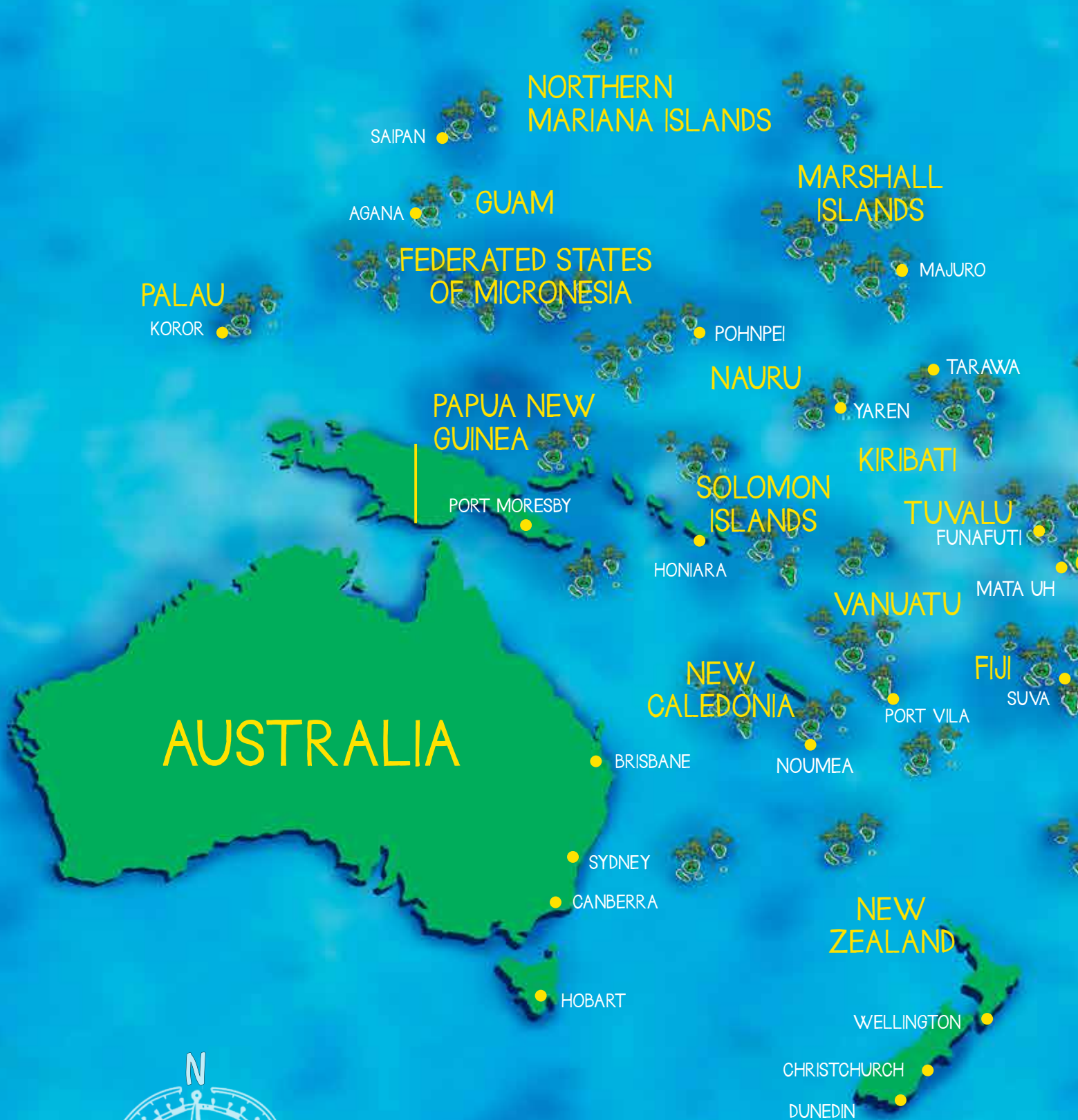
THE BLUE PLANET

Our Blue Planet Earth is our home.
From outer space our planet is blue.

Why is it blue?
Because ocean cover most of planet Earth.

What colour is our planet?





THE BLUE PACIFIC

This is the Blue Pacific.

It is made up of islands floating in the ocean, which together make up the Blue Pacific. Of the islands in the Blue Pacific, eighteen (18) Countries and Territories are members of the Pacific Islands Forum family.

Can you name one country from the Blue Pacific?



OUR JOURNEY



The ocean is a big part of who we are in the Blue Pacific. Our ancestors travelled from far away in small and big canoes – searching for new homes. There are thousands of islands scattered across the Blue Pacific Ocean. Our homes are on small islands and big islands too. We have many stories about the long journeys of our ancestors travelling across the Pacific Ocean on large canoes, carrying people and animals, food and water and guided by currents and stars.

Have you travelled in the Pacific Ocean?



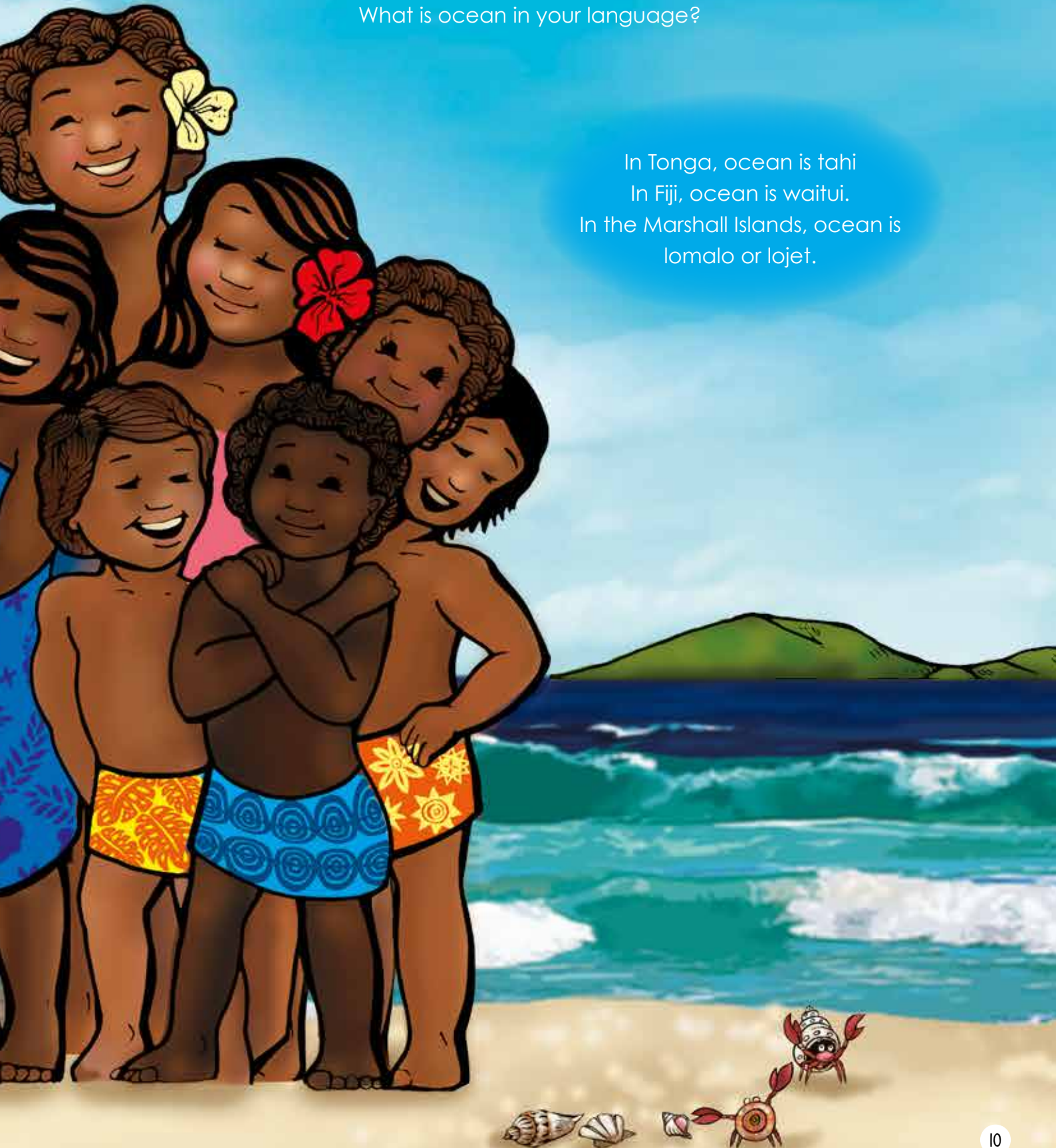
WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE BLUE PACIFIC

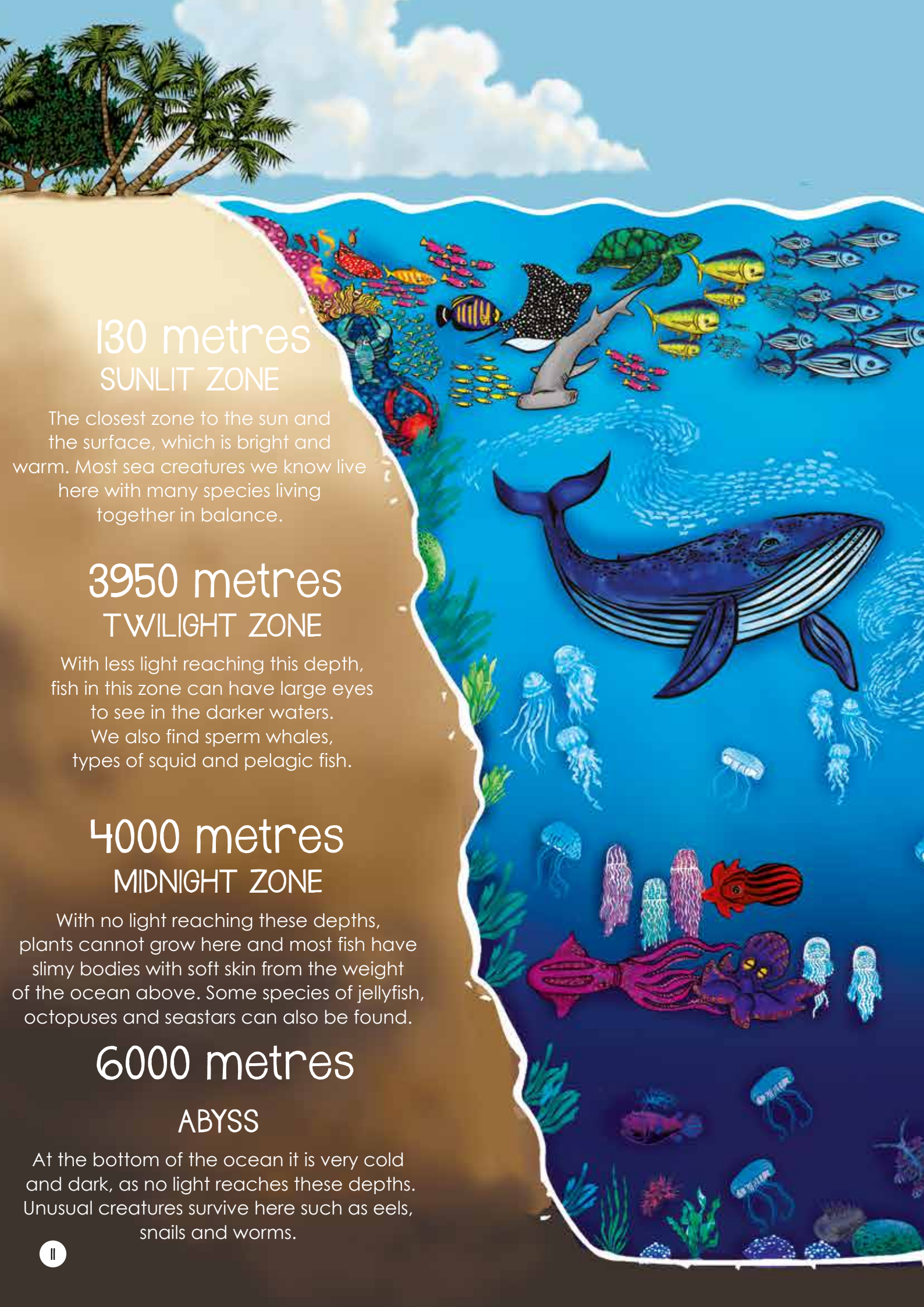


Our families make up the communities that live on the Blue Pacific. Our grandparents, our parents, our aunts, uncles and we, the children together make up the people of the Blue Pacific. Some of us live very close to the ocean and some live far from the ocean. But we all depend on the Blue Pacific Ocean. We get food from the ocean. The air we breathe comes from the ocean. The ocean is very important for our health. We must keep the ocean clean and healthy, so we can enjoy the ocean.

What is ocean in your language?

In Tonga, ocean is tahi
In Fiji, ocean is waitui.
In the Marshall Islands, ocean is
lomalo or lojet.





130 metres SUNLIT ZONE

The closest zone to the sun and the surface, which is bright and warm. Most sea creatures we know live here with many species living together in balance.

3950 metres TWILIGHT ZONE

With less light reaching this depth, fish in this zone can have large eyes to see in the darker waters.

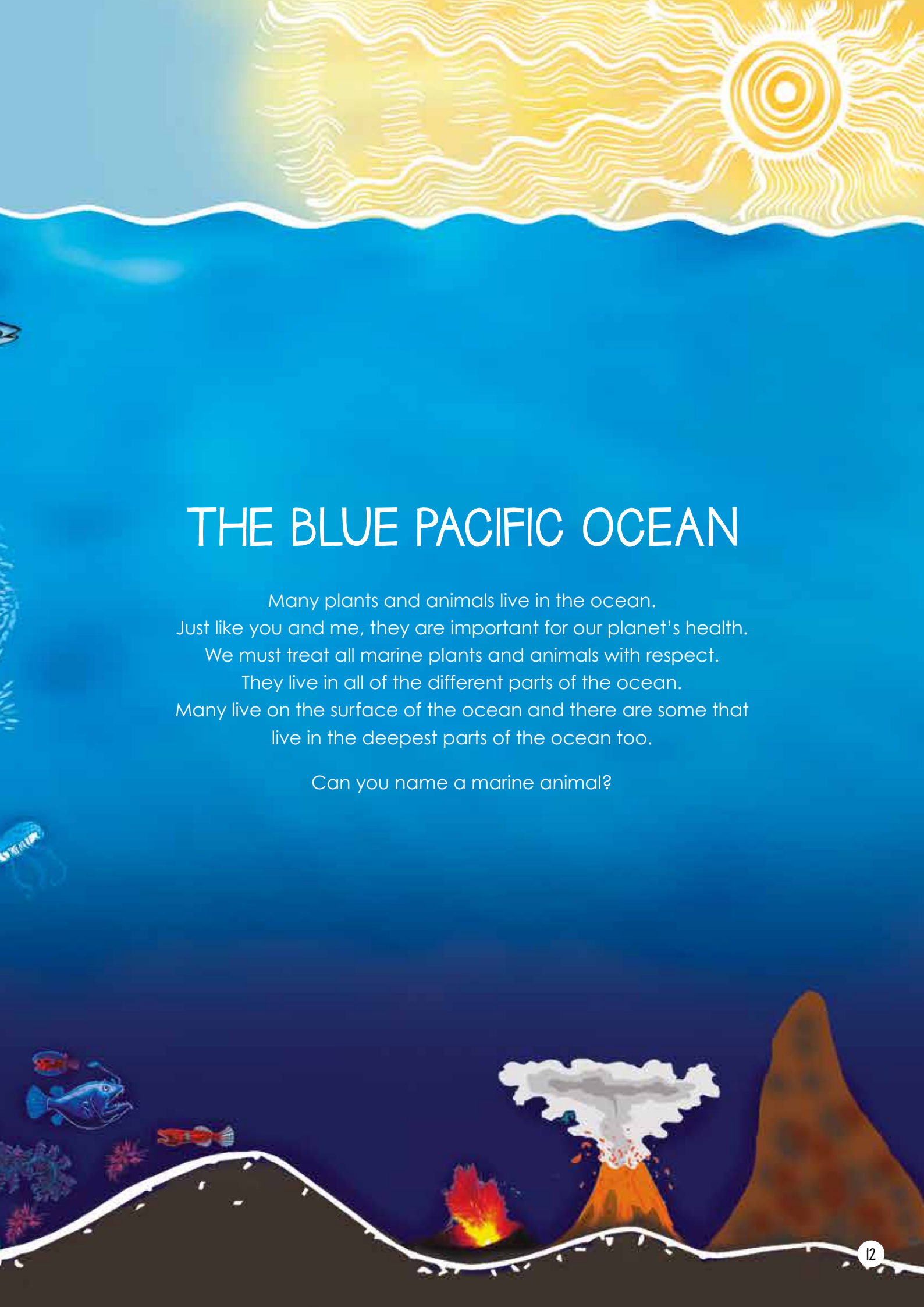
We also find sperm whales, types of squid and pelagic fish.

4000 metres MIDNIGHT ZONE

With no light reaching these depths, plants cannot grow here and most fish have slimy bodies with soft skin from the weight of the ocean above. Some species of jellyfish, octopuses and seastars can also be found.

6000 metres ABYSS

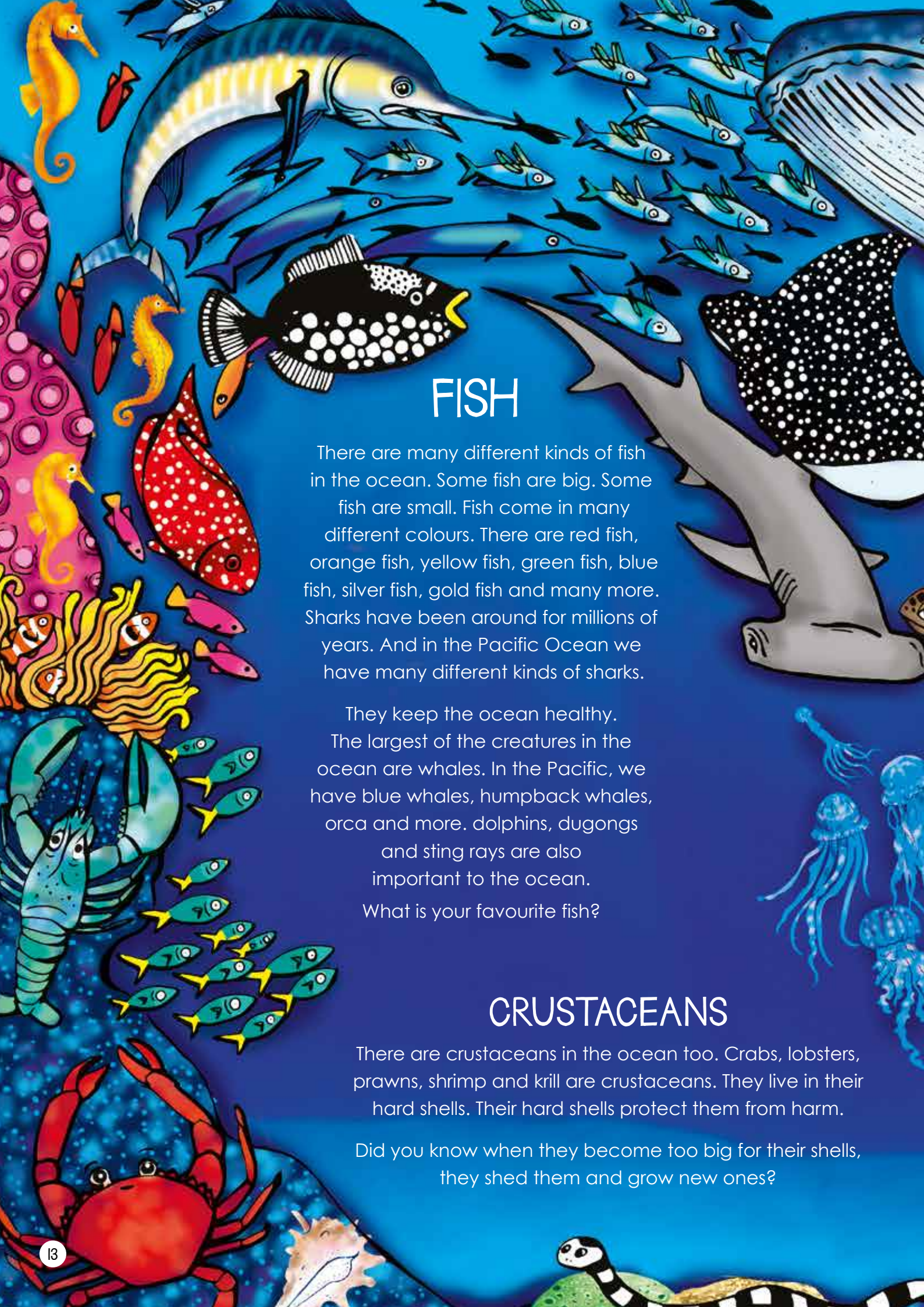
At the bottom of the ocean it is very cold and dark, as no light reaches these depths. Unusual creatures survive here such as eels, snails and worms.



THE BLUE PACIFIC OCEAN

Many plants and animals live in the ocean.
Just like you and me, they are important for our planet's health.
We must treat all marine plants and animals with respect.
They live in all of the different parts of the ocean.
Many live on the surface of the ocean and there are some that
live in the deepest parts of the ocean too.

Can you name a marine animal?



FISH

There are many different kinds of fish in the ocean. Some fish are big. Some fish are small. Fish come in many different colours. There are red fish, orange fish, yellow fish, green fish, blue fish, silver fish, gold fish and many more. Sharks have been around for millions of years. And in the Pacific Ocean we have many different kinds of sharks.

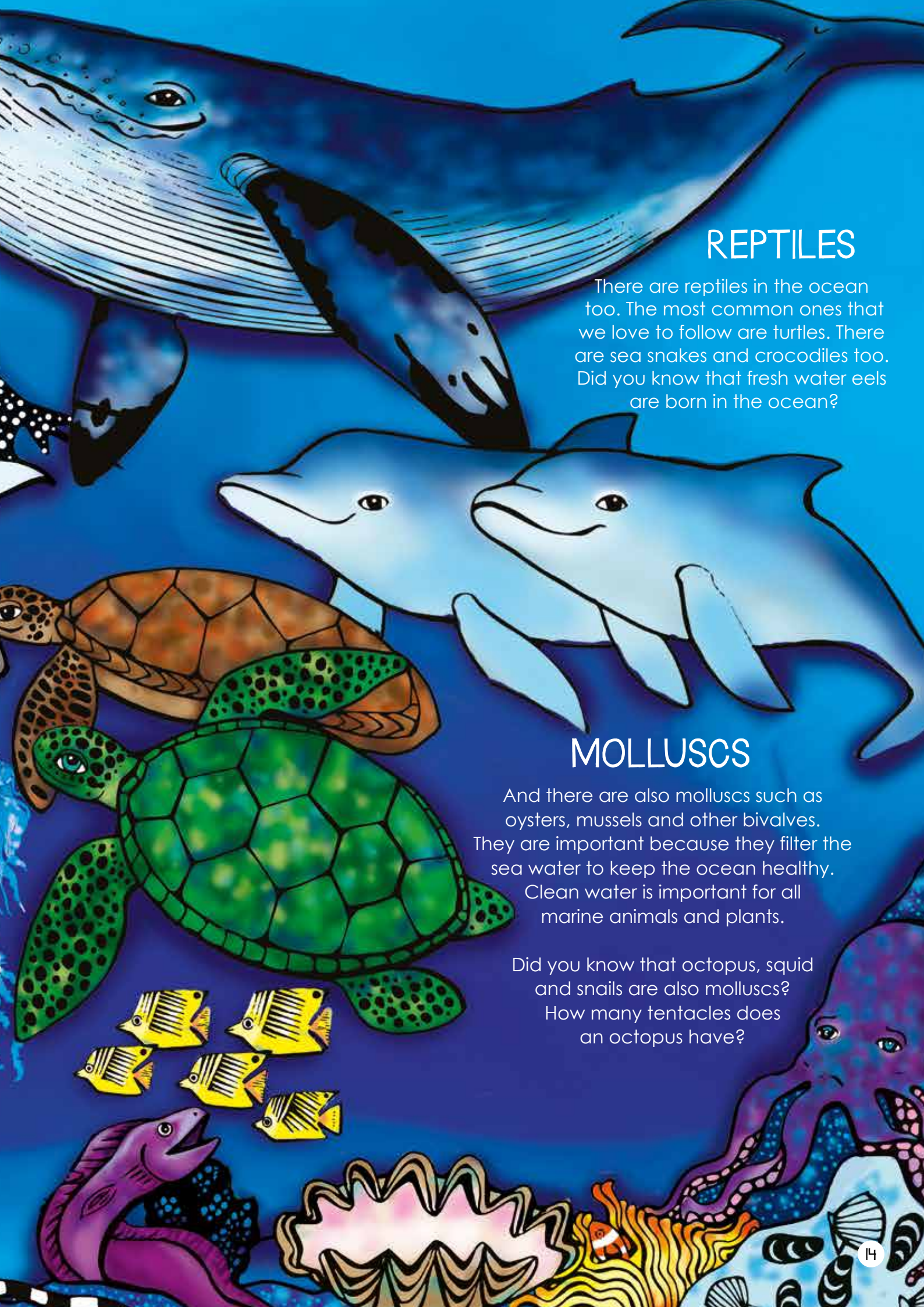
They keep the ocean healthy. The largest of the creatures in the ocean are whales. In the Pacific, we have blue whales, humpback whales, orca and more. dolphins, dugongs and sting rays are also important to the ocean.

What is your favourite fish?

CRUSTACEANS

There are crustaceans in the ocean too. Crabs, lobsters, prawns, shrimp and krill are crustaceans. They live in their hard shells. Their hard shells protect them from harm.

Did you know when they become too big for their shells, they shed them and grow new ones?



REPTILES

There are reptiles in the ocean too. The most common ones that we love to follow are turtles. There are sea snakes and crocodiles too. Did you know that fresh water eels are born in the ocean?

MOLLUSCS

And there are also molluscs such as oysters, mussels and other bivalves. They are important because they filter the sea water to keep the ocean healthy. Clean water is important for all marine animals and plants.

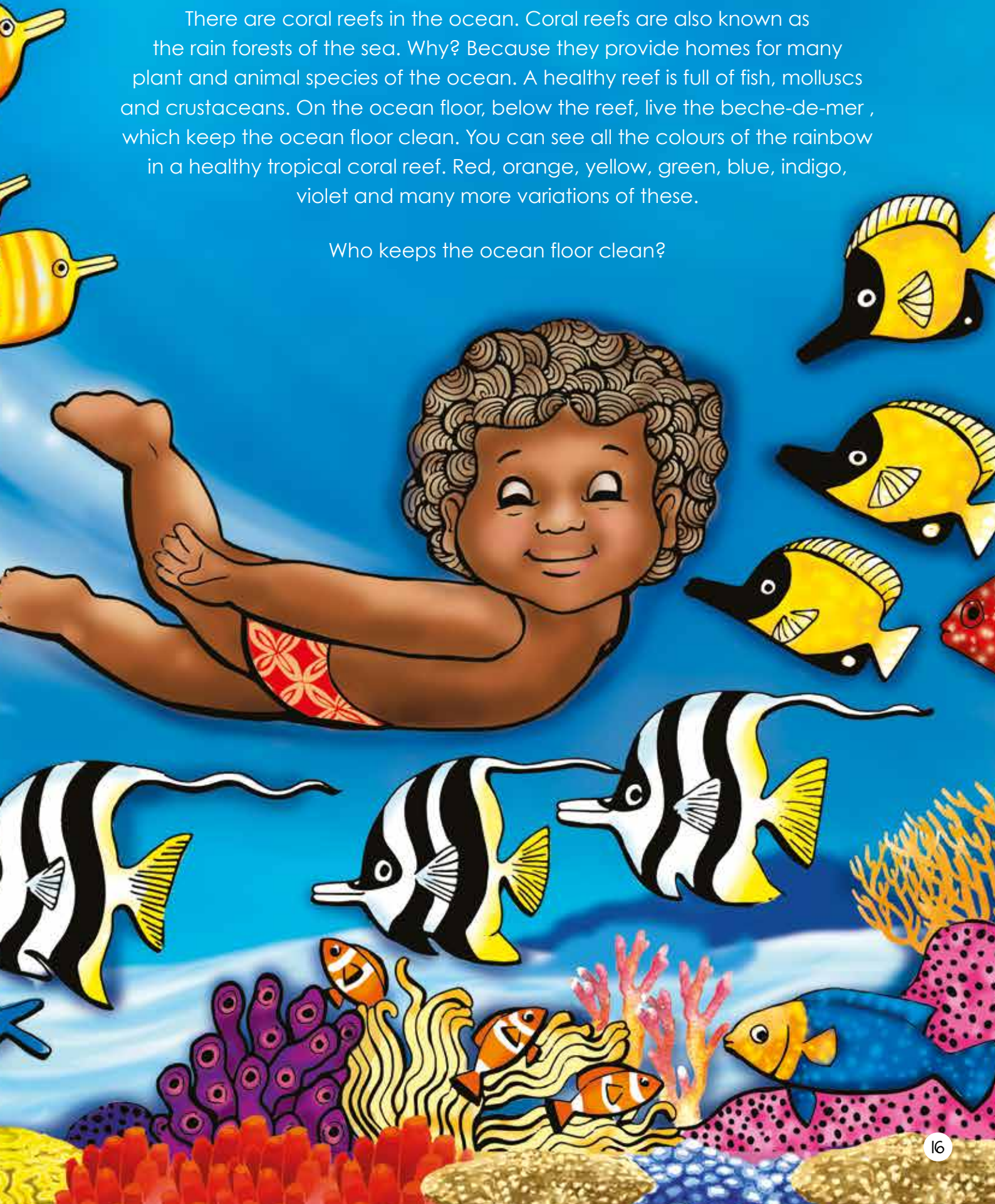
Did you know that octopus, squid and snails are also molluscs? How many tentacles does an octopus have?



WHO LIVES IN THE SHALLOW REEFS?

There are coral reefs in the ocean. Coral reefs are also known as the rain forests of the sea. Why? Because they provide homes for many plant and animal species of the ocean. A healthy reef is full of fish, molluscs and crustaceans. On the ocean floor, below the reef, live the beche-de-mer, which keep the ocean floor clean. You can see all the colours of the rainbow in a healthy tropical coral reef. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet and many more variations of these.

Who keeps the ocean floor clean?

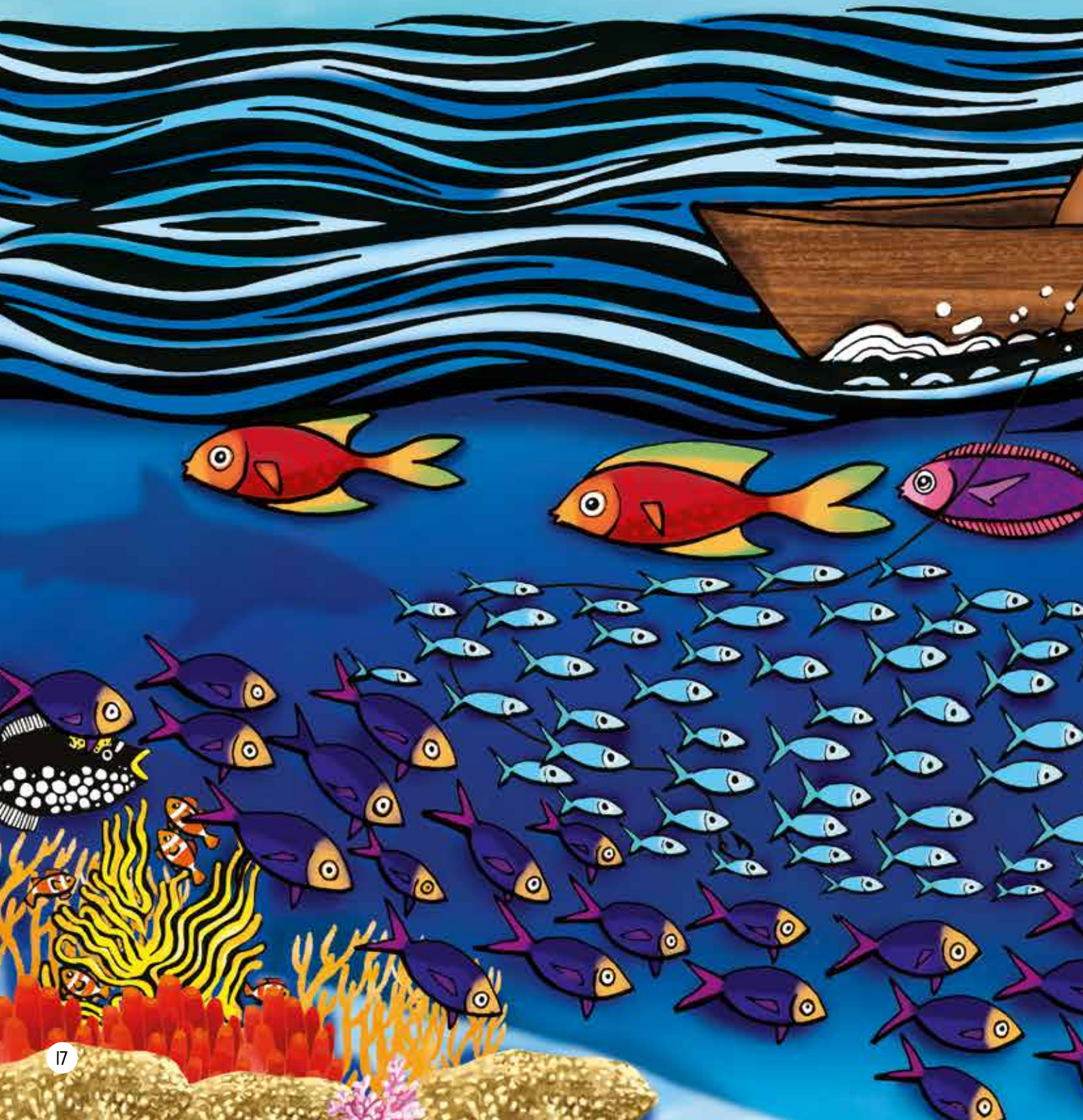


SEA BIRDS

There are birds that live and depend entirely on the ocean. They play an important role in ocean life and health. They get their food from the ocean. They are also food for some fish that live in the ocean. Some sea birds fly very long distances. Some sea birds dive deep into the ocean to fish.

The albatross and petrel are the sea birds of the Pacific Ocean. And there are frigate birds, herons, terns and seagulls. Frigate birds are very important for people. They herald bad or stormy weather.

Can you name a sea bird?





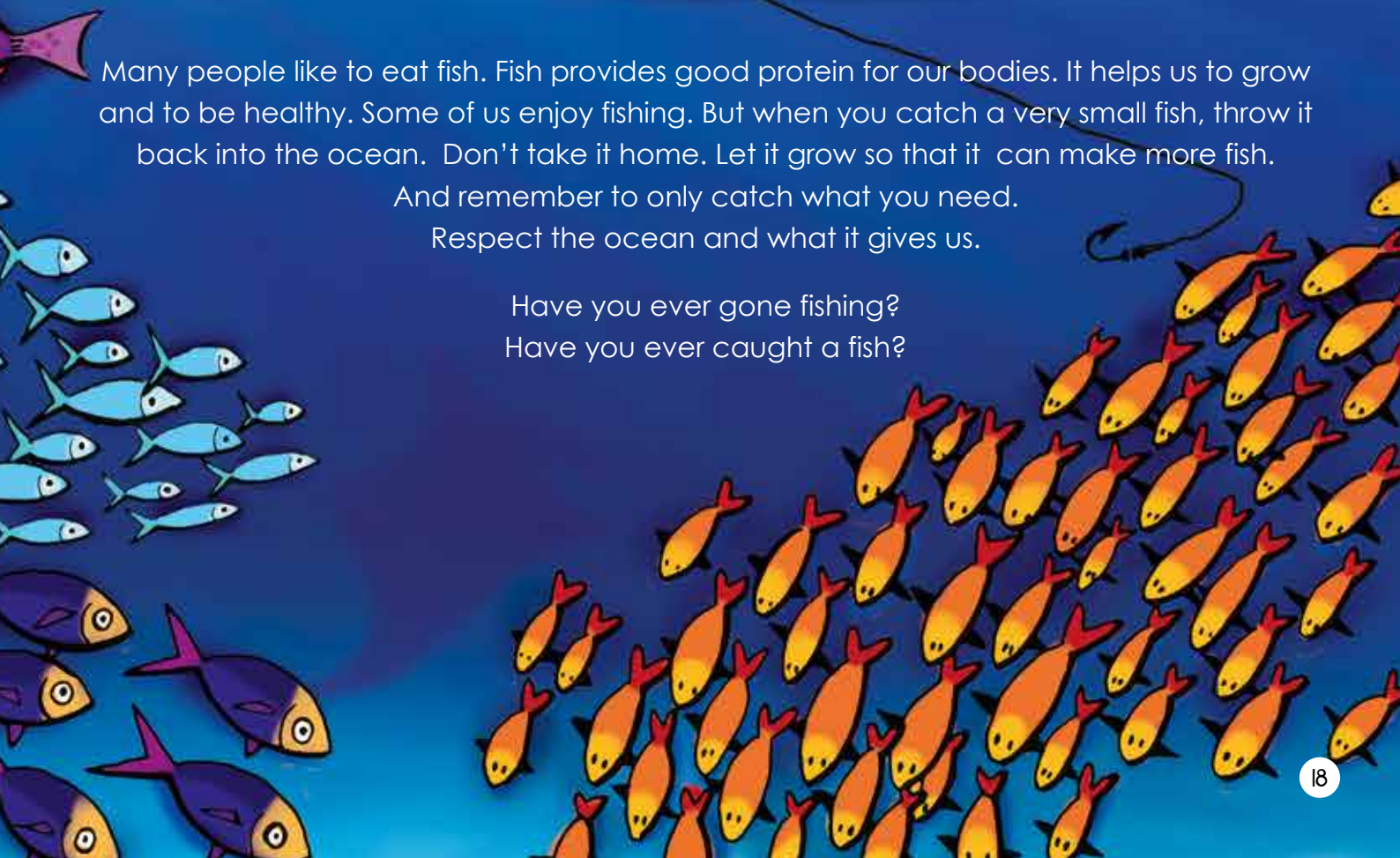
Many people like to eat fish. Fish provides good protein for our bodies. It helps us to grow and to be healthy. Some of us enjoy fishing. But when you catch a very small fish, throw it back into the ocean. Don't take it home. Let it grow so that it can make more fish.

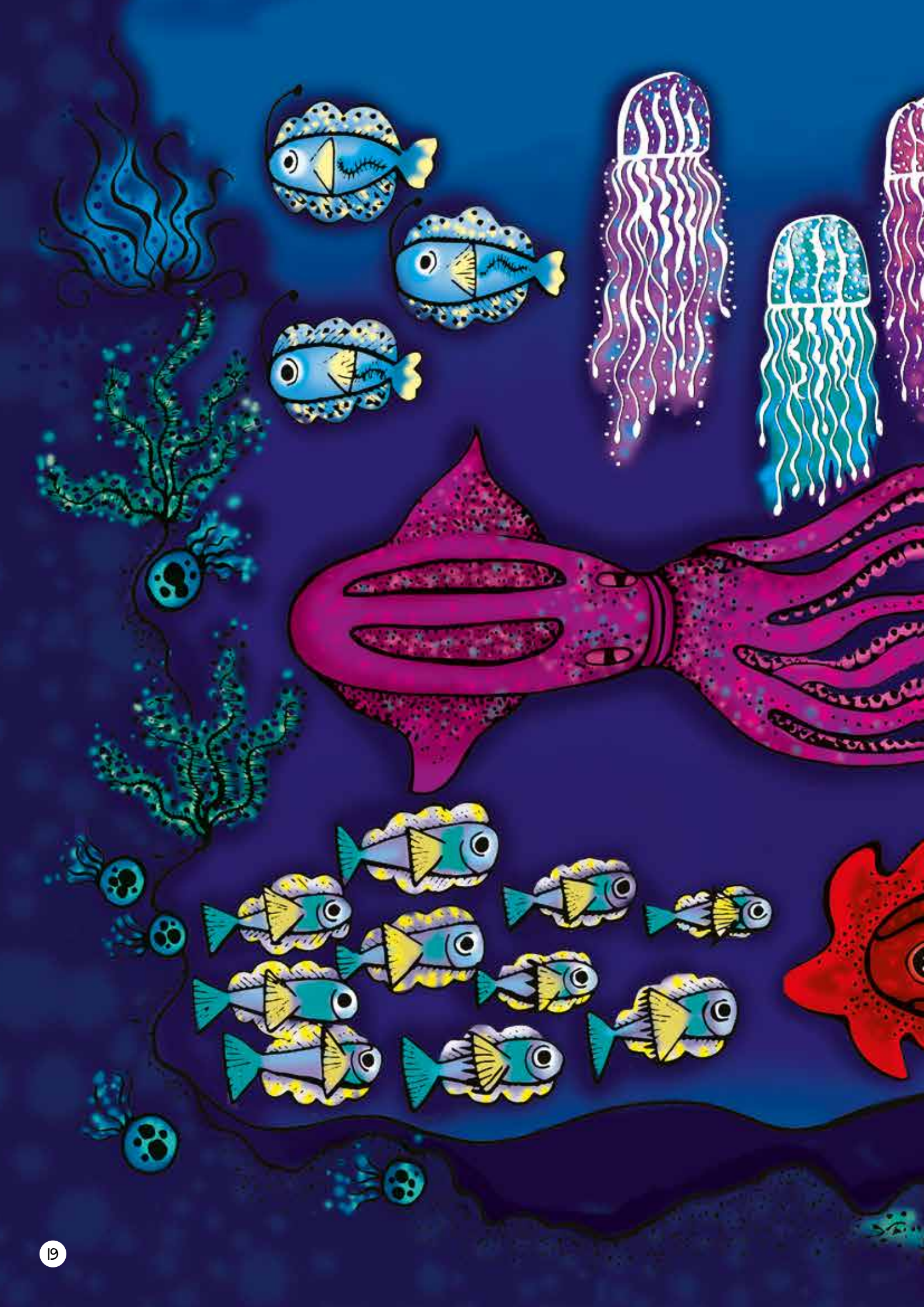
And remember to only catch what you need.

Respect the ocean and what it gives us.

Have you ever gone fishing?

Have you ever caught a fish?





WHO LIVES IN THE DEEP BLUE PACIFIC OCEAN?

You can find trenches and vents at the bottom of the ocean. In some parts of the ocean there are very deep trenches where there is no light and it can be very cold. In other parts of the ocean, there are ocean tunnels that can be very hot. These are called vents. Animals and plants live in the ocean and some of them near trenches and vents. These animals are important too, even though we cannot see them.

Do you know an animal that lives in or next to a deep ocean vent?



PROTECT OUR ENDANGERED SPECIES

Some marine animals are in great danger.

We need to protect them. If we don't protect them they will disappear forever. Some turtles are in danger because they eat plastic bags thinking they are eating real food.

They also get caught in fishing nets.

There are green sea turtles, hawksbill turtles, leatherback turtles, loggerhead turtles, olive ridley turtles and flatback turtles.

Can you name one type of turtle?

GREEN SEA TURTLE

Green sea turtles are also known as Pacific turtles.

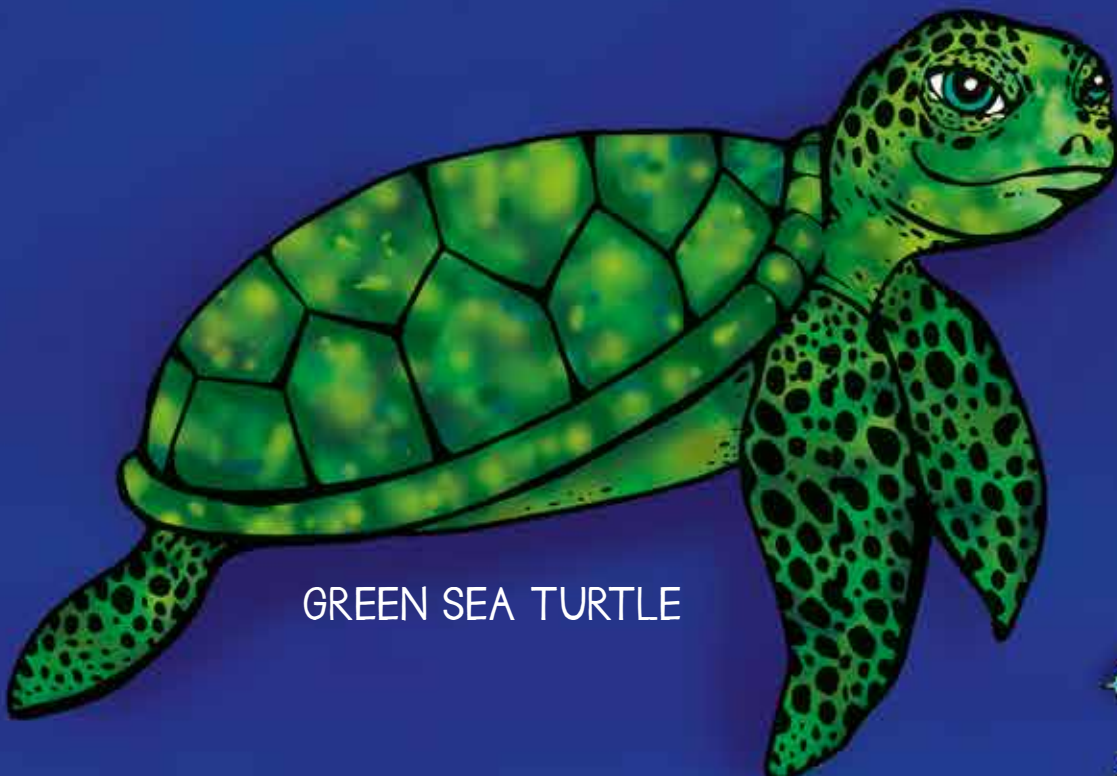
Some green sea turtles are green.

And some green sea turtles are black too.

Like all other turtles, green sea turtles swim very far away.

But they always come back to land to lay their eggs.

Did you know that turtles are born on land?



GREEN SEA TURTLE

HAWKSBILL TURTLE

Hawksbill turtles have narrow and pointed beaks
hawksbill turtles have nice colour and patterned shells.

What do hawksbill turtles eat?

They eat prey like sponges, sea anemone and jellyfish.
Hawksbill turtles help maintain the health of coral reefs.

How do they do that?

By eating prey such as sponges from the reef's surface.
In that way they provide better access for reef fish to fish.

Did you know that turtles are reptiles?

HAWKSBILL TURTLE



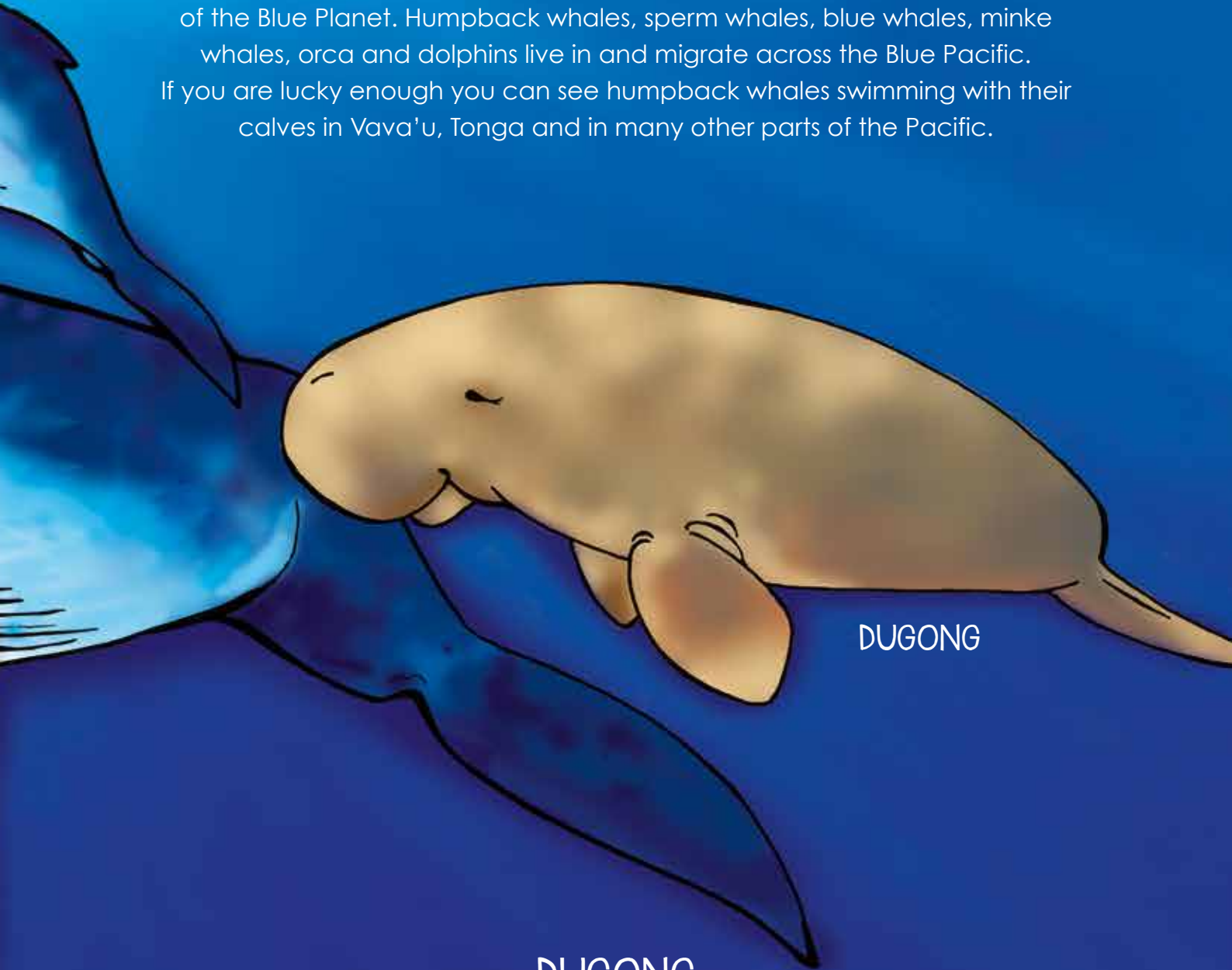
LET'S
SAVE THEM

HUMPBACK WHALE



HUMPBACK WHALE

Whales – the great giants of the ocean are also in danger. If we don't protect them now, whales will disappear. There are many kinds of whales that live in the ocean of the Blue Planet. Humpback whales, sperm whales, blue whales, minke whales, orca and dolphins live in and migrate across the Blue Pacific. If you are lucky enough you can see humpback whales swimming with their calves in Vava'u, Tonga and in many other parts of the Pacific.



DUGONG

There are also dugongs in the ocean. Dugongs are also known as sea cows or sirenas. Dugongs eat sea grass. Like turtles, whales and dolphins, dugongs are also in great danger of disappearing. Dugongs live in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Palau.

What do dugongs eat?

Can you find Papua New Guinea and Palau on the map of the Blue Pacific, which you can find on pages 5 - 6.



WE HELP FEED THE WORLD

There are different types of tuna fish that live in the ocean.

They include yellowfin, bigeye and skipjack.

Our fish are so special that many boats come from around the world and pay our governments to fish in our Pacific Ocean. There are also boats that do not pay and steal our fish. This is wrong. We need to know how much fish is being taken to keep our fish stocks healthy.

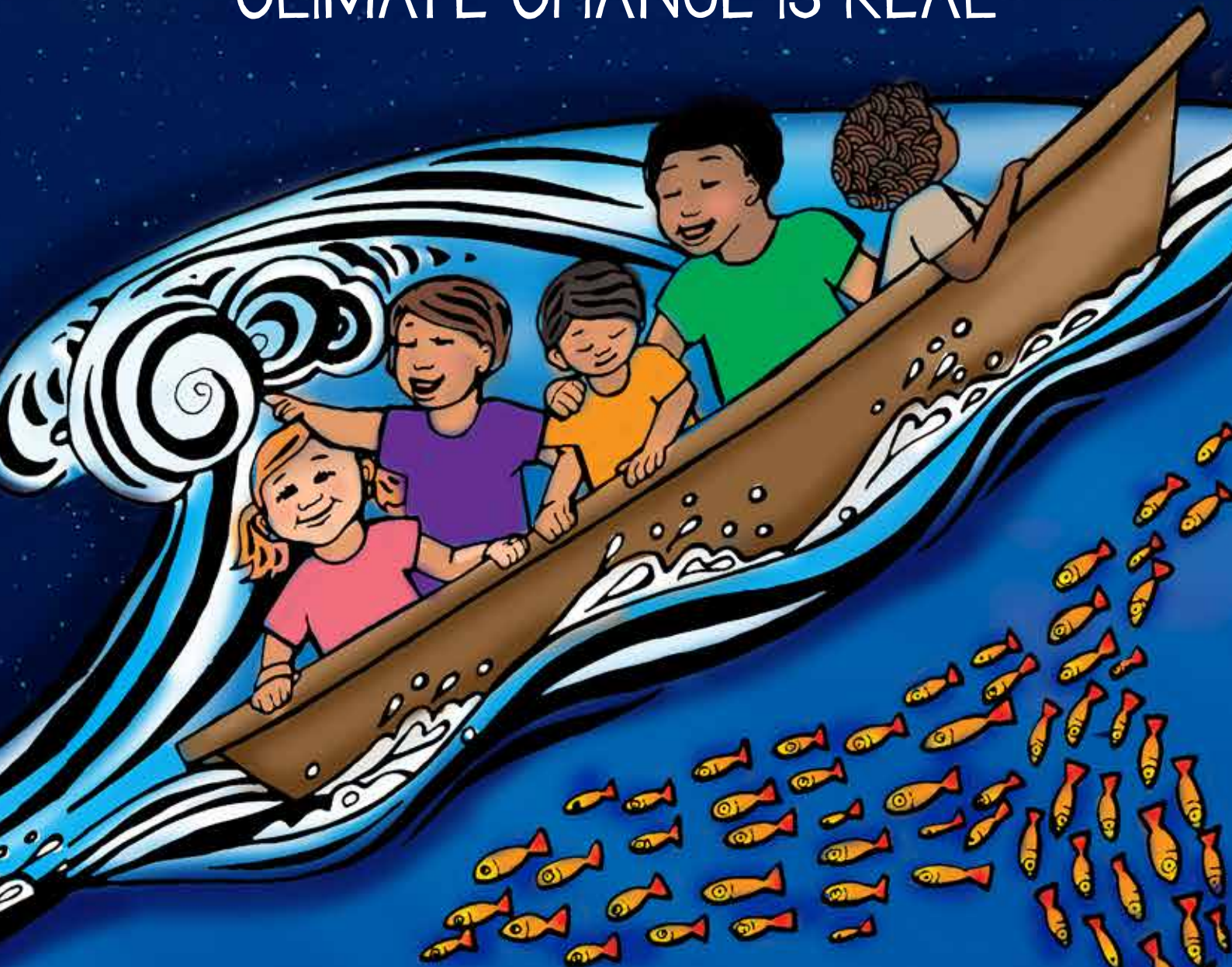
Can you name a type of tuna?







CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL



Our ocean is getting warmer. Our sea levels are rising because our Blue Planet is getting warmer. Have you noticed that our weather is changing? This is because of climate change. Some of the things that we do to make our lives easier is harmful for our environment. The smoke from our cars, trucks and buses.

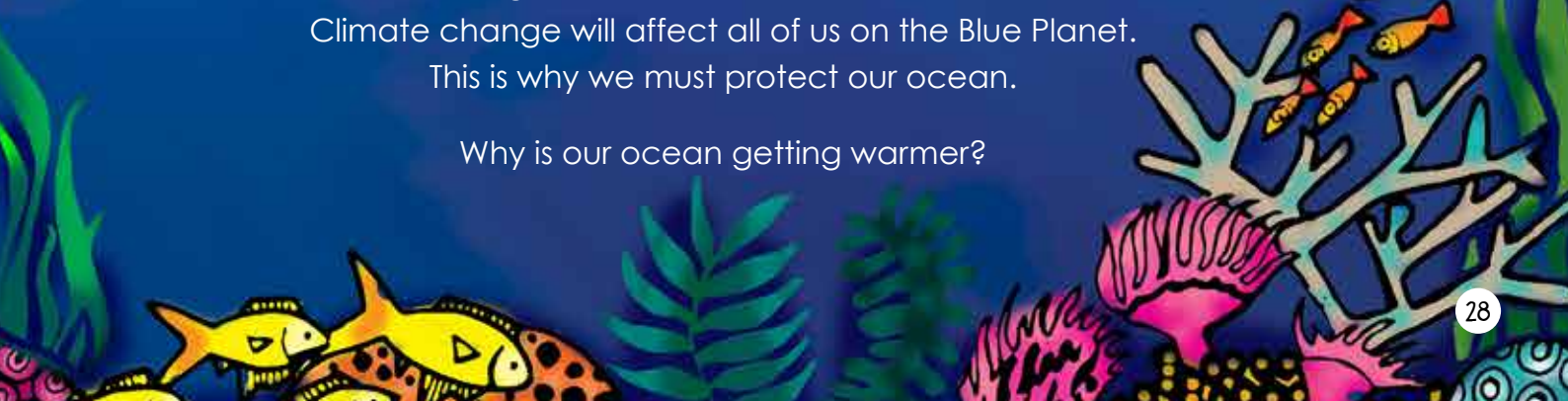
The fuel burned from factories. The cutting of our trees. These are just some activities that create more carbondioxide in our atmosphere. Our ocean plays an important role because it absorbs carbondioxide. Now the ocean is suffering because it cannot keep up with our human activities.

Climate change affects all of us here in the Blue Pacific.

Climate change will affect all of us on the Blue Planet.

This is why we must protect our ocean.

Why is our ocean getting warmer?





LET'S PROTECT OUR OCEAN

We must protect our ocean.
Because our ocean is our source of life.
It provides us with food and water.
It provides us with everything we need.

Why must we protect our ocean?





WHO'S POLLUTING OUR OCEAN

All of the ocean on the Blue Planet is in great danger from rubbish, which people should not throw or dump in the ocean. Rubbish comes in all shapes and sizes. Plastic bags, fishing nets, tins, bottles, old cars and much more are thrown or left in the ocean.

We cannot easily see some rubbish such as chemicals and oils, which flow into or is dumped into the ocean from the land, from ships and from boats. Most of this rubbish will stay in the ocean for a very long time. Sadly, some of this rubbish is eaten by marine animals such as turtles. Turtles sometimes eat plastic bags thinking that they are jellyfish.

This can make them very sick and they can die. We must protect our ocean and the plants and animals that live in it. We must not throw our rubbish into the ocean. We must try to stop making so much rubbish.







INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION

These are the poisonous chemicals and oil that flow into the ocean from rivers and from drains. They often come from factories large and small.

They can also come from fertilisers that farmers use to make their crops grow faster. These chemicals can harm and sometimes kill marine plants and animals. We need to stop chemicals and other poisonous liquids being put into the ocean. We need to tell the factories and farmers to stop putting their waste into our ocean. We need to protect our ocean now and for the future.

How does chemical waste reach the ocean?



BLUE PACIFIC PLEDGE

We, the children of the Blue Pacific, the largest ocean on the Blue Planet.

Pledge that we will: Unite to save the oceans of the Blue Planet. Respect our elders and their experiences. Learn from them on how to best manage the ocean and its many resources. Do whatever we can to keep it safe from danger. Stop throwing rubbish into the Blue Pacific. Prevent overfishing. Plant mangroves and keep sea grasses healthy. Only buy products that will not harm the ocean, its plants and animals. Tell our ocean story so the world will know just how much it means to us. Tell our ocean story so the world will know just how important it is for them.

Tell our ocean story so the world will know just how important it is for all of us. Because, we the children of the Blue Pacific, the largest ocean on the Blue Planet.

Know that the Blue Pacific is more than just our home.

It is us. It is in us. It is our future.

And if we nurture and save the Blue Pacific, we can nurture and save the Blue Planet.

We, the children of the Blue Pacific, the largest ocean on the Blue Planet, pledge that when we become adults, we will continue to be responsible guardians of the Blue Pacific and teach our children the same.



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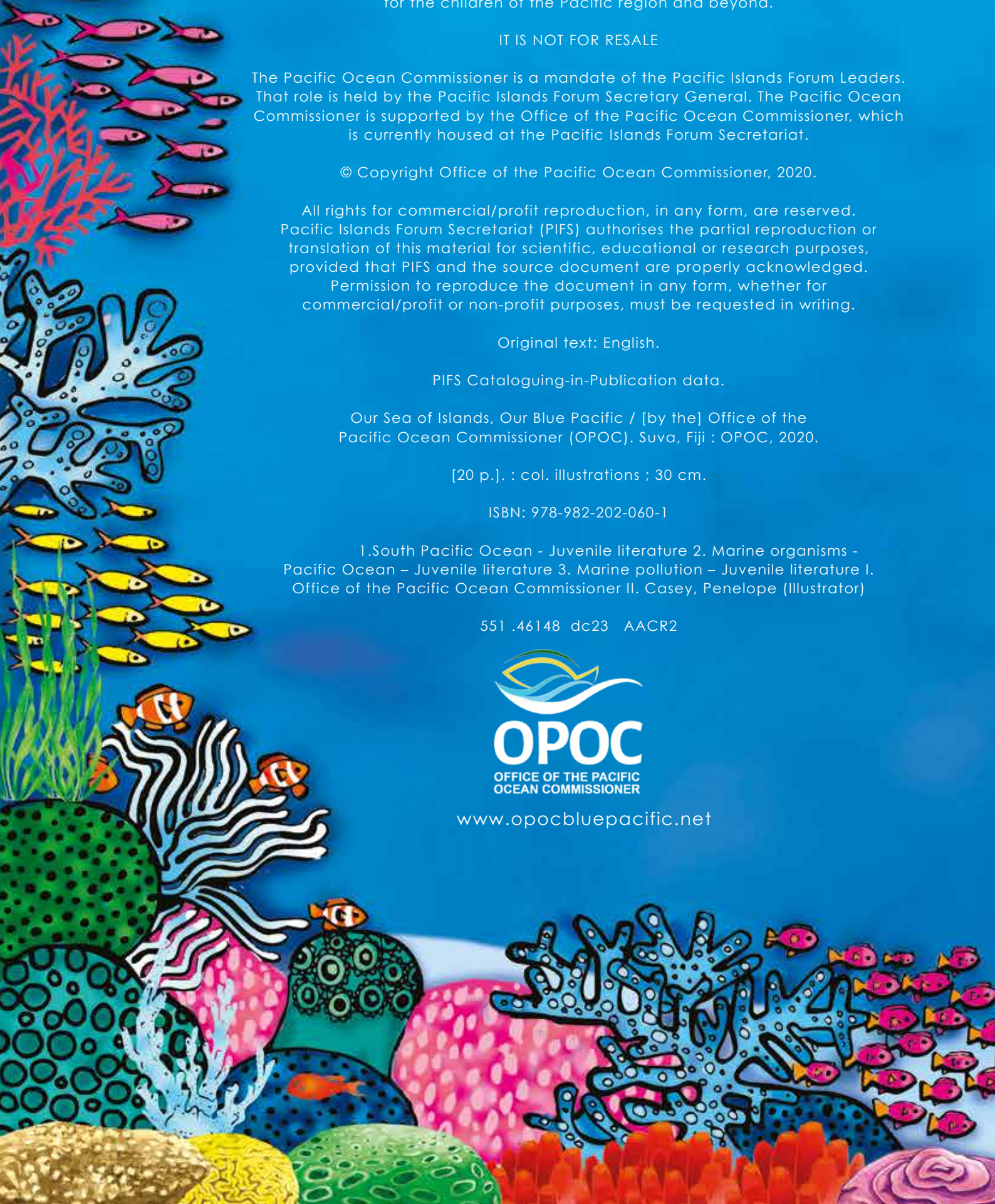
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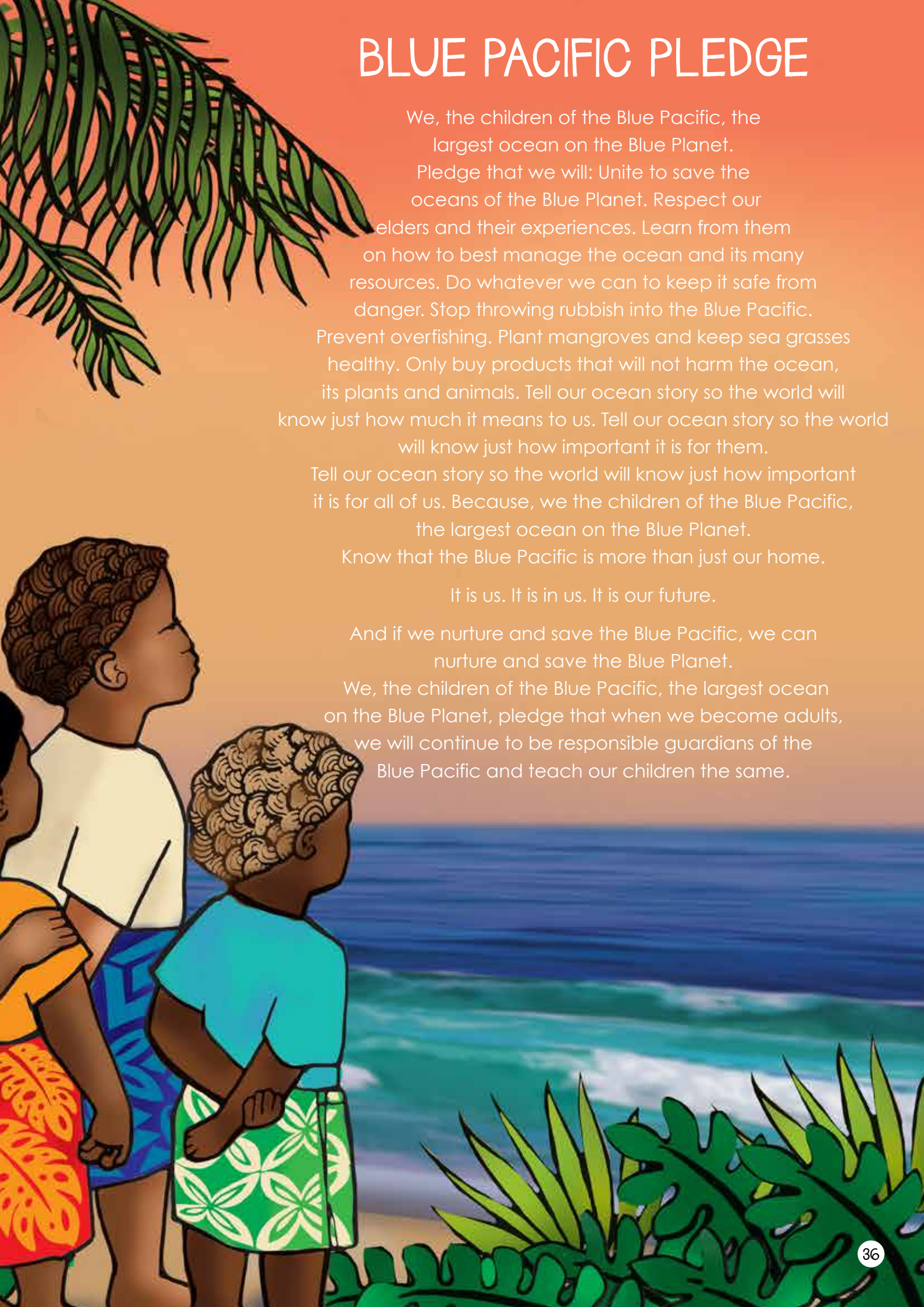
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An illustration of three children of Pacific Island descent standing on a beach, looking out at the ocean. The child on the left is a girl with dark curly hair, wearing a white shirt and a blue patterned skirt. The child in the middle is a girl with blonde curly hair, wearing a light blue shirt and a green skirt with a white floral pattern. The child on the right is partially visible, wearing an orange and red patterned skirt. In the background, there is a blue ocean with white waves, a green palm frond in the top left corner, and green tropical plants in the bottom right corner. The sky is a gradient of orange and yellow.

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PACIFIC OCEAN COMMISSIONER

Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner was approved by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders under the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape (2010), to champion and advocate regional ocean governance issues and initiatives at national, regional and global levels. This role is ad interim assumed by the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner

This office supports the Pacific Ocean Commissioner in ocean advocacy.



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