

Learning by Ear – Environment

10 – Seafood

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Intro

Hello and welcome to Learning By Ear's special series that takes a look at the environment. Today we'll be taking a look at efforts to save critically endangered species of Turtle and those feared ocean predators: sharks. Turtles are ancient reptiles that survived the extinction of the dinosaurs. But without urgent action their days may be numbered. We'll hear why it's so important to educate fishermen on the use of turtle-friendly nets. And we'll discover why more than one hundred species of shark could soon be wiped off the face of the planet...all for a bowl of soup. And did you know some fishing nets are big enough to engulf more than a dozen jumbo-jets... We'll hear on how mankind is using modern-day technology to wipe out the oceans' fish-stocks to the point of extinction. Stay with us...

Music – 0:30

Radionovela

SFX_Waves_on_beach

1. Gladys: I was on this beach last night and Moses, guess what I saw...
2. Moses: What did you see, Gladys?
3. Gladys: [excitedly] Turtles! It is nesting season right now...
4. Monica: [exclaims] Wow. You know I've lived a short walk from this beach all my life and I've never seen a turtle laying eggs. But I remember at school we used to hear about poachers stealing the eggs. And can you believe there are still people who eat turtle meat!
5. Moses: Sure, Monica. I do!
6. Monica/Gladys: [horrified] Oh Moses!!
7. Monica: Why Moses?!
8. Moses: Because my father says it's cheap. The fishermen don't mean to catch the turtles, but they feed in the same waters as the fish, like the coral reef just off-shore.

Sometimes, accidentally, they become trapped in the fishermen's nets.

9. Gladys: Of course they do. And then they drown because they breathe air like you and I.

10. Monica: There's so much fishing in our waters these days, and it's devastating our turtle populations. Moses, you should boycott turtle meat.

11. Moses: But why, Monica? If the turtle's dead anyway why not eat it?

SFX_Music_from_beach_bar [distant]

12. John: [calls out off-mic] Hey, Gladys

13. Gladys: Hi John. It's my brother, John, let's go talk to him.

Fade-up SFX_Music_from_beach_bar

14. Gladys: I was just telling Monica and Moses about the turtles last night.

15. John: [clap of the hand] Ah it was fantastic. You know I used to catch turtles myself. It was never my intention but at the time I thought

it was unavoidable and if I could make some extra money from it then I thought why not.

16. Monica: What made you change your mind?

17. John: Have you heard of the turtle conservation programme? They ran a programme educating fishermen about the need to protect turtles. I had no idea their numbers were threatened by the activities of fishermen like myself. I felt ashamed.

18. Moses: But how do you avoid trapping them in your nets if it's accidental?

19. John: Come, let me show you my nets...

SFX_pushing_chairs_back. X-fade into SFX_hammering

20. John: The guys are just doing some maintenance to the boat. Here, look at the nets we use now.

**SFX_hauling_net_out_of_boat
SFX_tapping_metal**

21. John: This is what we call a Turtle Excluder Device. All it is, is a metal grill at the entrance to the trawl net. This means that

large objects like turtles can't pass through into the net while fish and shrimps can.

22. Monica: Are they effective?

23. John: Well in some parts of the world where these excluders are widely used the number of Turtles caught in nets has fallen by up to 90%.

24. Moses: John, did you ever used to catch live turtles?

25. John: Yes, Gladys, we did.

26. Gladys: And did you return them?

27. John: No I have to confess we killed them and sold them at the market. We saw it as a bonus. But now I know better, and we tell other fishermen to release live turtles back to the sea. But you know the real problem is poaching...there's a man along the beach I want you to meet.

SFX_Knock_on_door

28. Peter: Hello John.

29. John: Hello Peter, I'd like you to meet my younger sister Gladys and her friends.

30. Peter: Hello

31. Moses/Gladys/Monica: Good afternoon Peter.

32. Peter: Well, what can I do for you...

33. John: I was wondering if you could take them to the beach this evening and show them the Turtles nesting. I took Gladys yesterday, but it's something the others have never witnessed.

34. Peter: Certainly. Let's meet on the beach at eleven tonight.

SFX_night_insects and SFX_waves_on_to_beach

35. Peter: Right...let's go find some turtles.

SFX_walking_across_sand

36. Peter: [hushed exclaim] Look over there...

37. Moses: Where??

38. Monica: Oh wow...over there, by the rock

39. Peter: That's right, Monica. Each year hundreds of turtles come to nest here. They always return to the same beach. Five years ago poachers stole 95% of the eggs that were laid here, mostly for food. Now with all the education programmes we've been running there's virtually no poaching at all. Let's crawl a bit closer...

SFX_Crawling_through_sand

40. Gladys: How many eggs will one turtle lay?

41. Peter: Often more than one hundred.

42. Moses: So isn't it ok if some are taken?

43. Peter: Unfortunately not. The survival rate of sea turtles to sexual maturity is very low. Only one in a thousand turtle hatchlings, that make it to the sea, reach adulthood. And then it takes 40 years to reach breeding maturity.

44. Gladys: Which is why it's so important to protect turtles?

45. Peter: Correct, Gladys. Did you know that six of the seven species of turtle in the world's oceans are classified as either endangered or critically endangered? Come on...let's return.

SFX_walking_across_sand

46. Monica: In a recent science class I learnt that some species of shark are also on the endangered list.

47. Peter: That's right, Monica. Man is emptying the oceans of sharks and if we carry on the way we are there is a really high risk of extinction for some species within the next few decades.

48. Moses: Should we care? After-all they are man-eaters!

49. Monica: That's where you are wrong Moses. Apparently most shark attacks against humans are a case of mistaken identity. That's to say they mistake humans in the water for their usual prey like seals.

50. Peter: Absolutley. And in answer to your question Moses, yes we should care. There are now

126 species of shark classified at being at risk of extinction.

51. Gladys/Moses: [exclaim] Wow!! Why so many?
52. Peter: Well a small number a caught of coastlines like ours by fishermen. You'll see shark meat on sale in our markets, and it's cheap compared to white fish. But you should refuse to buy it.
53. Monica: We learnt that the biggest threat is the market for shark fin soup in Asia.
54. Peter: Precisely. It's estimated that 40 MILLION sharks are killed each year for their fins that are highly prized by Asian diners.
55. Moses: [exclaims] 40 million!!
56. Peter: Some conservationists say the number may be as high as 100 million. Sometimes they cut the fins and tails off the sharks while they're still alive before dumping them back in the sea to die a slow, agonising death.
57. Monica: If sharks are the oceans' top predators then how does that affect the food chain?

58. Peter: Well, populations of fish like tuna and rays will grow unchecked and decimate smaller species of fish. Sharks are the lions and cheetahs of the sea. If we lose them there will be long-term damage to marine ecosystems.

Music – 0:30

Did You Know? – Over fishing

Did you know that we are emptying the world's oceans of their fish. The reality of modern fishing is that the industry is dominated by fishing vessels that far out-match nature's ability to replenish fish. Giant ships using state-of-the-art fish-finding sonar can pinpoint schools of fish quickly and accurately. Put simply: the fish don't stand a chance. Here are some astounding facts from the campaign group, Greenpeace. First of all the world's marine catch has increased four times in the past 50 years, from 18.5 million tonnes in the 1950s to more than 80 million tonnes today. As a result seven out of ten of the ocean's commercially targeted marine stocks, like tuna and cod, are being fished beyond ecologically safe limits.

How is this possible? Well check out the world's largest fishing net...it's so big it could encircle more than a dozen jumbo-jets at

it's opening. The net's circumference measures a staggering 2 kilometres in circumference. Ships using nets like these can catch about ten tonnes of fish per hour. But this scale of fishing is indiscriminate. It's thought that as much as a quarter of all the fish caught never make it back to the market...that works out at roughly 27 million tonnes of unwanted by-catch thrown back into the seas, dead. Now the world's fishing fleets are trawling the open seas in search of new fishing grounds.

Many millions of animals other than fish are severely injured or killed each year as a result of commercial fishing. Millions of dolphins have died in nets used to catch Tuna while tens of thousands of albatrosses are killed each year by vessels towing fishing lines many kilometres long carrying thousands of hooks.

Conservation groups point the finger at the 20 main fishing nations that catch 80 percent of the fish, rather than small-scale fishermen. Nonetheless the answer to the crisis they say is simple: catch fewer fish and allow fish-stocks to recover. But the fishing industry is showing no signs of slowing down.

Outro

And that's all for today's Learning By Ear special environment focus on endangered marine animals, written by Richard Lough. So remember, turtle numbers are dangerously low. Don't eat turtle meat and don't poach turtle eggs if you want to help protect these reptiles that survived the dinosaurs. Thanks for being with us. If

you want to hear the programme again or tell friends about it, go to our website at www.dw-world.de/lbe. Good Bye.