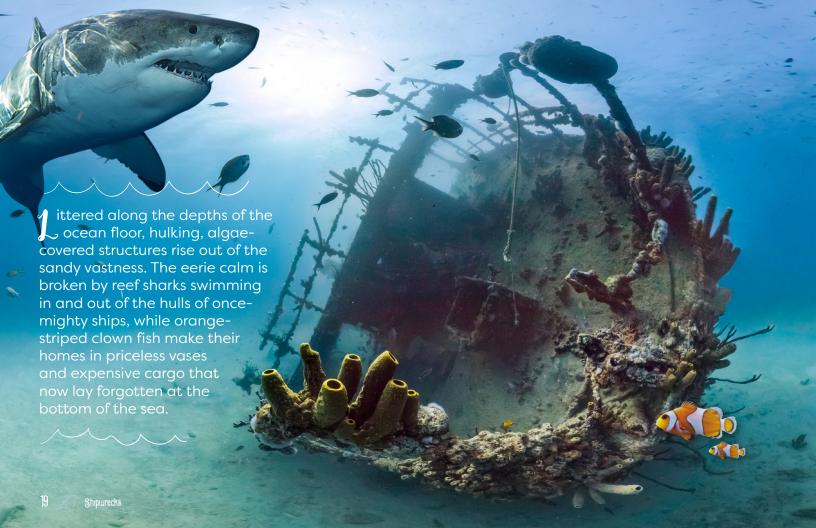


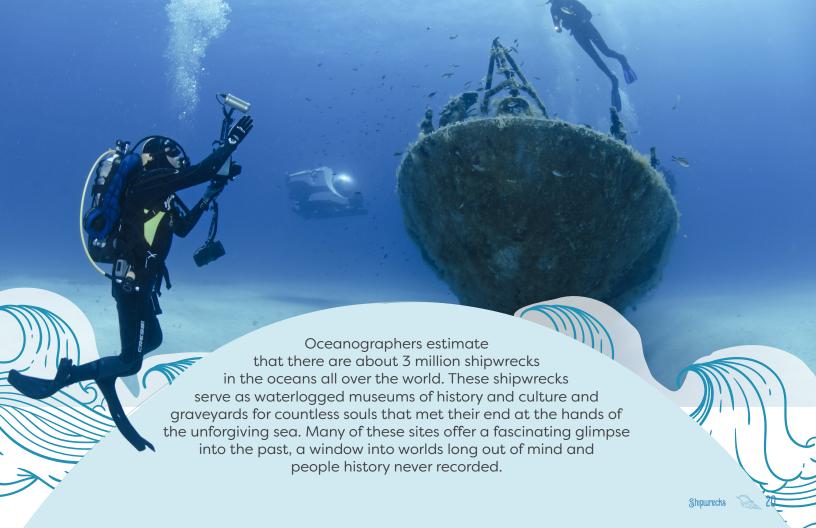






first invigorating step into the ocean, as the waves gently lap against your ankles, is the land at the beginning of the continental shelf where the dry land ends and the ocean realm begins. It is the perfect spot to splash and play in the waves, collect sea shells, and see tiny fish swimming all around you. All of the ocean's plant life and most of its creatures live in the warm waters of the shelf. Although its length can differ greatly between locations, it almost always stops at the steep drop-off called the continental slope.





Port Royal, Jamaica, in its time often referred to as "the wickedest city on Earth," was a hot spot for pirates and privateers in the late 1600s. It was thrown into the sea in 1692 after a massive earthquake claimed two-thirds of the city and 2,000 lives. (3,000

more would eventually die from wounds sustained in the chaos.)
Some say it was divine punishment for the violent lifestyle of Port Royal's inhabitants. What is left of the city lies on the ocean floor. Several buildings can be easily identified, as well as countless other artifacts, including sections of a stone floor resting on the bottom of the sea, still in a perfect herringbone pattern.



In ancient times, Atlit-Yam was a large, bustling fishing village belonging to Israel's northwestern coast. Much of the city has been excavated since its discovery in 1984, including houses, graves, freshwater wells, and a seven-stone megalithic monument arranged in a semicircle, eerily reminiscent of a similar and equally mysterious structure in northern England called Stonehenge. Nine meters (30 ft) under the waves, Atlit-Yam covers over

40,000 sq m (431,000 sq ft) of the seafloor. Evidence suggests a tsunami caused by an underwater volcanic eruption sealed its fate.



Built at the height of Alexander the Great's empire, the city of Alexandria, with its unmatched library, lavish modern conveniences, and architecturally magnificent lighthouse, stood for a thousand years as the most prominent trade center of the ancient world. It was presumed to be lost forever when eroding ground and a series of earthquakes and tsunamis finally caused it to slowly slide into the sea. Soon its grandeur was largely forgotten or mostly spoken of as more myth than history, and other cities were built on the new shoreline. In 1993 French archaeologist Jean-Yves Empereur went for a swim off the Egyptian coast while researching a 15th-century fort, only to be met with a sight straight out of a storybook. Where he expected to see debris, fishes, and seaweed, he saw huge Corinthian columns, perfectly preserved statues of pharaohs and other rulers, some over 12 m (40 ft) tall, Roman arches, obelisks, and sphinxes. He had found the lost city of Alexandria just under the feet, of the stunned dockworkers. Thousands of artifacts are left to be discovered and catalogued. Many speculate that the stone bases of the great Pharos Lighthouse, Cleopatra's palace, and even the Temple of Isis are located there, waiting to be explored.

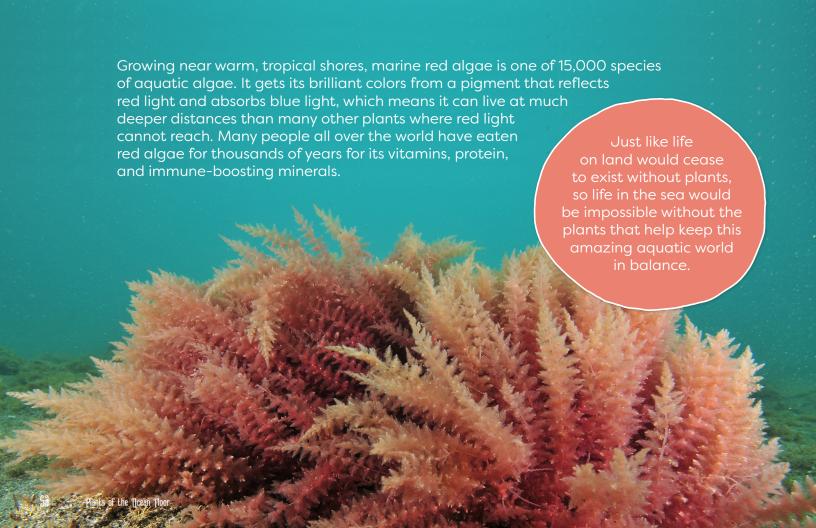


Although
the oceans of the
world are largely unexplored,
there is no doubt that humanity
has left its imprint on the seafloor,
sometimes by design, but most often by
accident and catastrophe.



Kelp is the largest marine plant in the world and can grow to 76 m (250 ft) tall. It thrives along the colder, shallow waters of rocky coastlines. Kelp anchors itself to rocks and other structures and then grows in massive towers toward the sunlight at the surface of the waves, creating a forest of brownishgreen algae. In ideal conditions, it can grow 46 cm (18 in) per day! Kelp forests are home to a diverse ecosystem of animals, from snails, crabs, and sea urchins, to sea lions, otters, and whales, and millions of colorful fishes.





EXPLORE the CESTI

he ocean floor is planet Earth's last frontier, largely unexplored and filled with sights to amaze us and new wonders to behold. Come along as we visit underwater volcanoes, canyons housed in the darkness of the abyss, and mountains that would dwarf anything found on land. Take a front-row seat as we discuss navigation and seafloor mapping techniques from long ago and discover how technology is making it possible to see the terrain at the bottom of the sea for the first time. Journey back to the days of ancient civilizations, pirates, grand sea voyages, and world wars as we uncover the shipwrecks and lost cities forever memorialized on the seafloor. Learn about the fascinating ecosystem that exists around hydrothermal jets and the plants and bizarre, one-of-a-kind creatures that call the depths their home. Let's explore the ocean floor!

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