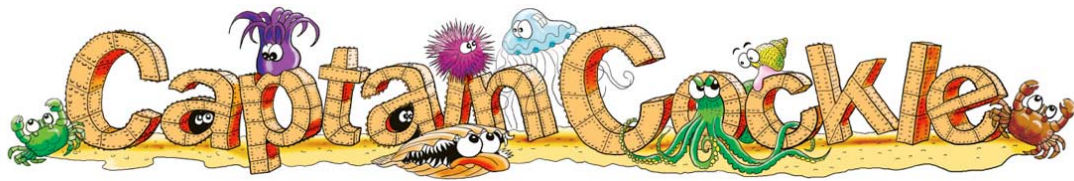


Captain Cockle



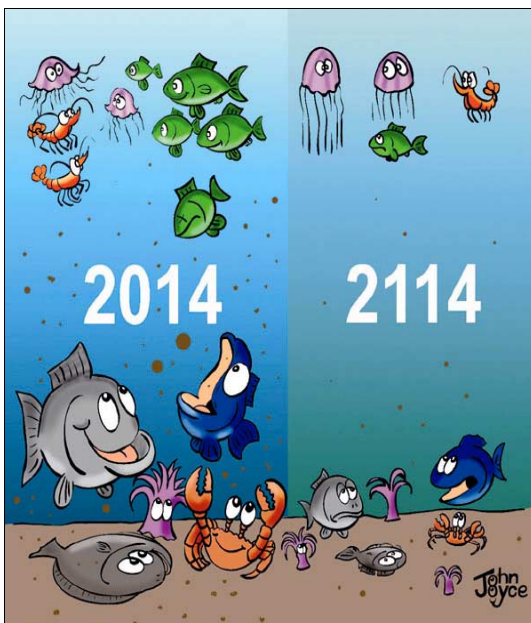
Mesolithic Marine Tours?

Evidence that humans undertook sea voyages of up to 40 miles (64 km) as long ago as 700,000 years ago has been discovered on the island of Crete, off the Greek mainland in the Mediterranean. While Crete has been separated from mainland Europe for about five million years, stone axes and other tools dating back to between 130,000 and 700,000 years have been discovered close to shelters on the island's south coast. Previous evidence of open-sea travel in Greece dates back 11,000 years and, worldwide, to around 60,000 years, although these figures have been disputed.

Meanwhile, the world's oldest surviving sea-going boat was discovered in Dover, UK, in 1992 and is estimated to be some 3,500 years old - when Stonehenge was still in use and when Tutankhamen was still the ruler of Egypt. A team of workers are currently building a half-size replica of the oaken boat and plan to demonstrate how it could have been used to cross the English Channel.



Major Reductions in Seafloor Life



Marine life living on the sea floor of the Atlantic could decline by as much as 38% over the next hundred years, according to a new international marine study, carried out by the National Oceanographic Centre in Southampton, UK and other partners. The study suggests that this reduction could be driven by the effects of climate change, including reduced ocean circulation and the creation of a warmer, less salty layer of seawater near the surface. This would reduce the number of animals and plants that live in shallower waters, which would also reduce the amount of food reaching the animals at the bottom.

Dr. Daniel Jones, who led the study said, "We were expecting some negative changes around the world, but the extent of changes, particularly in the North Atlantic, were staggering. Globally we are talking about losses of marine life weighing more than every person on the planet put together."

Changes such as these may not take place all over the world, but most oceans will be affected in some way. It is estimated that all key marine habitats - from coldwater coral reefs, to seamounts and submarine canyons - will experience losses in the numbers of animals and plants living there. The research also predicts that marine animals living on the bottom of the sea will become smaller due to lack of food. This will have an impact on seabed fisheries and marine ecosystems as a whole.

The study was carried out as part of the Marine Environmental Mapping Programme (MAREMAP) and involved researchers from the National Oceanography Centre, the Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada, the University of Tasmania, and the Laboratoire des Sciences du Climat et de l'Environnement, France. For detailed information see: <http://noc.ac.uk/news/major-reductions-seafloor-marine-life-from-climate-change-2100>

For more Fun Facts see the Children's Page at <http://www.spindriftpress.com>

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