



Pacific Ocean

CHAPTER 4

Open Water

THE OCEANS ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO HUMANS, ANIMALS, AND PLANTS.

The oceans and seas hold 97 percent of the Earth's water. They cover 71 percent of the Earth. All of this open water is salt water.

There are five oceans on Earth: the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Indian, the Arctic, and the Antarctic. The Pacific Ocean is the largest. It has 49.5 percent of the Earth's water. The Pacific Ocean also has the most kinds of plants and animals.

About 50 percent of all species¹⁴ on Earth live in the oceans.

¹⁴species: a group of animals or plants that are the same

Arctic Ocean

Atlantic Ocean

Pacific Ocean

Indian Ocean

Antarctic Ocean

The oceans change the Earth's weather. When the temperature in some parts of the ocean is unusually warm, it is called El Niño. When the temperature is unusually cold, it is called La Niña. In Spanish, *niño* means "boy," and *niña* means "girl."

El Niño and La Niña change the weather, affecting¹⁵ rain and wind. For example, during El Niño years, some parts of Australia and Indonesia don't get enough rain. During La Niña years, they get more rain than usual.

El Niño usually comes every three to seven years, but it is difficult to predict.¹⁶ Nobody really knows when the next El Niño will come.

¹⁵affect: make changes in

¹⁶predict: say when something will happen in the future