The striped marlin is one of the ocean’s most magnificent fish, swimming freely in the deep waters of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. As apex predators in the food web, they have ecological significance in keeping the ecosystem balance of the ocean.

They are highly migratory in nature and can travel great distances. During certain times of the year, Striped Marlins can be found in high numbers around Baja California Sur, Mexico, feeding on mackerels and sardines.

They owe their name to the vertical stripes along their body. In fact, they can change the color of their stripes from dark blue to phosphorescent blue or lavender in the blink of an eye. Striped marlins can also swim extremely fast, at average speeds of up to 50 miles per hour!

Threat:
Marlins are fished for human consumption. In addition, they are also targeted by Sports Fishing Tournaments where the goal is to catch the biggest marlins. Whilst this sport continues to be popular, it may be harmful to the breeding population of Marlins as the most likely specimens to reproduce are removed from the sea. All of this increases the pressure on Striped Marlin populations. In fact, their numbers are decreasing due to overfishing. Through education, we hope people can understand the importance of having Striped Marlins around to maintain the health of the Oceans. The truth is that they are worth much more alive than dead.
THE MAKO SHARK

You could call this sharp-teethed, big-eyed shark the track star of the ocean! Why? Because it is by far the fastest shark in the world. The species is called the Mako shark which can swim at speeds over 20 miles per hour. The fastest ever recorded Mako shark reached over 40 miles per hour! Pretty impressive, right? The species can be found all over the world, throughout warm and temperate oceans – from the Gulf of Mexico to the United Kingdom and Argentina. It needs to be noted that there are two different species of Mako shark: the more common shortfin Mako and the rarer longfin Mako. While the shortfin grows to more than 12 feet in length and weighs up to 1,500 pounds, the longfin grows to a maximum length of 14 feet and has a slimmer build and longer, broader pectoral fins which suggests that it is a slower and less active swimmer than the shortfin Mako.

Threat:
Mako sharks have extremely sharp, pointed teeth that enable them to catch and eat large prey like tuna, swordfish and other sharks. Because they share the same ocean habitat as their prey, Makos are regularly caught as bycatch (unintentionally) in tuna and swordfish fisheries around the world. They are also actively fished for their fins and meat. Furthermore, their jaws and teeth are often sold and traded as ornaments or souvenirs and recreational anglers love to hunt this species for sport too. For these reasons, the population of Mako sharks is dwindling all over the world. Both species are classed as endangered and more needs to be urgently done to save this beautiful species.

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Illustration by: Miguel Angel Salazar
Blue sharks are often considered to be one of the most beautiful species of shark. They are lean with a streamlined body, and long pectoral fins. As their name suggests, their skin is blue, except for their underbelly which is white.

Blue sharks are pelagic, which means they live in the world’s temperate and tropical oceans, usually far from shore in the open seas. They are highly migratory, traveling long distances in search of food. Their diet consists of squids, fish and shrimps and even small shark amongst many things. Like most sharks, Blue sharks are not dangerous to humans.

Threat:
Blue sharks are the most fished species of shark in the world. They are frequently caught as bycatch (unintentionally) in many fisheries and are also targeted for their fins and for their meat. It is estimated that over 20 million blue sharks are harvested every year.

Whilst Blue sharks are currently not endangered on a global scale, it is likely that overfishing is impacting their population in some parts of the world such as in the Mediterranean sea where they are critically endangered.

Establishing better protection is important for the long-term survival of the species.

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Illustration by: Miguel Angel Salazar
This flat, diamond-shaped animal is a Mobula – a type of ray. In total, there are nine separate species of mobula rays which are all found in warm, tropical and temperate seas.

They all have one very cool thing in common: they are called the “flying rays” because they love to acrobatically jump out of the water when gathering with thousands of other Mobulas. The reason for the leaping still remains to be a mystery but scientists believe that it might be a method of communication or a hunting strategy.

Mobula rays are filter feeders which means that they use their mouths to strain plankton out of the water. They can reach lengths of up to 5.2 meters (17 feet).

Threat:
Mobula rays are fished commercially in several countries for their meat, fins, and gills. Unfortunately, targeted fishing can decrease Mobula ray populations quickly because these rays grow and reproduce slowly.
Orcas are one of the world’s most powerful predators. These large marine mammals are easily distinguished by their distinctive black-and-white coloring.

Orcas are toothed whale and belongs to the Dolphin family - in fact they are the largest dolphin. Just like other smaller species of dolphins, Orcas are extremely smart and social. They live in family pods of up to 40 individuals and make a wide variety of sounds to communicate with each other.

Orcas are found worldwide in coastal and offshore seas, but are most abundant in the Arctic and Antarctic and in areas of cold-water upwelling. They’re excellent hunters with very diverse diets, preying on fish, penguins, and marine mammals such as seals, and even whales.

Threat:
Whilst Orcas are protected globally today, several populations have declined and some have become endangered. Some populations are suffering from Ocean pollution whilst others are unable to survive because of a dramatic reduction of their food supply due to overfishing from fisheries.

Finally, Orcas have long been a part of marine park entertainment, kept in captivity to perform shows for audiences. However, it’s become increasingly clear that orcas do not thrive in captivity.

Orcas are highly intelligent mammals capable of emotions just like us humans. They are born to be wild and free.

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THE HUMPBACK WHALE

You can think of Humpback Whales as the singers of the Ocean. They perform moans, howls, cries and other noises, creating magical songs. Scientists believe that humpbacks use this complex songs as a form of communication and to attract potential mates. As if it were not enough, they can also dance, jumping out of the water, making turns and blowing bubbles.

They live in all the Oceans and have one of the longest migrations of any mammal on Earth. Some of them can swim 5,000 miles from tropical breeding grounds to colder, productive areas to feed on krill and small fishes by straining huge volumes of water through their baleen plates.

Threat:

Populations of humpbacks were severely reduced before the 1985 ban on commercial whaling, but the numbers in much of its range have since improved. Regardless, they still face threats like entanglement from most fishing nets, collision with ships, harassment from unregulated tourism, underwater noise and habitat impact.
THE GREY WHALE

Grey Whales can grow to 50ft long and weight around 40 tons! As their name says, they have a mottled gray body and small eyes. You can easily recognise them because they carry a tiny ecosystem on their bodies. Their skin can be home to lots of barnacles and lice, up to 100,000 lice have been found on a single whale!

This amazing animals are known for their curiosity towards boats during whale watching ecotourism and some even like being petted like a dog! They have one of the longest migrations among all sea mammals, traveling around 10,000 miles roundtrip from Alaska to Mexico.

Their feeding system functions kind of like a giant vacuum cleaner. They dive to the bottom, turn on their side and suck up a mouthful of mud filled with tiny animals like amphipods, worms and crab larvae.

Threat:
Grey Whales used to be common throughout the Northern Hemisphere, but were hunted close to extinction. Now there’s only two remaining populations: the Eastern Pacific population that has successfully recovered, and the Western Pacific population which remain very low comprised of around 200 individuals only. They also face threats like entanglement from most fishing nets, collision with ships, harassment from unregulated tourism, underwater noise and habitat impact. Scientists have found some whales that are very skinny and malnourished, and called it “The skinny whale syndrome”. They think that it has to do with the reduction of numbers of their favourite meal (amphipods) possibly due to climate change.

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And YOU ... by downloading this booklet you are committed to the conservation and protection of wildlife.

You are part of the tribe. You are a Nakawe Warrior.