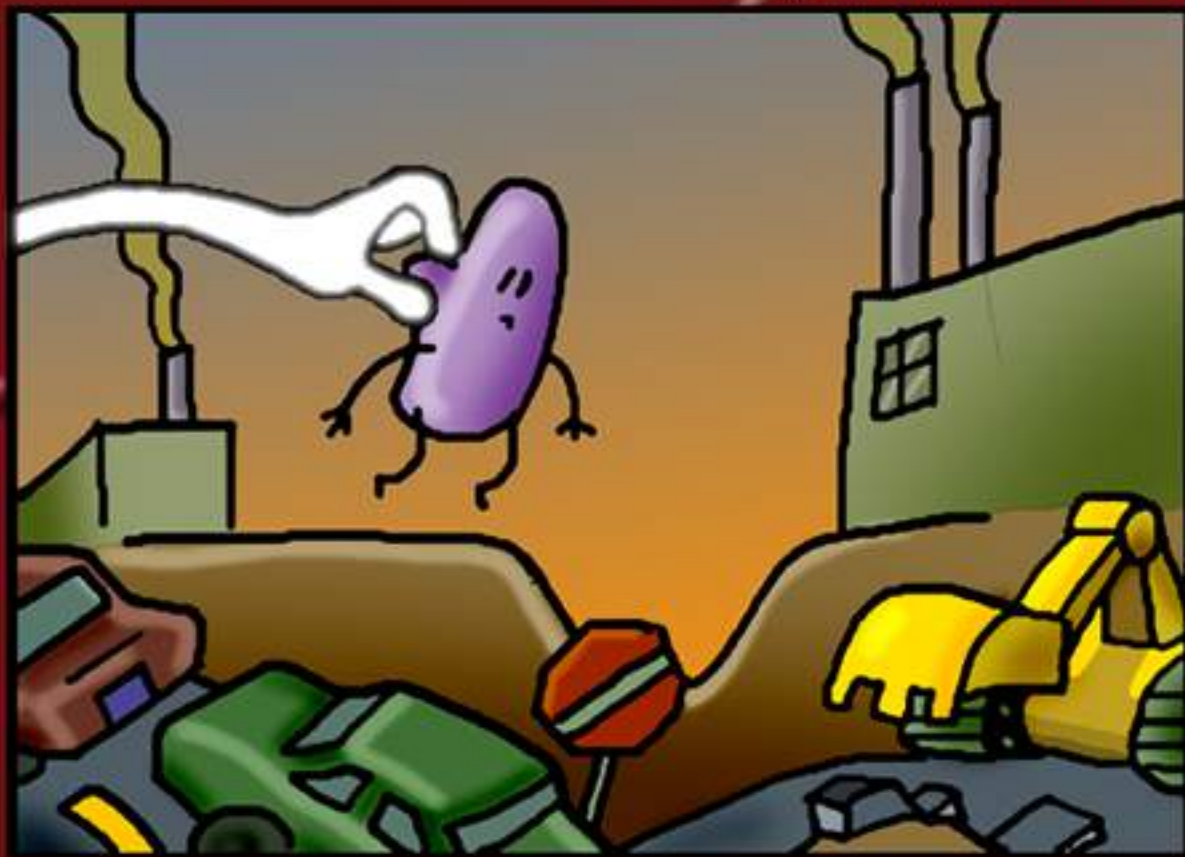
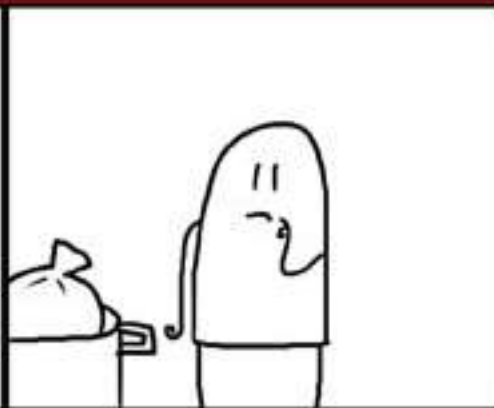


DO YOU LIVE ON LAND?

by Sean Ruecroft

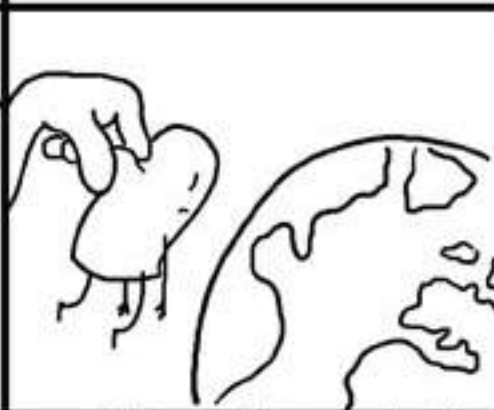




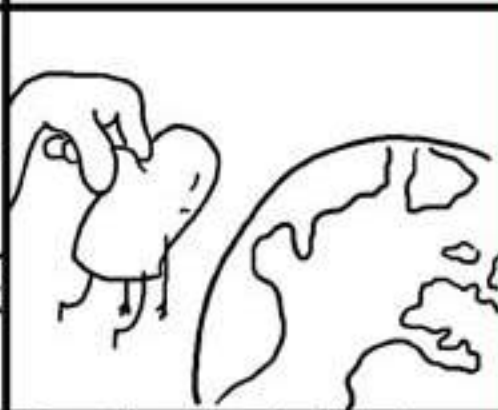
Do you live on land?



If you do ...



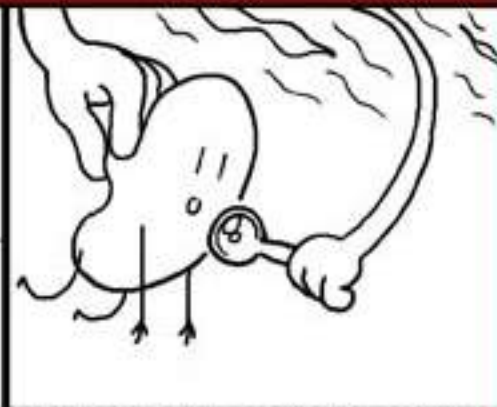
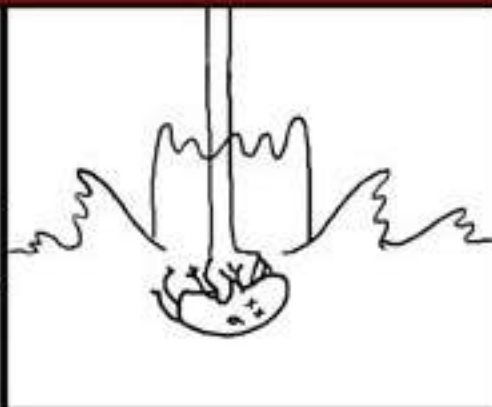
you might not think much about the 70% of the Earth that is covered in Oceans.



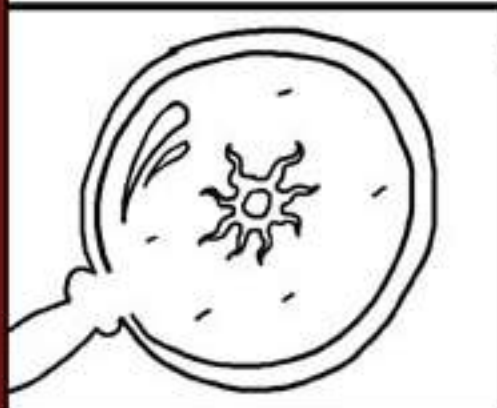
Even though you don't live there, Oceans are an important part of everyone's lives.



Let's take a closer look.



For one thing, most of the oxygen that we breathe is produced in the ocean



by tiny plant particles called phytoplankton.

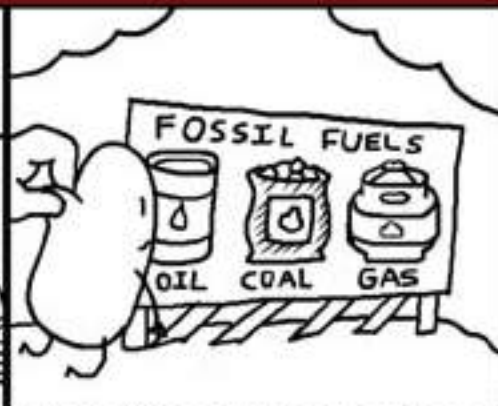


If these guys disappear, you better get used to holding your breath, and right now they're in danger.

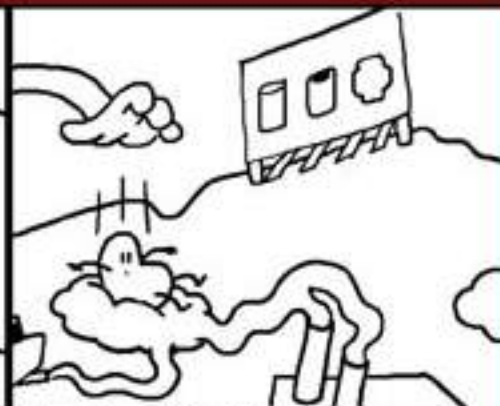




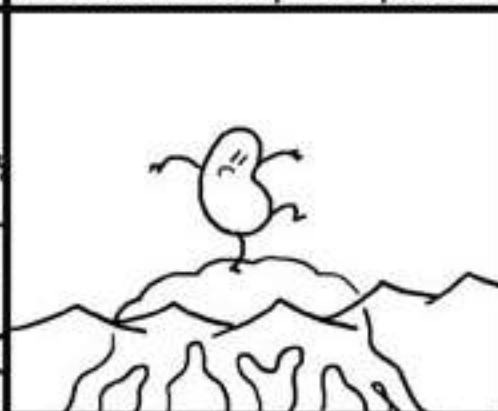
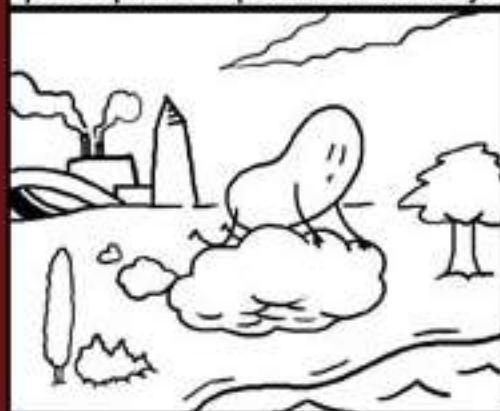
Back on land, humans are driving cars, heating homes, and running power plants to produce electricity.



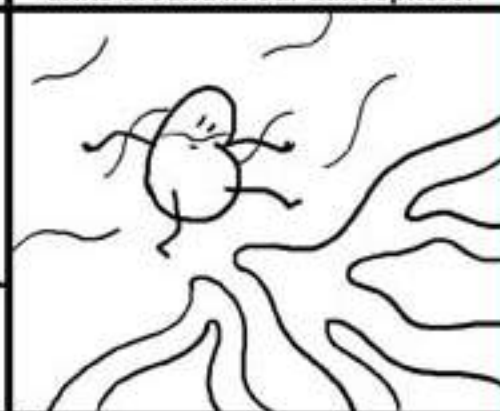
Many of these things run on fossil fuels like oil, coal, and natural gas which are burned up in the process.



When fossil fuels burn, they produce Carbon Dioxide gas, or CO₂, which drifts around in our atmosphere.



The CO₂ in our atmosphere gets absorbed by ocean water, and that CO₂ becomes an acid.



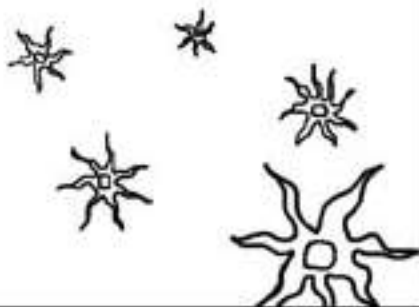
This process is called ocean acidification.



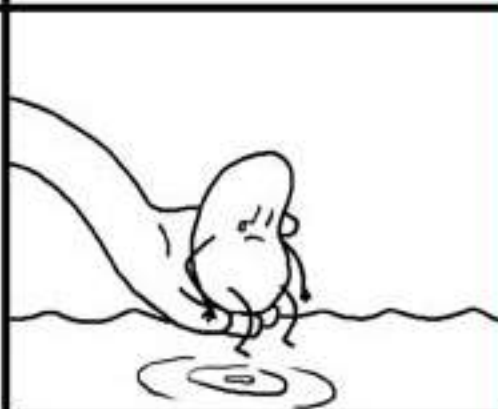
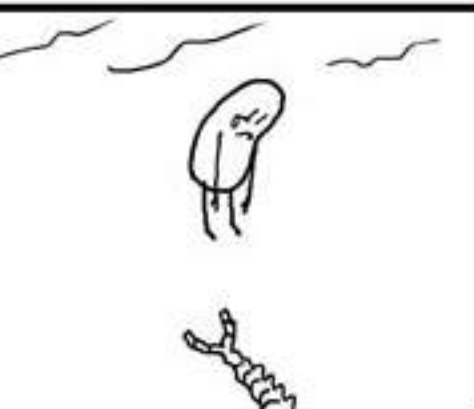
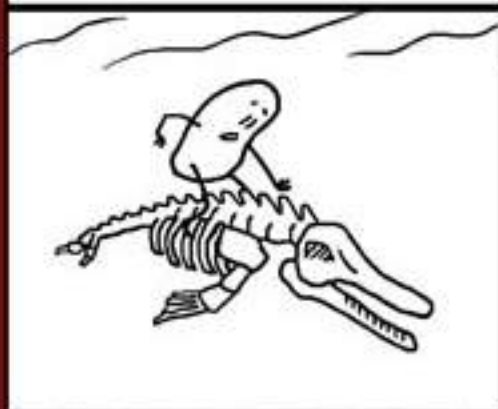
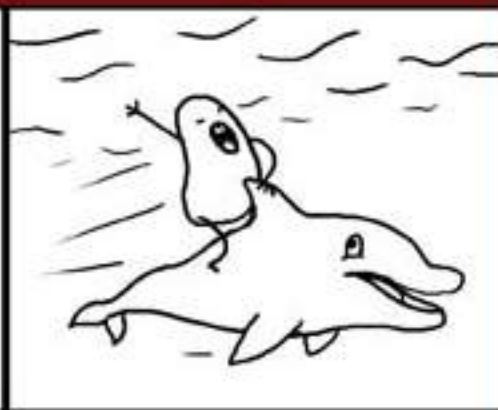
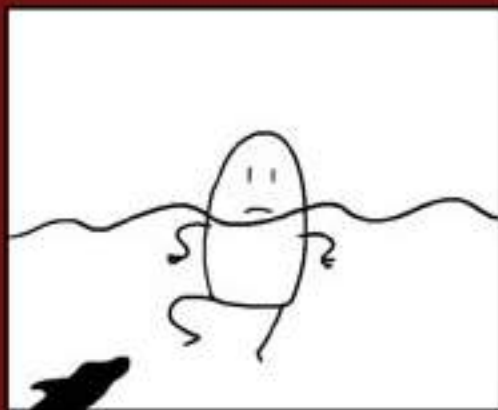
If the ocean becomes too acidic,
shellfish won't be able to grow
their shells,



coral reefs will dissolve,



and the oxygen-producing
phytoplankton will disappear.

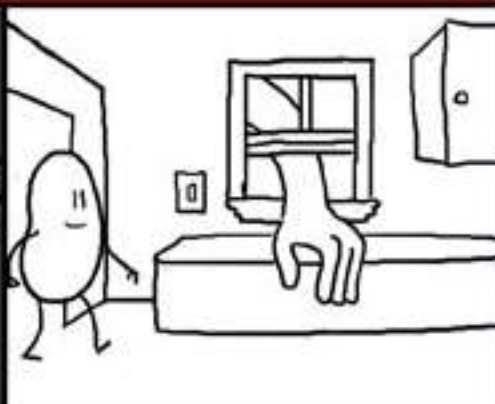


This drastic change to the food chain will mean that bigger animals won't be able to find enough food

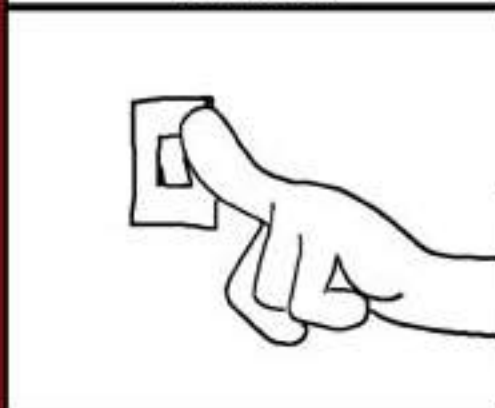
and the ocean will become empty.



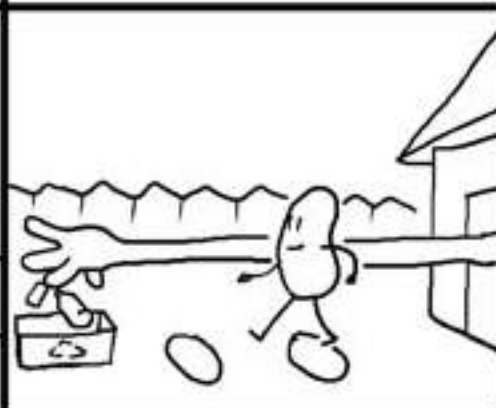
Luckily, there is a lot that people can do to prevent ocean acidification.



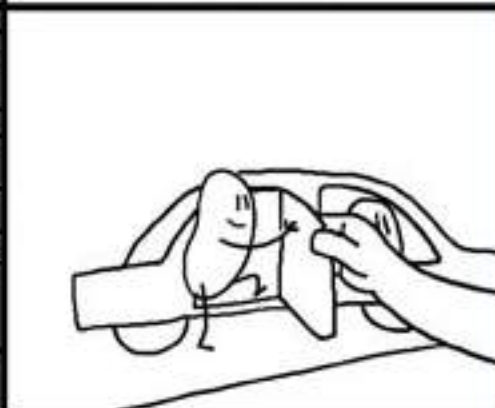
Some ways to help are as simple as...



turning off your lights when you're not using them,



recycling glass, paper, and plastic,



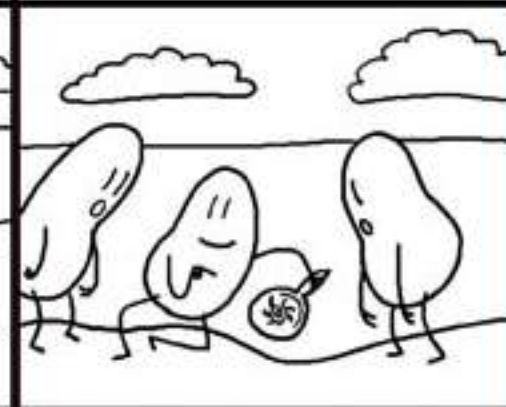
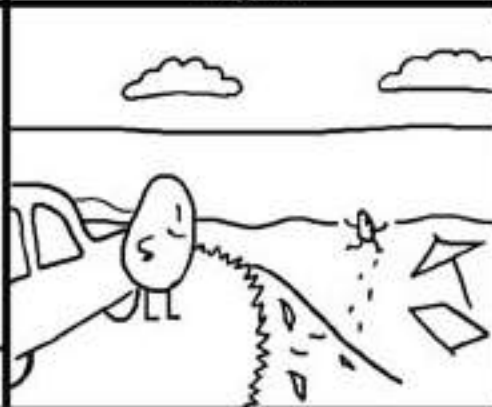
and sharing rides to conserve fossil fuels.



People can also choose to use alternative energies such as wind, solar, and hydro power.



If enough people do this, we can put away harmful fossil fuels for good.



You can tell more people about the importance of our oceans and how they can help keep them safe.



Then the oceans will be healthy enough for everyone to enjoy them for generations to come.



The End