



Cambridge Primary Checkpoint

ENGLISH

0058/01

Paper 1 Non-fiction

April 2025

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1 hour

INFORMATION

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This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Text for **Section A**

The sun rises above the horizon. The ocean is calm. Seabirds break their night-time silence with a round of raucous calls, a noisy welcome to the new day. In rainforests, fields and wetlands all over the world, birds join in with the dawn chorus¹. The remarkable thing is that this daily performance is not limited to animals living above the waves. Below the surface, a multitude of sounds fills the sea, the many voices of the 'choral reef'. 5

Just like songbirds on land in spring, the creatures of the coral reef perform their own chorus at dawn and again at dusk. However, the underwater sounds are louder in the evening than in the morning. Whatever the time of day, though, it is a lively chorus created by some of the most unlikely performers. It has long been known that fish make sounds, but who would have thought tiny creatures like sea urchins and shrimps were part of the choir? 10

The tropical coral reef is a naturally noisy place, and we are only just realising how important sound is to the creatures living there. Steve Simpson, of the University of Exeter, has been studying them. He has designed a piece of underwater equipment with four hydrophones. These record the sounds that creatures make and show him which direction they are coming from. 15

'Listening in surround sound, we can work out who's making which noises and why,' Steve explains. 'Are they trying to impress each other or to scare something away? There's a whole underwater language that we're only just starting to understand.' 20

One of the most vocal reef creatures he studied is the clownfish. In one experiment, Steve introduced a model of a fish called the coral trout, a known predator of clownfish. He then recorded the buzzing sounds that the female clownfish made to frighten off the attacker and warn other fish. Every time a boat passed by, this channel of communication was blocked. The fish were inaudible – they could no longer hear each other. 25

'You think of all the boats that are driving around, all the ships, and the offshore drilling, all the noise we are making in the ocean, and then you realise just how much we're drowning out natural sounds. It's robbing animals of their ability to talk to each other.' 30

As Steve has found out, even the sounds made by small boats and jet skis are interfering with how young coral reef fish find their way to a suitable reef to live on. 35

'Noise in the ocean is a real problem, but we can do something about it. We can choose when and where we make noise. If there are nights when we know coral reef fish are settling onto the reef, we can have restricted quiet zones when boats are not allowed to drive around at night. We can directly reduce the noise that we make, and we can start doing that today.'

40

Glossary

¹dawn chorus: when birds sing at the beginning of each day

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