

## **Caribbean Sea under threat**

**The Caribbean Sea has been listed as one of the areas most seriously damaged by human activity.**

A new study points to pollution from ships, over-fishing - and climate change as the three major causes of damage to marine ecosystems in the waters around the region.

Scientists say nearly every corner of the world's oceans have been damaged in some way by human activity.

Other areas said to be suffering similar affects are the North Sea, the South and East China seas, the east coast of North America and the Mediterranean Sea.

The first global scale study of human influence on marine ecosystems says the biggest damage is caused by climate change.

The study found that significant increases in water temperatures have already been observed in the North Atlantic.

And global warming is projected to further raise temperatures to varying extents in other areas.

The study also noted that oceans are becoming more acidic as they absorb carbon dioxide, and plants are being affected by increased ultraviolet radiation.

## **Over-fishing**

Kim Selkoe, co-author of the study, said that research found that 80 percent of the world's ocean is fished.

"The other really surprising thing to me what our fishing data showed 80 percent of the world's ocean is fished," Selko said.

"There's nowhere left for the fish to hide... fishing boats are just really everywhere."

While subsistence fishing has a limited impact on ocean ecologies, high-impact commercial fishing dumps millions of pounds of unwanted dead fish, birds and mammals back into the ocean.

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According to the findings, shipping traffic is the third largest cause of damage.

"When you look at the map of the ship traffic, it's just a solid coverage of the world's oceans," Selkoe said.

"The fuel gets spilled, there's noise pollution which is disturbing to whales and such... which has a major affect on the ecosystem."

Ms Selkoe said spilled fuel and noise pollution has a major effect on the ecosystem.

It's recommended that shifting shipping lines away from sensitive areas like coral reefs and continental shelves could significantly reduce the impact on ocean life.