

# I LIVE BY THE SEA

## INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PHOTO AND FILM CONTEST

# THE BEST STORIES

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THE BEST PHOTOS  
AND STORIES

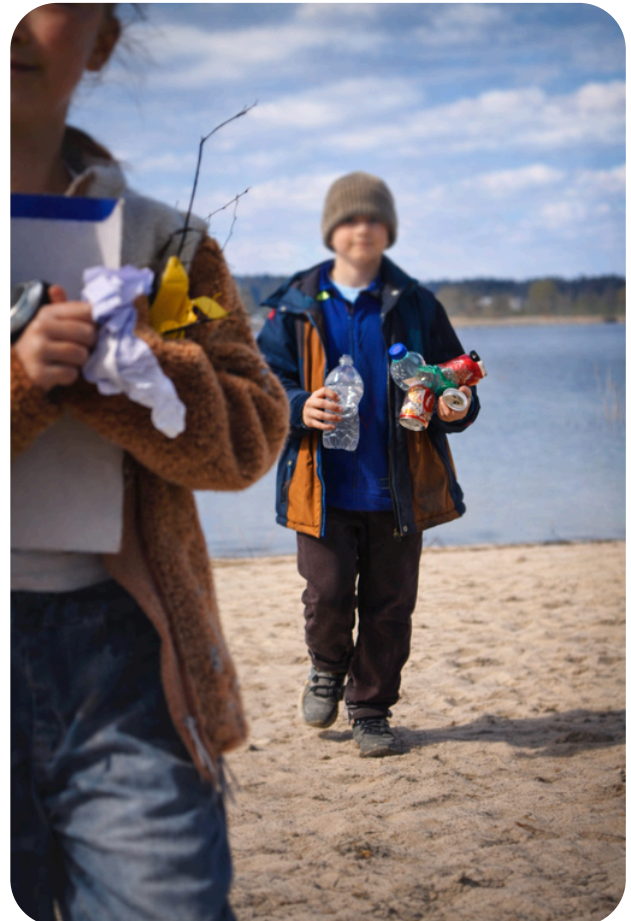
**We live by the sea of energy**  
**BY ADRIANNA SPIESZ, LAURA SPIESZ, AGE 7**  
**Netherlands**



We live in Vlaardingen close to Rotterdam harbour and Maasvlakte a man-made peninsula that includes offshore wind energy installations. You can see them in our photo! And there is much more in the North Sea. This way we can get clean energy from our sea. Because our sea is not only a great beach and tasty food (oh we love seaweed salad more than chocolate!), but it's full of energy. The picture was taken in a museum by the sea (Portlantis) that explain how energy can be extracted from wind in the sea. And we live by the sea, the sea of energy!

**The sea does not begin at the shore - It begins with us.**  
**BY NATALIA BOGUCKA, AGE 11**  
**Poland**

We don't all live by the sea, but we all shape it. We started here – by cleaning our lake, picking up what others left behind. This water, these places, our choices – they all flow further. Nothing disappears. Everything travels. Every piece of plastic we leave behind will reach the ocean. The sea does not begin at the shore. It begins with us.



Do the turtles deserve this?

**BY HARSHANA JAYACHANDRAN VIKRAM, AGE 7**  
INDIA



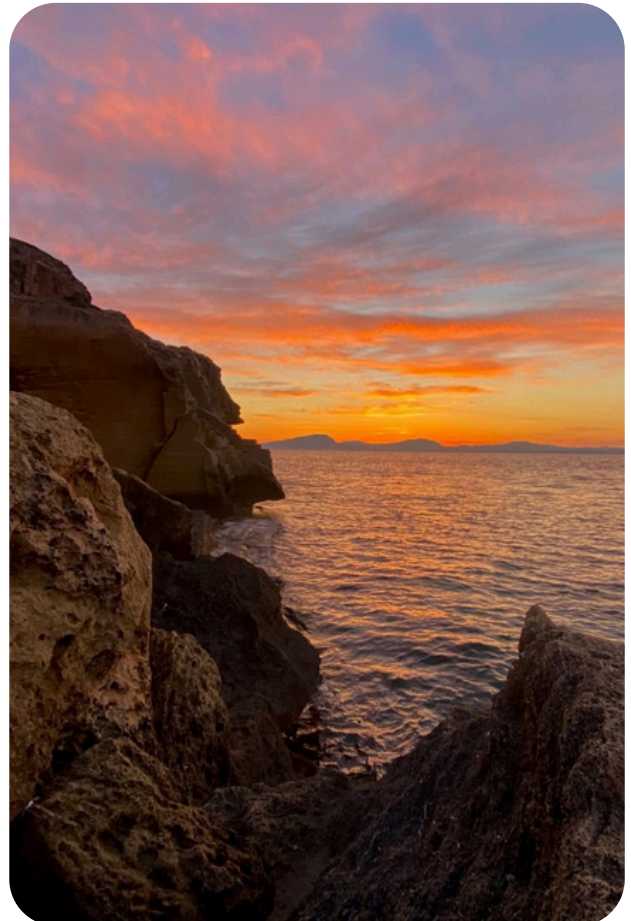
I took this photo on Galle beach in Sri Lanka while on vacation. I saw a dead turtle on the sand with plastic all around it, and hungry crows were eating it. I think the sea was trying to tell something to the people on the beach.

Even though I am only seven, I understood two things. First, the plastic around killed this turtle, even though turtles are supposed to live for a hundred years. Second, even after it died, the turtle was useful by being the food for the hungry crows to help the nature cycle. I learned that being a turtle is very hard. Turtle eggs are left unguarded from the time they are laid at the seashore. The babies have to fend for themselves as soon as they hatch out. Thus, only half of them survive into being big turtles..They try so hard to survive the big ocean fighting big obstacles, only to get killed by a small plastic bag made by people. When I saw this, I had one big question for the world: What did the turtles do to deserve a death like this?

How the sea makes me feel!

**BY JENNIFER BHANJI, AGE 15**  
PORTUGAL

The sea makes me feel calm and slow,  
Like I don't have anywhere to go.  
The sunset paints the sky so bright,  
With soft warm colors, gold and light.  
The sea makes me feel small but free,  
Like all my worries can't reach me.  
The waves move gently, in and out,  
Like they're whispering, soft and low.  
The sky turns orange, pink, and red,  
As the sun sinks down to rest its head.  
The air feels warm, the breeze is light,  
Everything glows in the fading light.  
I stand alone, but not alone,  
The sea feels like a place I've known.  
And in that quiet, peaceful view,  
I feel like I can just be true.



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I Love Sea  
**BY ZOFIA ORŁOWSKA, AGE 11**  
POLAND



I chose this photo because I love the sea. The Baltic Sea is beautiful during sunset. I love watching the waves and playing in the sand.

I often go to the beach with my family to walk along the shore.

Unfortunately, many people litter the beach. I can often see seagulls eating the trash. It makes me sad. People should throw the trash bins and not on the sand or into the water. I hope that more people will start to care about the sea.

**The marshmallow sand coast**

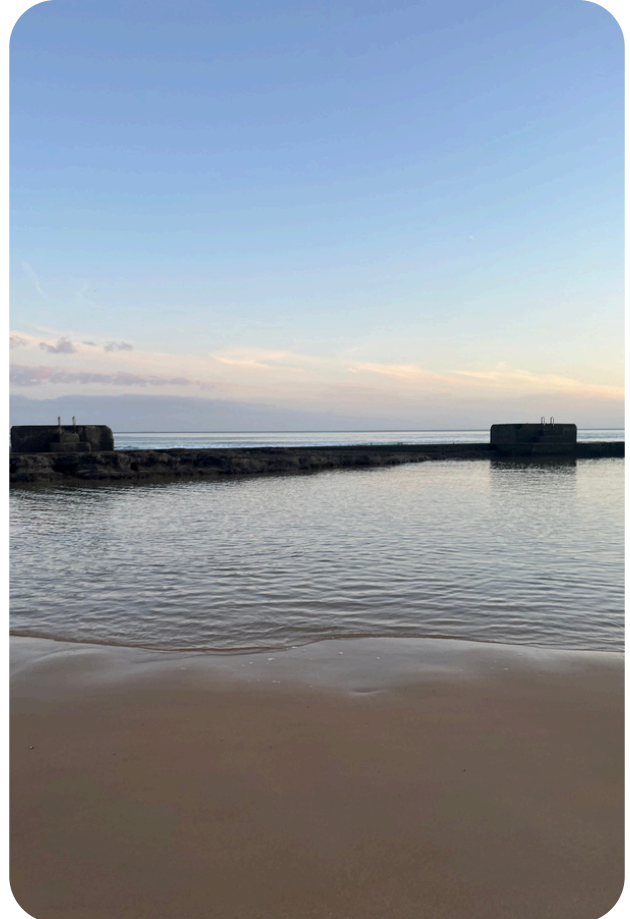
**BY GABRIELA MANSUR, AGE 14**  
PORTUGAL

At my sea, I see more than just water and sand. I see a place that feels calm, but also important. The waves move gently, and the horizon seems very far away. The colorful sky and the sound of the ocean create a peaceful atmosphere that makes me just want to stay there forever.

This place is special to me because it helps me relax, but it also reminds me that the sea is very precious and it needs everyone's help. It can be easily affected by human actions like pollution and waste. No matter where we live, we all have an impact on the ocean, and that makes me realize how connected we are to it.

The sea is full of life, even if we don't always see it. Many animals and plants depend on it and it plays a huge role in keeping our planet healthy. It is also a place where people come together and create memories.

Living by the sea means understanding that we have a responsibility to protect it. If we take care of the ocean, we take care of our future.



I live by the sea... but they don't.

**BY LORENZA LOPEZ GONZALEZ, AGE 13**

**PORTUGAL**

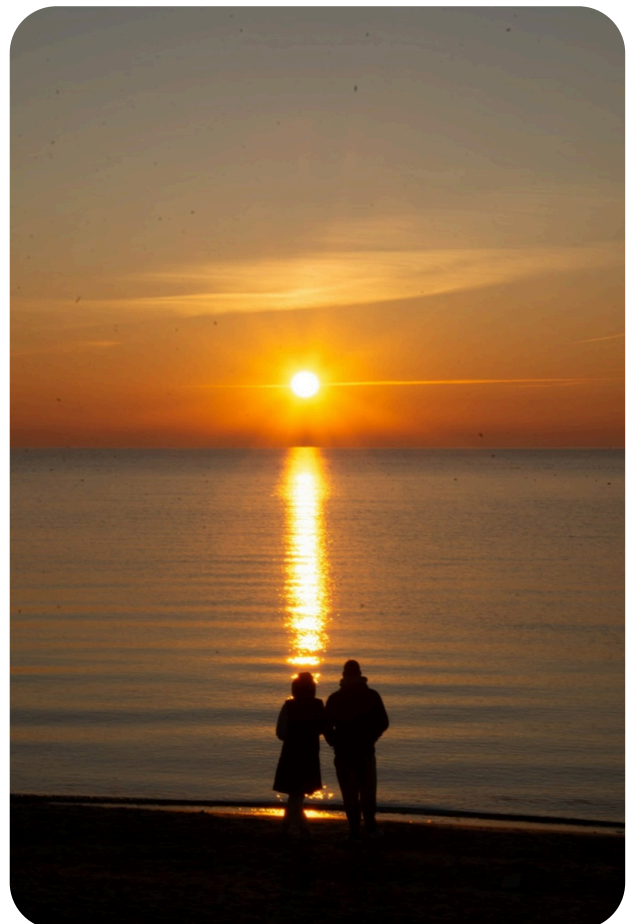


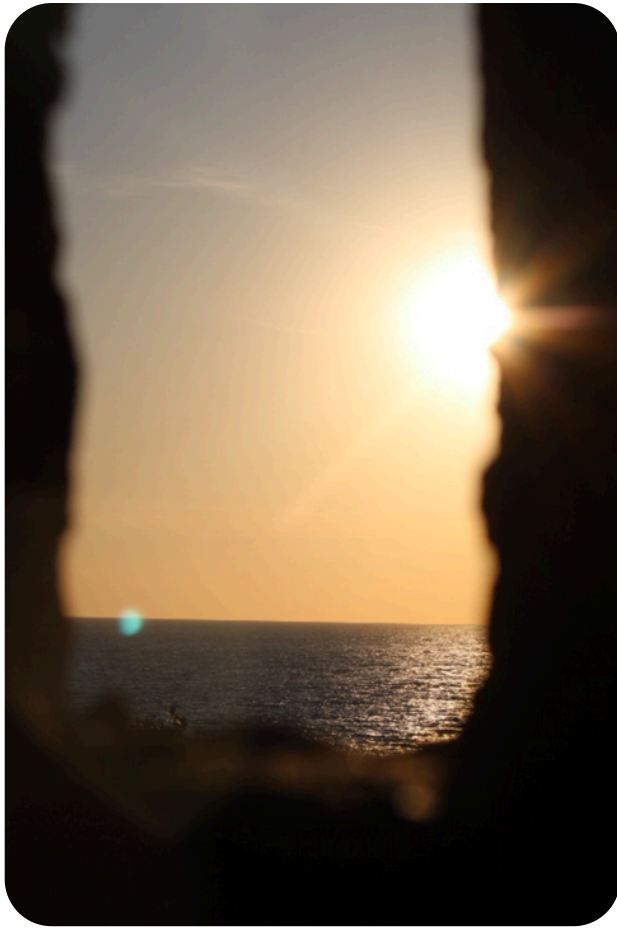
I hope that more people will start to care about the sea. When I was traveling in Japan, I got the chance to go to the only aquarium in the world that has a whale shark. Although I thought it was fascinating, I couldn't help but wonder how these animals feel. They live in a glass tank, where everyone watches them. They should live by the sea.

**Baltic sea**

**BY IGOR SAŁKIEWICZ,  
FILIP WĘGRZYNOWICZ, AGE 14**  
**POLAND**

When I live by the sea, I have the opportunity to admire the sunrise with the love of my life. As the sun rises, it creates a beautiful atmosphere to gaze at the surface of the water illuminated by the sunrise together with the person I love.





On the second day of May at sunset, I was hiking along the coast with my family in Circeo (Italy). We reached some ruins, it was the "Fortino San Felice Circeo", from Napoleon's time. It had some holes, where soldiers used to observe the sea for invasions. I could imagine the people before me being there and looking at the sea as well. I imagined the Mesozoic period we had studied in science, history arguments and poets we have studied in our English and Italian classes who were inspired by the sea. We often take the sea for granted, but it's art, history, science and so much more. The sea has been here from much longer than us. I always have felt a connection when I see it and in that moment I felt deeply connected to the infinite history as seen by the sea.

Goodbye to the day, hello to darkness  
**BY ANA MANSUR, AGE 12**  
PORTUGAL

The photo shows a calm seaside view at sunset. On the right side, there are rocky cliffs with some trees and buildings, and a small lighthouse can be seen in the distance. In the ground, there are plants growing along the edge of the cliff.



## Steel and Salt: My Horizon of Freedom

**BY FILIP DUTKIEWICZ, AGE 14**  
POLAND



When I say I Live By The Sea, I don't just mean long walks on the beach or the sound of the waves. For me, it means waking up every day in the shadow of these three steel giants. These crosses are my compass. They stand where the cold Baltic mist meets the shipyard cranes, marking the spot where our journey toward freedom truly began.

Living here, I feel the weight of two historic tides. First, the difficult days of December 1970, when the courage of shipyard workers was tested against an unjust system. Their sacrifice remained a silent echo in the coastal wind for years. Then, the powerful wave of Solidarity in August 1980—a peaceful revolution that started right here, behind the shipyard gates, fueled by the salt of the sea and an unbreakable spirit.

This monument, built in 1980, is a reminder that the strength of steel and a common goal can change the world. It marks the moment when our anchors of hope finally held fast, leading to the fall of the Iron Curtain and the birth of democracy. To live by this sea is to breathe the air of a freedom that was earned right here, in my own backyard.

## Lonely bird

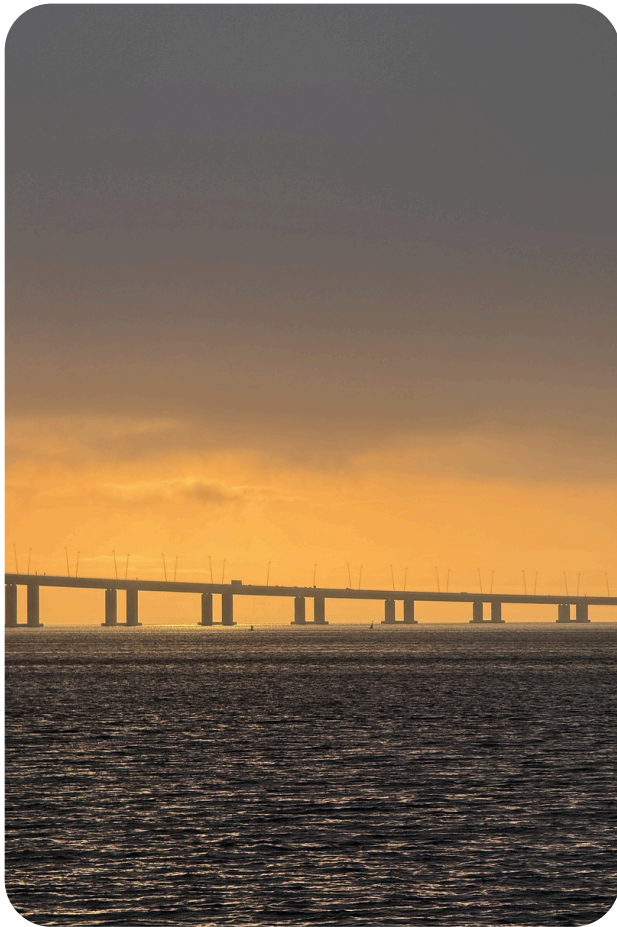
**BY MANDY FOURNIER, AGE 15**  
FRANCE

Jurata.  
The last day of 2025.  
Gloomy, piercing cold, fog.  
What is he waiting for? His beloved?  
A New Year's Eve party? Spring?  
Does he regret not flying away to the warm seas ?  
No, the Baltic sea is the best, in any weather  
and at any time of year.



I live in Lisbon, Portugal. From here, I can see the Atlantic Ocean. It is big, beautiful, and full of life. It is my sea. But something is wrong with it. Every time I go to the beach, I find plastic. Bottles, bags, straws, wrappers. All of it left behind by people. All of it ending up in the water. This plastic does not disappear. It breaks into tiny pieces and sinks into the ocean, where fish eat it without knowing. Then we eat the fish. The plastic we throw away comes back to us. Sea turtles eat plastic bags because they look like jellyfish. Seabirds feed plastic pieces to their babies because they think it is food. Dolphins and whales get tangled in fishing nets and ropes left in the sea. These animals are not doing anything wrong. We are. The Atlantic Ocean near Lisbon is one of the most important oceans in the world. It is full of fish, plants, and creatures that keep our planet healthy. But every year, millions of tonnes of plastic enter the oceans around the world. If we do nothing, there will be more plastic in the sea than fish by the year 2050.

I am 14 years old. I did not create this problem. But I live with it every day when I look at my sea. And I want to fix it. It is not complicated. Pick up your rubbish. Use less plastic. Tell others what is happening. Small actions, done by many people, can change everything. My sea is calling for help. Can you hear it?



Through the Stone window  
**BY KAROLINA PIĘTKA, AGE 13**  
POLAND

Sometimes, when you are exhausted, you want to lie down and do nothing at all but instead you can go watch the sunset through a small stone window. At that moment, the only thing you can think of is how amazing the world is.

The breathtaking feeling of seeing the ocean reflect the sunset as sunbeams pour through the window.

Moments like this show you how much you have to be thankful that you can hear the sound of the sea, look at the light shimmer on the water and feel the breeze on your skin.

Occasionally you can even spot a boat full of people that also are admiring the view.

Little things like this can make your live happier.

