

# Life in the Ocean - The Story of Oceanographer Sylvia Earle

Claire A. Nivola

1. What does Sylvia Earle call the ocean?  
The blue heart of the planet
2. Where did Sylvia live in her childhood? Why?  
On an old farm in Paulsboro, NJ, because her parents wanted her and her brothers to grow up in the country as they had done.
3. What did mom call what Sylvia liked to do outside with her notebook?  
Investigations
4. Where did Sylvia move when she was 12?  
She moved to Clearwater, Florida with the Gulf of Mexico right in her own backyard.
5. What did Mom say happen to Sylvia when they moved to Florida?  
Sylvia "lost her heart to the water."
6. What was the book that Sylvia found that inspired her?  
A book by naturalist William Beebe that described his descent into the ocean in his Bathysphere.
7. Name some ways Sylvia was always diving deeper to see more.
  - \* At 16 she swam 30 feet to the bottom of the river using diving gear
  - \* Scuba diving to research algae for a university degree
  - \* The only woman on a research ship in the Indian Ocean
  - \* Leading a team of divers in a deep-sea laboratory off the US Virgin Islands
  - \* Walking in an aqua suit on the ocean floor
  - \* Using a one-person spherical bubble to descend 3,000 feet in the Pacific
  - \* Plunging 13,000 feet in a Japanese submersible
8. How did Sylvia describe whales?  
They are like swallows or like otters. They move in any direction. They are sleek, elegant, and gorgeous. They are among the most exquisite creatures. They move like ballerinas – wonderful dancers in the sea.
9. What does hearing the whales sound like according to Sylvia?  
They sound like being inside the heart of an orchestra.

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10. What did Sylvia get to live in for two weeks in 1970?

Tektite II – a deep-sea station that was 50 feet below sea level in the coral reefs.

11. What happened nine years after she stayed among the coral reefs?

She walked on the ocean floor off Hawaii, 1,250 feet below sea level in a JIM suit (an atmospheric diving suit). She thought it would be as black as midnight but some sun came through. She saw some bioluminescent creatures flashing with their blue fire.

12. What percentage of the ocean has been explored?

Only 5% of the ocean floor has been explored.

13. What was Sylvia Earle's lifelong passion?

Her lifelong passion was to witness firsthand the marvels of the sea and to serve as a spokeswoman for the vital importance of the ocean to the health of our planet and to our very survival. She lived by the saying "go deeper, stay longer."

14. When was Sylvia born?

1935