



The Great Barrier Reef is a spectacular place! It stretches for more than 2000 km along the north eastern coast of Australia, and is home to thousands of sea animals. There are more than 1500 species of fish in its waters, and it is also visited by sea birds, humpback whales and sea turtles.

Many more tourists have visited the Reef in recent years. This has meant an increase in diving, swimming, shell and coral collecting, and walking on the Reef. These activities can disturb sea life and kill the coral. There have also been problems with over-fishing in the area, and each year more than 2000 large ships sail through the Reef. People fear that if this continues, there will be a disaster such as an oil spill.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park was created in 1980, and now there are certain rules that people should follow. People are only allowed to catch a limited number of fish in the area. If ship and boat owners leave rubbish behind, they are fined. Divers are asked not to stand on the coral, and to watch animals instead of touching them. Collecting coral is totally forbidden in the Marine Park! The Park has done a lot to help the Reef. However, if people don't learn to care for their environment, the problems will continue.



The Himalayas extend for about 2500 kilometres and pass through India, Nepal and Bhutan. This incredible mountain range contains many of the highest mountains in the world, including Mount Everest, which rises to a height of about 8848 metres.

More climbers and trekkers visit the Himalayas than anywhere else in the world, and so there has been an increase in road building. This has damaged the natural environment. Visitors themselves also cause environmental problems. Some people leave behind rubbish and disturb wild animals that live in the area. In Nepal, many species of animals such as tigers, leopards and the Himalayan black bear, have become endangered. This is partly because a lot of the forest has been destroyed and partly because of hunting. Unless this stops, the animals will become extinct.

The Annapurna Area Conservation Project was set up to try to solve some of these problems. Tourists have to pay to visit the area, and the money is spent on environmental protection and local communities. National Parks have also been established for the protection of the endangered species. However, it is still important to educate people to respect the environment. Sometimes people do not realize the damage they do. Perhaps if they understood this, they would spend more time looking after nature.