



The Blue Commons

Rescuing the Economy of the Sea

Guy Standing

Planet Earth is mostly blue - about 70% of the earth's surface is covered by the oceans, which provide half of the oxygen we breathe and three-quarters of all life on Earth. But who owns the sea?

About 40% of the world's population lives in coastal communities and depends on ocean resources. They are in trouble. Since the twentieth century governments and corporations around the world, often corruptly, have pushed a fatally flawed maxim of 'blue growth', destroying fish populations and plundering vital ocean ecosystems.

The sea has been extensively enclosed for private gain, generating multiple inequalities. A system of rentier capitalism now dominates the marine economy, based on privatization, rapacious financial capital and a remorseless drive for profit over people and ecosystems.

The Blue Commons peels back the veil of the boundless exploitation and inherent criminality in the ocean economy. Written by an economist responsible for much of our contemporary understanding of inequality and possible solutions, this book not only reveals the scale of the challenge but points to a transformative alternative: building a blue commons, dismantling rentier capitalism and prioritizing the world's commoners and the health of our oceans.

'Shines a bright light on the economy of the oceans, directing us brilliantly towards where a sustainable future lies'

Danny Dorling

'Guy Standing writes with remarkable erudition, but also with passion and lyricism about the Blue Commons. He commands the reader to wake up to the threat posed by rentier capitalism's violent policies for extraction, exploitation and depletion of that which is both common to us all, but also vital to our survival: the sea and all within it'

Ann Pettifor

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9780241475874 | July 2022

