

Great Barrier Reef

- R. W.: Hello. This is Rebecca Watson from Radio Ena. Our topic today is the accident in the Great Barrier Reef, Australia, where a Chinese ship that transported oil stranded on April 3rd. Experts guess that it could take 20 years for the world's largest coral reef to recover. This is why we want to interview Professor Jenny Miller, the director of Greenpeace, about this topic. Welcome Professor Miller.
- J. M.: Thank you for inviting me, Mrs. Watson.
- R. W.: First of all, can you give us some general information about the Great Barrier Reef, please?
- J. M.: Yes, of course. The Great Barrier Reef is one of Australia's most remarkable natural gifts and the world's largest coral reef. With 2.600 kilometres it is larger than the Great Wall of China and the only thing on earth visible from space which is made of living organisms. The reef is located in the Coral Sea, off the coast of Queensland in northeast Australia. In the Great Barrier Reef live lots of animals that have almost died out, for example sea turtles or rare whale species.
- R. W.: Thank you. Now let's talk about the accident. Can you tell us some facts about what exactly happened?
- J. M.: On April 3rd a Chinese ship, carrying 65,000 tonnes of coal, ran aground off the shipping lane and leaked oil on Australia's Great Barrier Reef. They sprayed chemical substances in order to break up the oil slick. But authorities fear that another oil spill will damage the world's largest coral reef. The ship hit the reef at full speed in a restricted zone. So it is in a very damaged condition and the worry now is that the salvage operation may disturb the ship in a way that sees more oil discharged into the water.
- R. W.: What's your professional opinion about this incident? What are possible consequences for the animals living there?
- J. M.: I think it's a real disaster. The fact that there was no legal requirement to have marine pilots on board ships in the area to guide them safely through the 1,500 mile reef system put it in grave danger. After this incident the animals that are living there are especially endangered because the oil can destroy their whole living environment. That would be a veritable catastrophe.
- R. W.: Thank you very much for all this interesting information, Professor Miller.