

World Oceans Day



OUR OCEANS
OUR FUTURE

2017/ANNUAL
REPORT

Photo: C. Gaber



Photo: C. Gaber

INTRODUCTION

Thanks to your participation, and that of hundreds of organizations, schools, businesses, and governments, World Oceans Day reached new heights for global ocean awareness and involvement. With 1,000+ events in 100+ countries and a huge social media presence, this annual celebration of our shared ocean continues expanding in many exciting ways, creating more impact around the world!

This year, we celebrated 15 years of serving and supporting the global community as a key collaborative coordinator for World Oceans Day. We engaged with people and organizations from all sectors and the World Oceans Day Youth Advisory Council helped in significant ways, including helping to develop and amplify our message. The website, World-OceansDay.org, continues to develop as a major central platform for providing free, innovative and inspirational resources for everyone – no matter where you live – to get involved in creating impact for a healthier ocean and a better future. Our fast-growing World Oceans Day social media platforms flourished, stimulating an online ocean “buzz” around the month of June.

As we head toward 2018, youth involvement and leadership for World Oceans Day will play an increasingly important role. Youth around the world will help drive its evolution into an even more effective force for ocean conservation, education, and action on 8 June and year-round.

We plan to double the number of members and country representation of the Youth Advisory Council for 2018 and will provide more pathways for involvement of young people, from single digit ages into their 20s.

The World Oceans Day network consists of thousands of organizations and key individuals from all sectors that have partnered with us to help strengthen our mission. These include: youth networks, aquariums, museums, schools, the maritime industry, sailors, dive groups, surfers, businesses, communities of faith, government agencies, celebrities, and many more.

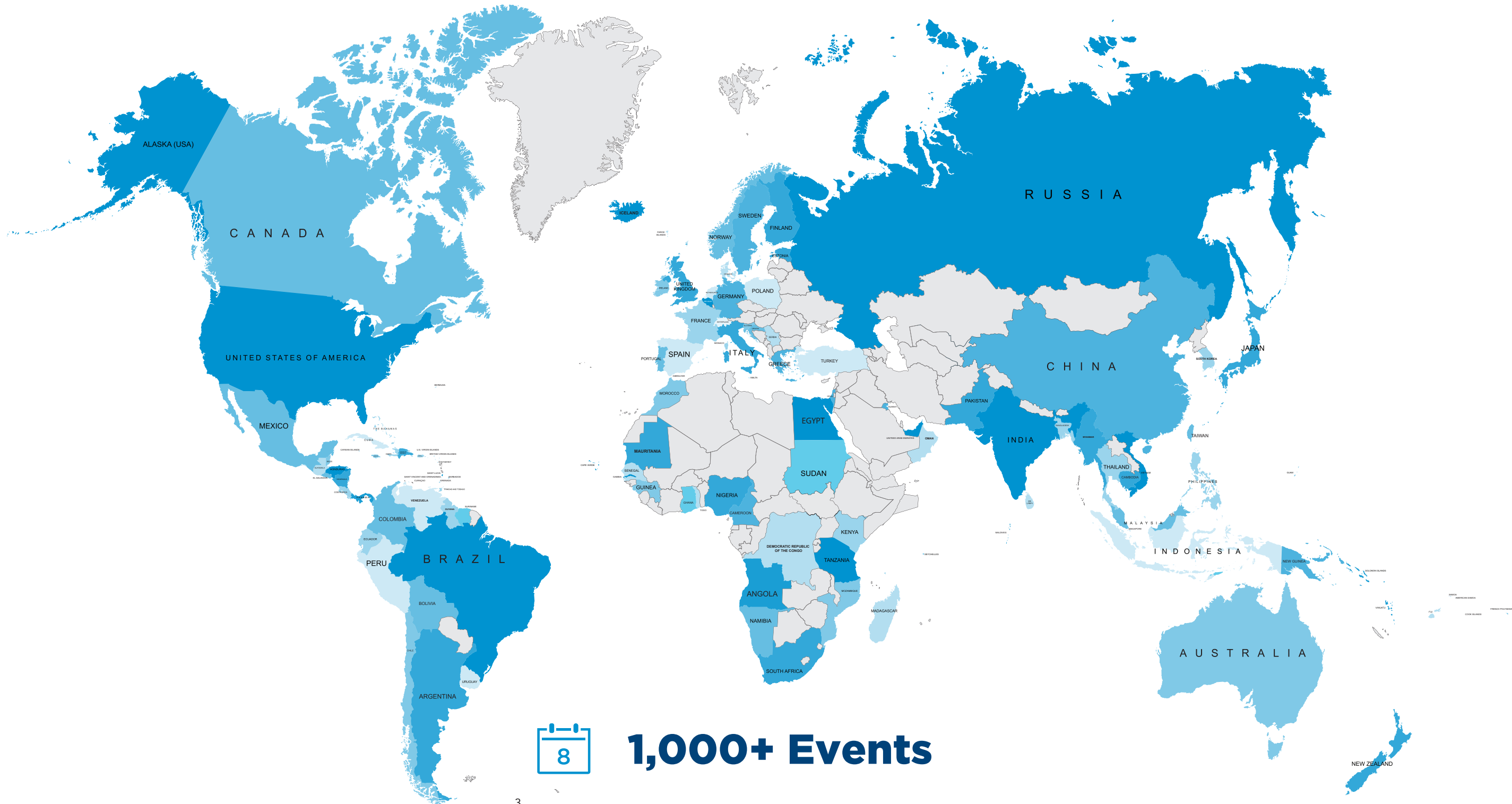
To address the many issues facing our ocean – and human society – and to develop the solutions that will create a better future, we need to expand our efforts in all sectors. Through collaboration, we can tackle the issues – from climate change (including ocean acidification) to plastic pollution, overfishing, and much more – on a scale commensurate with the size of the challenges.

Throughout the year, we are continuing our proactive outreach and engagement to further raise awareness and participation in World Oceans Day. We need your help to grow this unique opportunity to engage and activate people in all sectors. Please contact me to get involved. Together, we can – and will – make a real difference!

• Bill Mott Director, The Ocean Project

COORDINATED BY:





1,000+ Events

EVENTS

1,000+ Events in 100+ Countries

Events are the essence of World Oceans Day, bringing together millions of people every year to commemorate the day in a variety of ways. Over 1,000 World Oceans Day events took place in 118 countries, making 2017 the largest celebration yet! More than 500 organizations celebrated World Oceans Day for the first time this year, with a large increase in the number of businesses participating. Events are becoming both more educational as well as meaningful, as 54% of events covered a special topic including ocean and climate, marine biodiversity, ocean science, ocean governance, and marine pollution. In addition, more youth are joining in on World Oceans Day celebrations, with 30% of events including special activities for young people.



118 Countries



30% Youth Events



45% Plastic-Pollution Focused Events



500+ New Organizations Celebrating



EVENTS

Online Events

Online events have taken center stage as the second most popular type of event. Ocean-focused online classes and lectures, articles, and live streams are just some of the types of the many online events that took place in 2017. This surge in celebrations represents our technology-driven age and the demand for more accessible events. Online events have the potential to reach even more people in a wider range of locations, especially if social media is used to promote the event and the event remains available online beyond World Oceans Day.

United Nations Ocean Conference

Coinciding with World Oceans Day, the United Nations Ocean Conference was held from 5-9 June to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and many more stakeholders gathered in New York City for plenary meetings, partnership dialogues, and other events at this unprecedented conference. On 8 June, a special World Oceans Day ceremony was held at the UN Headquarters, which included cultural performances, a presentation of the World Oceans Day Photo Competition winners, and speeches from political leaders, ocean explorers, and youth.

YOUTH

The need to take action to protect our ocean is more critical than ever and young people are increasingly playing a key role. For the last several years, youth engagement and leadership development have been our top priorities for growing the reach and impact of World Oceans Day.

World Oceans Day Youth Advisory Council

The World Oceans Day Youth Advisory Council was established in 2016 to help grow World Oceans Day into the future. Currently composed of 11 youth from 11 diverse countries, Council members share a deep passion for the ocean and commitment to making World Oceans Day an impactful, youth-driven event for our ocean on 8 June and year-round.

Council members helped shape the conservation action focus for 2017, and also participated in a number of speaking opportunities and celebrations. As part of our latest campaign against plastic pollution, [keepoceans.blue](#), Council members helped develop the messages to reduce the use of single-use plastic and promoted the campaign with their personal and peer networks, encouraging commitments on social media.

The World Oceans Day Youth Advisory Council also celebrated World Oceans Day at a number of events. Several Council members gathered in New York City to attend the World Oceans Festival, which kicked-off World Oceans Day week and the UN Ocean Conference. They joined other young ocean advocates to participate in a Youth Rally for the Ocean, and Council member and co-founder of Bye Bye Plastic Bags, Melati Wijsen, addressed the United Nations General Assembly with her and her sister's inspirational mission to ban plastic bags in Bali. Other Council members hosted beach clean-ups, presentations, and film screenings in their local schools and communities.

During the remainder of 2017, the Youth Advisory Council will be helping to plan for World Oceans Day 2018. Concurrently, we plan to double the number of Council members and the numbers of countries represented.

Youth Advisory Council

Caitlin Philipps, Australia
 Gabriella Schaubert, Canada
 Brandon Koots, Curacao
 Sang-Jin Kim, Germany
 Nehara Pandey, India
 Melati Wijsen, Indonesia
 Mohammed Wahabi, Morocco
 Oghenechovwen C. Oghenekevwe, Nigeria
 Eugenia Barroca, Portugal
 La Tisha Parkinson, Trinidad & Tobago
 Baylee Ritter, USA

(Youth Advisory Council members, La Tisha, Melati, and Eugenia attend the World Ocean Festival)





YOUTH

Sea Youth Rise Up

Sea Youth Rise Up launched in 2016 as an opportunity to utilize World Oceans Day as a rallying point to highlight the importance of youth leadership in ocean conservation. Collaborating with the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit and Big Blue & You, The Ocean Project developed Sea Youth Rise Up as a platform to share the important work of young conservation leaders and inspire a global audience of youth to understand the important leadership role they play in protecting the ocean.

A primary goal of Sea Youth Rise Up is making sure national and international decision-makers fully recognize the importance of involving youth throughout the process of creating a better future. For 2017, the Sea Youth Rise Up delegation of seven selected young conservation leaders took their energy and messages to New York City. This year's program kicked off on June 3 with the Social for the Sea - an uplifting evening of networking bringing together ocean conservation leaders of all ages at the Central Park Zoo, hosted by the Wildlife Conservation Society. The 2017 Sea Youth Rise Up delegation then attended the World Ocean Festival on 4 June where they led an Ocean Advocacy March and highlighted solutions to critical ocean conservation issues through a Youth Rally for the Ocean which was broadcast live via Facebook.

Additionally, the Sea Youth Rise Up initiative received the World Ocean Festival's Turn the Tides Award, presented by Peter Thomson, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, during the Festival, recognizing our work to elevate the role of youth leadership in protecting our ocean.

World Oceans Day Children's Book

The Ocean Project partnered with Unite for Literacy to engage children, families, and communities for World Oceans Day, through the publication of a children's book highlighting the importance of our oceans not only on 8 June, but every day. The book and related outreach was developed with the World Oceans Day Youth Advisory Council and is available online and in print form in multiple languages. Thousands of books were printed and distributed at World Oceans Day celebrations. Stay tuned for more books to be released in this online ocean library for beginning readers and their families!

(The 2017 Sea Youth Rise Up delegation meets Dr. Sylvia Earle at the World Ocean Festival.)

Preventing Ocean Plastic Pollution on 8 June and Year-round

The theme for World Oceans Day 2017 was “Our Oceans, Our Future,” with a conservation action focus on encouraging solutions to plastic pollution and preventing marine litter for a healthier ocean and a better future. Nearly half of all events had a focus on ocean plastic pollution and one quarter of events were aquatic cleanups. From lectures to film screenings to art displays, there was a surge of events to bring awareness to the issue of ocean plastic pollution and encourage action.

New Plastic Pollution Resources

For World Oceans Day 2017 and continued involvement year-round, we updated and released new plastic pollution prevention resources. Aquatic cleanups continue to be some of the most popular events around World Oceans Day, so we updated the Aquatic Cleanup Guide to support organizers. Whether you’re with a school, recreational organization, zoo, aquarium, museum, business, or other organization, you can build important connections with your visitors and members, students, and the public to clean up your community or coastline. Participants observe firsthand the impact of their cleanup efforts, and the media can help amplify the event and the importance for healthy waters.

To help event organizers effectively communicate the issue of plastic pollution while maintaining a positive and solution-oriented approach, we also developed a Talking About Plastic guide. The guide also provides tips for engaging youth and helping them learn about using less, not littering, and recycling. We plan to translate these resources into multiple languages for 2018.



Photo: A. Fernandes

Partnering with UN Environment on a Plastic Pollution Pilot Campaign

During the week surrounding World Oceans Day, 12 zoo and aquarium partners participated in a pilot project, developed in collaboration with UN Environment’s #CleanSeas Campaign. They asked their visitors to help address the problem of plastic pollution in our ocean by taking three steps: text a local number with the word “plastic” to express concern about the problem; click to pledge to be part of the solution by choosing reusable bags, using refillable bottles, avoiding plastic straws, or “all of the above” and; share commitments on social media to help amplify the impact.

The response from visitors from the initial ask was positive, but it was apparent that the carryover effect of having been asked was even more impressive. Exit surveys indicated that those visitors who had been asked to help expressed not only higher awareness and concern about the problem, but also a stronger belief that they could be part of the solution, as well as a greater appreciation of aquariums and zoos as conservation actors, and more satisfaction with their visit. With the initial success and a few lessons learned, hopes are high for improving and expanding the effort in advance of World Oceans Day 2018. For those who want to get started sooner, the pilot also produced an online library of existing resources, including photographs, infographics, videos and reports available at www.ouroceansourfuture.org.



Photo: South Carolina Aquarium



45% Plastic-Pollution Focused Events



25% Aquatic Cleanups

SOCIAL MEDIA

#WorldOceansDay

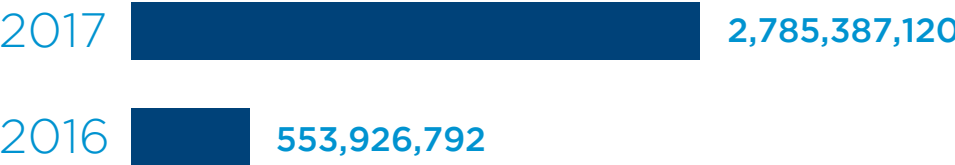
On World Oceans Day and the days surrounding 8 June, the public, organizations, businesses and numerous celebrities turned to social media to share their messages of love, respect and concern for our oceans. Each year, the reach of World Oceans Day grows exponentially through the power of social media. On 8 June, #WorldOceansDay, developed more than 2.78 billion impressions on Twitter and Instagram combined. Top influencers included National Geographic, Miley Cyrus, Leonardo DiCaprio, Chris Hemsworth, the World Wildlife Fund, the United Nations and many more reaching millions of people around the world.

@WorldOceansDay

The World Oceans Day social media accounts continue to grow as the official feeds for World Oceans Day preparation and celebration. In the month surrounding 8 June, World Oceans Day Facebook posts reached over 700K people and World Oceans Day tweets developed over 700K impressions. The number of World Oceans Day Instagram followers continues to double each year. Follow @WorldOceansDay on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for updates and more on ocean conservation throughout the year.



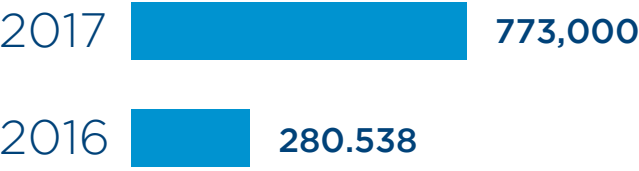
#WorldOceansDay Impressions



@WorldOceansDay Impressions June 8

Facebook Reach: 704,511

Twitter Impressions (month leading up to June 8)



WorldOceansDay.org

The World Oceans Day website serves as a central coordinating platform with free resources and ideas for everyone, no matter where you live, to expand the reach and impact of World Oceans Day on June 8 and year-round. The website helps organizers with planning and promotional resources, an event registration form to share your event with the world, and an event map to find a celebration happening near you. This year, thousands of people utilized the website to create or join World Oceans Day celebrations.

Each year, we develop new promotional materials and other resources to make event planning and promotion as simple as possible. New “Happy World Oceans Day” posters were made available in 16 languages. Thousands of users visited this webpage to download and print posters for their events. Many organizers added to the poster to create their own custom-designed event announcements. New social media graphics and resources were also created along with a World Oceans Day event organizers kit with the Octonauts. To provide event ideas for specific audiences, such as surfers, educators, resorts, sailors and more, we developed a series of blog posts throughout early 2017.

Teaming with a company in the UK, we released new World Oceans Day apparel and accessories with a variety of designs, ethically-produced and printed on organic cotton. The “design your own” option was a popular feature amongst event planners, and continues to generate interest throughout the year. Many chose to add their logos to the World Oceans Day designs and received discounts for bulk orders. Proceeds from each sale help support our work in inspiring action to protect our ocean.

(A variety of apparel designs were created for World Oceans Day 2017)



GET READY FOR WORLD OCEANS DAY 2018

Throughout the year leading up to 8 June, we will expand our outreach to all sectors, to further expand involvement and collaborative action for World Oceans Day. You can help us grow the reach and impact of this unique opportunity to rally the world in June by spreading the word and forwarding this information.

We will continue our special focus on connecting with and activating more youth around our blue planet. For 2018, we're also committed to providing more multilingual and culturally appropriate resources and tools to better help engage more schools and universities, visitor-serving centers, businesses, recreational stakeholders, the maritime industry, policymakers, the religious community, media, and many more.

As always, we will support our partner network to become more active on the issues of most importance to you, including fisheries, carbon pollution issues, plastic pollution prevention, and much more. Each year we focus World Oceans Day on rallying the world on a specific conservation action theme, with the last three years being plastics pollution prevention. We'll look to build this focus throughout the year and again promote it in a major way, with a crescendo around 8 June.

Thank you for your involvement and we look forward to hearing how we can better support you in your activities around World Oceans Day!

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!



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The Ocean Foundation, our fiscal sponsor