

America, the Ocean, and Climate Change:
New Research Insights for Conservation, Awareness, and Action

presentation of findings

Prepared for the NOAA Education Council

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Today's Session

1. Update

- Findings
- Implications

2. Discussion

- Applying findings
- Tracking surveys
- Other opportunities



Update: Findings

- The public is still far from “ocean literate,” but concerned about the ocean when prompted
- The public is willing to act to help conserve the ocean, when asked
- The public, especially youth, increasingly identifies with the “environmental movement”
- Among environmental issues, climate change is clearly the highest concern
- The public believes their own actions can make a difference for the environment
- There is an action information gap, with the public not knowing which actions to take
- Aquariums and zoos are trusted messengers, and are expected to fill that action information gap
- There is an opportunity for aquariums and zoos to align onsite and online efforts



Update: Implications

- The public is supportive, but needs prompting! (Ask, don't expect!)
- Consider focusing on high impact audiences, especially teens and 'tweens (not just "the public")
- Consider focusing on specific issues that resonate with those audiences, e.g. connecting ocean species conservation with climate change, and suggesting "healthy" seafood (rather than starting broad)
- The public wants aquariums and zoos to inform and guide them, offering specific suggestions for conservation action ("We can be bold!")
- Apply new technologies, especially through the Internet (rethink idea of visitors)
- Measure success in outcomes and impact (not just outputs)



Discussion: Applying Findings

- Aquariums and zoos already are reshaping programs and proposals
- ➔ ○ They are rethinking the assumption that better stewardship and decision making by the public will only come *after* a comprehensive understanding of the role of the ocean



Discussion: Tracking Surveys

- **Conduct additional tracking surveys (funded through September 2010)**
 - Test messaging
 - Measure changes in attitudes and actions
 - Provide ongoing intelligence to community
- **Obtain input from NOAA and Priority Partners**
 - Additional topics to cover in tracking surveys in 2010
 - Possibilities for extending tracking surveys



Discussion: Opportunities

- **Sharing this information within NOAA**
- **Informing suggested actions**
 - With AZA, WAZA and others, aquariums and zoos are investigating possibilities for a more coordinated climate/ocean/personal action campaign
 - What actions should aquariums and zoos be suggesting to their visitors, specifically on climate change?
- **Improving coordination among the players**
 - Much interest among aquariums and zoos, but a danger of overlap and conflicting messages
- **Gathering more information on youth**
 - Good initial insights but we need more on effectively reaching youth, encouraging better understanding, encouragement to go into the sciences, and using the latest in technology to reach them
- **Obtaining more information on international markets**
 - We were able to obtain preliminary benchmarks for eight countries (pro bono), but not enough so as to leverage, for example, the opportunity with WAZA and others
- **Strengthening partnerships between aquariums, The Ocean Project and NOAA**



Thank you!

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