

Insights and Updates: Fall 2012

- **Phoenix rising on research**
- **iPads and OA**
- **CliZen Finds a Climate for Change**

The Ocean Project is pleased to present this latest update on our market research initiative. In this issue we highlight the attention the research will be receiving at the upcoming meeting of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, new (and ongoing) market research on ocean acidification, as well as a new report from the [Climate Literacy Zoo Education Network \(CliZen\)](#). We hope you find it all useful as you develop strategies and tools to engage your visitors in conservation action. And, as always, we welcome your [feedback!](#)

AZA and IAC to highlight research

Findings from the market research initiative will feature prominently in multiple sessions at the annual conference of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums in Phoenix from September 8-13.



- **Tuesday, September 11 at 2PM: "We've got the power!"**
The Ocean Project's research will be discussed as part of a panel on the possibilities for zoos and aquariums to obtain and promote green power. Attending this session is a great way to identify new opportunities for your institution to go green, and gain new insights on the benefits of bringing your visitors along. Panelists from the EPA's Green Power Partnership, The Indianapolis Zoo, The National Aquarium, and The Ocean Project.
- **Thursday, September 13 at 8AM: "Engaging millennials"**
A review of recent experiences in engaging "millennials," those born in the '80s and '90s, will include research from The Ocean Project and others on their motivations, their influence, and the tools they need to engage others and take action. Panelists from YouthMuse, The Ocean Project, Slover Linett Strategies and WCS.
- **Thursday, September 13 at 8AM: "A Crisis is a Terrible Thing to Waste? Strategies for Opportunistic Messaging Through Media Events to Advance Conservation Outcomes"**
Most institutions may already be familiar with the idea of managing public relations when a crisis happens to them or their community, this panel examines the opportunities for using crises to communicate larger, non-crisis concepts to positively increase public conservation awareness and engagement. Panelists from New England Aquarium, California Academy of Sciences, Canyon Ranch Institute, and The Ocean Project

The market research will also be presented at the International Aquarium Congress in Cape Town, South Africa.

- **Thursday, September 13 at 2PM: "Engaging Visitors in Conservation"**
Bill Mott will present the market research, and its insights on who our audiences are, what messages they will hear, and how to motivate behavioral change.

Please be sure to check the final agenda for the locations - See you there!



OA, Overview & iPads

The Ocean Project has expanded its market research about public awareness, understanding and willingness to take action on the issue of ocean acidification. Building upon our recent national public opinion survey (See the two page summary of those findings at <http://theoceanproject.org/communication-resources/market-research>), we are now working with twelve partner institutions to investigate visitor opinions. Partners are currently collecting visitor input on iPads, which is proving to be a promising way to quickly obtain information and, potentially, evaluate efforts. Stay tuned!

Climate Change Education: What Do We Know and Where Should We Go?

By Alejandro Grajal, PhD, Senior VP for Conservation, Education and Training at the Chicago Zoological Society

We know that ninety-seven percent of climatologists believe that the Earth's climate is changing due to human activities and that the consequences will be catastrophic to many plants and animals (including ourselves). And we know that efforts aimed at engaging audiences and mobilizing action on this particular issue have had limited success. But what can we, as zoos and aquariums, do about it?

This is the critical question that led to the creation of the Climate Literacy Zoo Education Network (CLiZEN) in the fall of 2010. With support from the National Science Foundation, CLiZEN brought together a team of zoo and aquarium educators, learning science researchers, conservation psychologists, and climate scientists who wanted to do more, and do better. And what have we learned? Two big lessons that I'd like to highlight here.

First, we now know without a doubt that our institutions are uniquely poised to be positive forces in climate change education. One of CLiZen's first activities was to conduct a national survey of zoo and aquarium visitors, expanding upon the good work already done by others, including The Ocean Project. Our survey took place during summer 2011 at fifteen zoos and aquariums across the United States, with the top line findings as follows:

- *Our visitors are receptive audiences for climate change education*
- *Our visitors want to do more to address climate change, yet perceive barriers to doing so, particularly ignorance about what behaviors will be effective*
- *We provide visitors with socially supportive contexts for discussing animal exhibits and connections to nature*
- *Our visitors have access to and experience with virtual social networks and other Internet platforms*
- *Our visitors' concern about climate change and participation in behaviors to address climate change systematically vary with their sense of connection with animals*

Second, we also now know that solely providing more information, more data, is not in and of itself an effective way to go. For our institutions our comparative advantage is the personal connections with the animals, as those are strongly related to our visitors' climate change conviction and concern, as well as their willingness to engage in behaviors to address climate change and their desire to do more.

All told, we know that we have not only an opportunity but a responsibility to serve as a resource for our visitors to learn about, discuss and evaluate the causes, impacts and opportunities to address climate change. We should not, however, focus on didactic presentations of climate change causes and mechanisms. Instead, let's do what we know we already do well. Let's develop creative approaches around our collections, and generate dialogue about the solutions that visitors can implement individually and collectively to address this critical issue with us.

About this Initiative: Made possible with funding provided by NOAA. Earlier reports, including our *2011 Annual Update*, as well as complete copies of the two landmark studies – *America, the Ocean, and Climate Change: New Research Insights for Conservation, Awareness, and Action* (2009) and *Communicating About Oceans: Results of a National Survey* (1999) – can be found on our TheOceanProject.org

To learn more about The Ocean Project and how you can get involved in our growing global network, please visit our [website](http://www.TheOceanProject.org).