

## Insights and Updates: Winter 2013

- [Ocean Acidification \(OA\) reports](#)
- [Small grant winners](#)
- [Small grantee successes](#)
- [World Oceans Day 2013 \(June 8\)](#)
- [Happenings at The Ocean Project](#)

Happy 2013! In our ongoing efforts to support zoos, aquariums, and museums (ZAMs) do more for conservation, The Ocean Project has exciting new data to share and we are pleased to present this latest update on our communications research initiative. This issue highlights recently completed research on ocean acidification (OA), small grant winners, as well as some changes at The Ocean Project. We hope you find it all useful as you develop strategies and tools to engage your visitors in conservation action. As always, we welcome your [feedback!](#)

### Ocean Acidification (OA) reports: Supporting ZAMs in addressing climate change's "equally evil twin"

In our [previous update](#) we wrote about our study on public awareness, understanding and willingness to take action on the issue of OA, likened to climate change's "equally evil twin" by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) chief Jane Lubchenco. Building upon our national public opinion survey from spring/summer 2012, and working collaboratively with 12 partner ZAMs to investigate visitor opinions, we recently concluded a first phase in this initiative. We are pleased to present some of the study's key findings (for the full report, please go to [www.TheOceanProject.org/OA](http://www.TheOceanProject.org/OA)):

- **The visitor intercepts revealed how ZAM visits are critical activation points for public engagement.** ZAM visitors are not only a self-selecting group with a higher than average interest in the ocean and ocean animals, but also a group whose interest in these issues appears to be elevated upon arrival. Despite low unaided public awareness of OA, this combination offers great opportunities to raise concern and inspire action around OA and other conservation issues (see Figure 1).
- **ZAMs are very interested, but few are already active, in addressing OA with their visitors.** Many partner ZAMs indicate that they "currently" communicate around the issue of OA or plan to do so, with most efforts centered around coral reef exhibits, or as part of a larger communication effort about climate change.
- **Visitor intercepts suggest high likelihood of success in motivating conservation action!** Visitors indicated that they expect, trust, and appreciate the ocean conservation information they receive from ZAMs, especially when that information relates to how they can help a specific species. Moreover, they see receipt of such information as a key part of a good experience. Inspiring conservation action is likely to be not only good for the planet, but also good for the "gate"!

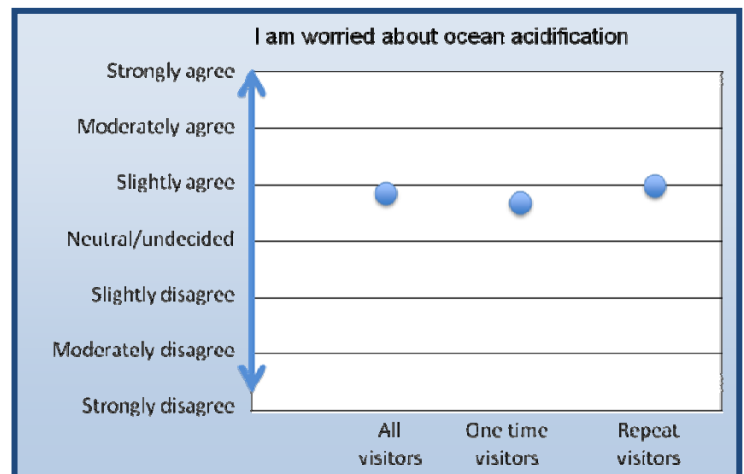


Figure 1: ZAM visitors surveyed while onsite were much more likely to express concern about OA. Repeat visitors express higher levels of concern.

If you are interested in finding out where your institution falls in the spectrum of potential for addressing OA (or other conservation issues) awareness and visitor willingness to engage in helping with the solutions, contact [Bill Mott](mailto:bmott@theoceanproject.org) (bmott@theoceanproject.org). We can provide you with the strategic communications tools to join a growing group of ZAMs in addressing this issue of growing local and global importance.

## Small Grant winners

We recently culminated a third and final round of small grants – funded under a three-year NOAA Education grant in 2010. Our Small Grant Advisory Panel had a challenging time deciding among an extremely competitive pool of applicants, but we are pleased to announce the following grant recipients:

[Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum](#) (\$15,000) “Desert-Ocean Connections” will utilize two brand new aquarium galleries at the Desert Museum as the centerpiece for programming that addresses the interdependence of the Gulf of California and Sonoran Desert ecosystems and water resources. The project will develop new interactive interpretive stations for the Desert Museum’s 30 Junior Docents, focused on sustainable seafood (using [Seafood Watch](#) materials) and desert waters.

[Brevard Zoo](#) (\$10,000) “Zoo Teen’s Youth Environmental Summit” will support an event planned by youth from their Zoo Teen program. Teen leaders will be trained in conservation issues, mentored in event planning, participate in hands-on projects, collaborate in small groups, and set goals focused on how they can make a difference for conservation. The Zoo will develop a ‘handbook’ for best practices for dissemination among The Ocean Project’s partner network.

[Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) (\$15,000) “Young Women in Science: Ocean Guardians Summer Program” will engage young women, particularly Latinas, in ocean conservation activities. The Aquarium’s bilingual Ocean Guardians program will address the problem of underrepresentation of women and minorities in the sciences through a variety of activities.

[Woodland Park Zoo](#) (\$10,000) “Woodland Park Zoo - Climate Change Curriculum” will build on findings from The Ocean Project’s market research to enhance the Zoo’s existing youth programs and allow the Zoo to develop a new climate change curriculum. Through training and mentoring, it will empower youth to develop and implement conservation action projects.

See all [past grant winners here](#).



Photo by Alfonso Romero

## Small grantee successes: Empowering youth to be environmental heroes!

In the past year, our [small grantees](#) have done some amazing work. Asked to integrate findings from The Ocean Project research into their programs targeted at youth and/or minorities, and evaluate them for conservation outcomes, our grantees are reporting some fascinating results which we will be featuring in our blog over the course of the coming months. In the meantime, [Detroit Zoological Society](#) (DZS) “Tomorrow’s Leaders Today Summer Ocean Project” had a great story to share about how they saved the day (and the fish!) DZS’s Belle Isle’s Blue Heron Lagoon was exhibiting severe environmental distress in the wake of a period of very hot days last summer when DZS’s student participants rushed to the scene. Armed with newly-acquired water quality testing skills and equipment, they found two irregular parameters (oxygen and temperature) causing the problem. Working with the park manager, they adjusted the flow of the connecting channel between the Detroit River and the Lagoon, and saved the resident fish.

## World Oceans Day 2013: "Together we have the power to protect the ocean"

June 8 will soon be upon us and there is no better time to start planning to celebrate World Oceans Day than right now! The Ocean Project, working in partnership with the [World Ocean Network](#), has been promoting this growing global event since 2003. The number of celebrations has been growing each year: Last year there were approximately 600 events in 55 countries, including in 42 US States. We hope your organization will participate this year and help us reach the goal of 1,000 events held on or around June 8.

The World Oceans Day 2013/2014 theme centers around joining together to celebrate and protect the ocean; connect with other organizations to take *action* on a community level and create the future *you* want. Looking for partners? Check out our [Partner Map](#) or contact World Oceans Day coordinator, [Alyssa Isakower](#) (aisakower@theoceanproject.org), to get more involved.

## Happenings at The Ocean Project

Wei Ying Wong, Communications Project Director, will be leaving The Ocean Project on Feb 15, 2013 to join [Philadelphia Zoo](#), as their new Director, Conservation Impact. She has been integral part of The Ocean Project family for more than two years, working closely with [Priority Partners](#) and other audiences engaged with communicating for conservation. We are sad to see her go but glad to have her staying in the ZAM community and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

Coming out of a successful 2012, The Ocean Project is looking forward to an even greater 2013. Projects that we have been cultivating are coming to fruition and a few new initiatives are in the works. It will be an exciting year ahead working closely with you and our other partners to most effectively communicate for conservation outcomes with your visitors and the public!

The [Communications Research Initiative](#) is possible with funding provided by NOAA. Earlier reports, including our *2012 Tracking Survey*, as well as complete copies of 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 at [TheOceanProject.org](#)

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