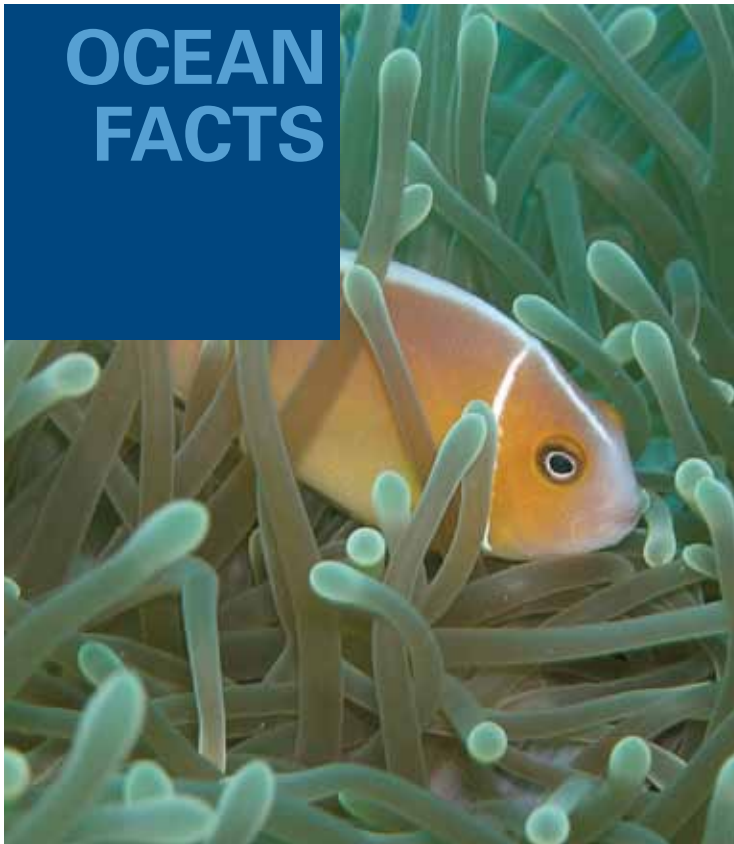


# OCEAN FACTS



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## Saving Our Seas: Protecting Our Oceans for the Future

Healthy oceans are essential to our survival. They provide food, jobs, and recreation that we rely on. They create the very air we breathe. But our oceans and coasts are facing innumerable threats—from overexploitation and pollution to ocean acidification and invasive species—and need urgent attention. The National Ocean Policy, adopted by President Obama in July 2010, improves the way we manage our oceans, reducing duplicative efforts and conflicting government actions, and focusing attention on the most serious issues jeopardizing ocean health. We must ensure that sufficient funding is dedicated to the National Ocean Policy to protect our oceans and coasts, and the communities and economies they support, for generations to come.



For more information, please contact:

**Alexandra Adams**, *Natural Resources Defense Council*, aadams@nrdc.org, 202.289.2418

**Alison Chase**, *Natural Resources Defense Council*, achase@nrdc.org, 212.727.4551

**Roberta Elias**, *World Wildlife Fund US*, robertaelias@wwfus.org, 202.495.4648

**Sarah Winter Whelan**, *American Littoral Society*, sarah@littoralsociety.org, 503.267.9577

**Jeff Watters**, *Ocean Conservancy*, jwatters@oceanconservancy.org, 202.351.0481

**Sean Cosgrove**, *Conservation Law Foundation*, scosgrove@clf.org, 202.421.3585

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## AMERICA'S OCEANS AND COASTS ARE ECOLOGICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY VALUABLE

Healthy oceans and coasts are a vital part of a healthy U.S. economy. The area of ocean controlled by the United States is greater than the country's total land mass, and our ocean economy contributes more than twice the economic output of the entire farm sector.<sup>1</sup> A significant amount of this economic strength comes from recreation, tourism, and fishing, which depend on clean beaches, clean water, and abundant fish and wildlife. Caring for our oceans and coasts will protect America's economy and jobs.

*"The fact of the matter is our oceans are in deep trouble. They are not going to get better unless we begin to pay coordinated, concentrated, well-funded attention to their improvement."*

– **William Ruckelshaus, EPA Administrator (1970-1973) and Member, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy**<sup>2</sup>

## THE NATIONAL OCEAN POLICY WILL HELP PROTECT OUR OCEAN AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES

The National Ocean Policy is a landmark action. It was established through Executive Order #13547 and has long been recommended by leading ocean experts, including two different national commissions: the congressionally-established U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, appointed by George W. Bush, and the independent Pew Oceans Commission, chaired by the Honorable Leon Panetta. The President's Executive Order was issued after a year-long public outreach process that shaped the Policy and its implementing framework. Discussions were held with stakeholders from commercial and recreational fishing, shipping and ports, energy developers, conservationists, scientists, and other ocean users to develop a policy that will protect, maintain, and restore our ocean resources so we can continue to fish, swim and enjoy our oceans and coasts for generations to come.

Specifically, the National Ocean Policy established a framework for regional ocean partnerships, made up of federal agencies, state governments, and tribes, to determine—with robust public and stakeholder involvement—how the ocean and coasts in their region can be sustainably used and protected. Better planning can help protect ocean wildlife, provide cleaner water on our beaches, and provide greater certainty for offshore businesses.

*"A new national ocean policy—especially as it creates a unified framework for effective coastal and marine spatial planning—is critical to the Nation and to the ability of the Coast Guard to execute its mission."*

– **Admiral Thad Allen (Ret.)**<sup>3</sup>

## THE NATIONAL OCEAN COUNCIL WILL IMPROVE OCEAN MANAGEMENT

A new National Ocean Council of existing federal agencies was created to implement the policy. The Council will ensure that all government agencies that play a role in ocean-related work—from fishing to shipping to offshore energy and coastal development—communicate with each other and coordinate their efforts. The National Ocean Policy does not replace or override existing statute, or alter the jurisdiction of any agency. Instead, the policy improves coordination of the more than 140 laws and 20 different federal entities that currently govern our ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes. Better cooperation at the federal, regional, and state levels will advance ocean health and sustainable use.

## THE NATIONAL OCEAN POLICY NEEDS FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The National Ocean Policy is a huge victory for everyone who treasures the wonder of the seas, who values ocean life, who flocks to the beach, who loves seafood, and who makes a living on or from the water. Your help is needed to make sure the National Ocean Policy protects and restores our oceans and coasts, and the communities and economies they support. Congress should ensure that sufficient funds are available to implement elements important to the National Ocean Policy, for example; \$10 million is needed in the FY2014 NOAA budget. Efforts to reduce or eliminate federal funds for the development and implementation of the National Ocean Policy would be a "penny wise and pound foolish" approach to ocean, coastal and Great Lakes governance and should be opposed.

*"We need a national ocean policy that commits the nation to protecting our oceans as a national trust. We must improve coordination of policies among federal, state, and local governments on an ecosystem basis. We must control pollution, manage coastal development and restore our fisheries. And we must increase our investment in better science, research and education."*

– **Leon Panetta, U.S. Secretary of Defense, former Chair, Pew Oceans Commission**<sup>4</sup>



**Learn more!** "Ocean Blueprint" is a short NRDC film about protecting ocean ecosystem health. To view, visit <http://www.nrdc.org/oceanblueprint>.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (2004). *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century*. Final Report. Washington, DC. (pp. 30-31). Available at: [http://oceancommission.gov/documents/full\\_color\\_rpt/welcome.html](http://oceancommission.gov/documents/full_color_rpt/welcome.html).; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Economics: National Ocean Watch (ENOW) Data 2010. Available at <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/enow>.; U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Industry Economic Accounts Data, GDP-by-Industry and Input-Output. Available at: <http://www.bea.gov/industry/index.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> *The New York Times*, Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2011/06/08/08greenwire-ruckelshaus-marine-experts-lend-support-to-50872.html>. Last accessed August 22, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> In testimony before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation (November 4, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> "Protecting the Ocean for Our Children," op-ed. Available at <http://www.panettainstitute.org/programs/leon-panetta-commentaries/commentaries-from-2007/protecting-the-ocean-for-our-children/>. Last accessed August 22, 2011.

