

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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The Ocean Project and its hundreds of Partners planning events around the world for World Ocean Day on June 8th

(Providence, RI) - On June 8th hundreds of communities around the globe will celebrate the 16th annual World Ocean Day – an opportunity to celebrate our world ocean and our personal connection to the sea, and to raise awareness about the crucial role the ocean plays in our lives and the important ways people can help to protect it.

The Ocean Project – with 750 Partner aquariums, zoos, science museums and other educational organizations in all 50 states and 70 countries – is the largest network ever formed to focus on conservation of the ocean. [The Ocean Project](#), working closely with the [World Ocean Network](#) each year, helps to coordinate events and activities to celebrate World Ocean Day with our Partners and other organizations around the globe. Together we are also working to have the United Nations officially designate World Ocean Day as June 8th each year.

This year's theme: In order to better make the connection between climate change and ocean health, this year we are encouraging Partners to promote the theme "helping our climate - helping our ocean" with a special focus on coral reefs to take advantage of [International Year of the Reef](#) (IYOR) 2008.

Climate change and the ocean: The ocean and climate are inextricably linked – the ocean plays a crucial role in maintaining the Earth's climate and ocean life is vulnerable to climate change. As human activities produce too much carbon dioxide, it is absorbed by the ocean and, as a result, ocean waters are becoming warmer and more acidic, threatening the fundamental building blocks of life in the ocean. The ocean is also rising as a result of climate change.

Impact on marine life: Coral reefs - important food, medicinal, economic, aesthetic and cultural resources - are particularly vulnerable to these changes. Scientists are recording record coral reef die-offs and are worried about the future survival of these treasured ecosystems. Other ocean life and ecosystems are also at risk - salmon populations are disappearing from their historical ranges, invasive species and diseases are spreading into new waters, and marine mammals continue to face decreased food supplies as a result of climate change. Coastal communities are also threatened as sea level rises.

World Ocean Day provides an opportunity to get directly involved in protecting our future through beach cleanups, sustainable seafood events, educational programs, storm drain stenciling, film festivals, and more. A few examples of events planned for 2008 include:

- **Monterey Bay Aquarium** (Monterey, CA) – Offering free admission on June 8th and inviting the public to join in a celebration of the ocean and to learn about the treasures of the ocean, the threats it faces, and what we can do to keep it healthy.
- **Seattle Aquarium** (Seattle, WA) – Celebrating with “World Ocean Weekend” focused on orcas and other whales and their need for a healthy marine environment. NOAA, conservation organizations, and researchers will participate, and there will be hands-on interactive activities and crafts.
- **Center for Coastal Studies** (Provincetown, MA) – “Children’s author Karen Romano Young: presentation and book signing.” Young will talk about, read from, and sign her new book *Across the Wide Ocean*, a book about navigation for humans and animals at sea.
- **The Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society** (British Columbia, Canada) – “World Ocean Day at Blackie Spit, Crescent Beach.” Featuring interactive displays, family activities, crafts, face painting, marine creature touch tank, live music, local organic food, kayaking, scuba, interpretive walks, and more.
- **Moyle District Council** (Northern Ireland) – “Surround Yourself in Sea.” An opportunity to get immersed in the wildlife of the ocean by visiting one of Northern Ireland’s wildest and most exciting places to view the animals that depend on the ocean for survival, including the basking shark, bottlenose dolphins, seals, and more.
- **Petition to the United Nations** (online at <http://www.WorldOceanDay.org>) - The Ocean Project and the World Ocean Network have launched a push for one million signatures to petition the United Nations seeking official recognition of June 8th as World Ocean Day.

A complete list of events for 2008 and event ideas can be found at the newly updated World Ocean Day website.

<http://www.WorldOceanDay.org>

We invite you to plan a World Ocean Day event in your community and [list your event](#) for promotion at the World Ocean Day Website.

For media interested in accessing free online images of the ocean, The Marine Photobank (<http://marinephotobank.org>) has a growing collection of compelling images and photo stories that visually engage and help audiences to understanding the threats and challenges facing our world’s ocean. The Marine Photobank is partnering with The Ocean Project and its Partners to use this free resource to promote ocean conservation. The World Ocean Day website also has a poster and logos for you to download and use in publicity.