



THE OCEAN AND SOCIETY SURVEY FOR OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Ocean Conservation Trust (OCT) — Plymouth, England

FIELDWORK

14–16 April 2025

SAMPLE

n=1,054

ADMINISTERED BY

FocalData

FUNDED BY

Ocean Conservation Trust

IMPACT OF DATA:

TARGETED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

NATIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL
STRATEGIES

INFORMED ADVOCACY APPROACHES

**WHAT IS THE OSS?**

A global tool designed to help countries understand how their population thinks and feels about the ocean, and their capacity and willingness to take action on ocean health.

**OSS PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES**

In 2025, 14 countries ran the OSS. Open access, nationally representative datasets are available. **2026 is open for participation.**

WHY DID THEY RUN THE OSS?

The OCT is a UK charity committed to helping people develop and nurture a meaningful connection with the ocean. Deeper ocean connection drives people to take more positive actions for the ocean and climate - both big and small.

The OCT was integral to early efforts to understand ocean literacy levels in England and Wales. In 2020, the OCT partnered with the UK Government Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the Ocean Literacy Survey which was run twice.

Being a foundational partner of the global Ocean and Society Survey was a natural progression of these efforts. Data on what people think, feel, and do about the ocean makes the OCT more effective - enabling better decisions on marine management, habitat restoration and coastal resilience.

**"Conservation is all
about people."**

WHAT DID THE OSS REVEAL?

The majority of respondents are willing to make lifestyle changes, primarily motivated by concern for future generations.



38%

said they live 100km+ from the ocean, yet almost the entire UK lives within 100km



53%

feel concerned about the health of the ocean



61%

place high value on the ocean's climate protection benefits



72%

are willing to change their lifestyle to help the ocean

Ocean Friendly Homes

Every year, the OCT runs information campaigns online and at their aquarium in Plymouth. The OSS data revealed that many UK citizens rely on aquariums for information about the ocean, yet feel they lack the resources to make positive lifestyle changes for the ocean.

The OCT responded with their 2025 summer campaign, which focused on accessible actions that people could take at home. The Ocean Friendly Homes campaign highlighted practical 'swaps': replacing bottled shower gel for a bar of soap or swapping fast-fashion for pre-loved clothes.

The campaign reached almost 50,000 aquarium visitors plus the OCT's online audience. By empowering people to make small changes, this campaign fostered a sense of hope and an appreciation for the ways that our actions can affect the ocean and the climate at the same time.



#thinkOcean Challenge

The #thinkOcean Challenge is a movement to encourage people to reflect on their ocean impact. Every year, as part of the UN Ocean Decade, the OCT releases a short #thinkOcean quiz to gather opinions on the ocean and climate change. The 2025 final question drew directly from the OSS: 'how often do you think about ocean health?'. By the end of the Ocean Decade, the OCT are hoping to have tracked a positive shift in ocean connection amongst people in the UK.

At a national level, the OCT is using data from the OSS to develop England's first Ocean Literacy Strategy for publication in 2026. To track progress on the strategy, one of its recommendations will be to run an annual or bi-annual OSS.

At an organisational level, the OSS will inform the OCT's next five year strategy. The data will ensure their strategy is aligned to the realities of UK citizens' thoughts and feelings on ocean and climate action.

"Ocean protection is harder when there's a disconnect between people and the sea."



OSS data has both guided and strengthened the OCT's ocean advocacy. In 2025, the OCT wrote several letters to the UK Government on ocean action. Using OSS data, with its nationally representative citizen sample, increased the credibility of the letters.

In 2025, the OCT's Head of Ocean Advocacy and Engagement spoke at the Labour Party Conference. She was able to segment the survey data by political party and explore the opinions of Labour voters on ocean and climate action in particular, in order to deliver targeted insights to UK decisionmakers.

The OSS data showed that 85% of participants agreed that children should have the chance to learn about the ocean at school, identifying a strategic opportunity for the OCT. Driven by the data, OCT has engaged with the UK Government on its current school curriculum review to advocate for expanded and improved ocean education.

"The survey illuminates peoples' opinions on the ocean that may be otherwise overlooked."

OCT REFLECTS ON THE OSS

"Protecting and restoring our ocean isn't necessarily working in a lot of places because there's a disconnect between people and the actual management of the seas."

NICOLA BRIDGE, HEAD OF OCEAN ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

OCT says that for relatively little effort, the insights that you get about your populace are invaluable. The OSS allows users to better understand the policy areas that people are passionate about, and what actions they are more likely to support. The data also reveals important links between human health and wellbeing, and the health of the ocean.

It's an effective tool for collaboration and aligning impact. Sharing the data with other environmental and conservation organisations, who are working towards similar goals, allows us all to identify where we can achieve greater impact. In particular, the ability to segment the data by location provides a unique snapshot of what particular communities want. When campaigns and projects are designed with communities in mind, they are more likely to work in the long term.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

**Interested in using
the survey data?**

**Interested in
running the survey?**

Get in touch!

