

Ocean emergency

Our action plan for healthy seas



A healthy planet needs a healthy ocean

Our ocean covers over 70% of our planet. It provides more than half the oxygen we breathe and absorbs nearly a third of our carbon emissions.

But today, it's in poor health because of human activity. Right now, we're polluting our waters and destroying precious habitats. This is not only harming the species that live there, it's also reducing the ocean's ability to help fight the climate crisis.

We're determined to change this. Together with communities, businesses and governments, we can make a difference through social, political and cultural change.



70%

of our planet
is ocean

Our goal is to recover the health of our ocean.

For the sake of our wildlife, our climate and our own wellbeing, by 2030 we're calling for:

- ✓ A third of our seas to be truly protected, so nature can recover
- ✓ Ocean pollution levels to show a clear downward trend
- ✓ Our fish stocks to be at sustainable levels



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**We must take
urgent action
to improve the
health of our
ocean.**

”

Sandy Luk
Chief Executive

Polluted, over-fished, destroyed

We all love the sea; it's a source of adventure, food and reflection.

But it's also a dumping ground. Every year between 8 and 13 million tonnes of plastics enter our ocean. Globally, some areas of our ocean now contain six times more microplastics than plankton.

We call a third of our seas 'protected' – but they're not; in practice, less than 1% of our seas are well managed and just 5% of the UK's marine protected areas are safe from bottom trawling. Continuing to allow this destructive fishing method in places where the seabed should be protected is like bulldozing a national park.

Every day, valuable species and habitats that capture and store carbon are being destroyed.



 **92%**

The UK has lost up to **92%** of its seagrass in the last century.



This action plan sets out how we will fight for the future of our ocean through people-powered action – with science on our side.



Fighting for our ocean

A healthy ocean can help protect us against climate change. It can sustain a diverse array of species, including our own.

From cleaning beaches to shaping sustainable policies, we work towards a cleaner, better-protected, healthier ocean. One we can all enjoy.

For a better-protected ocean,

we secure spaces where species and habitats can recover. We're campaigning for at least 30% of UK waters being effectively managed by 2030 to protect wildlife and ecosystems. Only seas full of life can absorb carbon and help tackle climate change.

For a cleaner ocean, we campaign to stop pollution entering our ocean, and our volunteer beach cleans

remove and record the litter on our coastline. Using science, we track the health of our waters, influence business practice and call for better environmental regulations.

For a healthier ocean, we promote sustainable fishing and seafood to minimise harm. We support businesses to catch, produce and source seafood sustainably and incorporate conservation into their work. Our Good Fish Guide highlights the most and least sustainable fish, so people can make better seafood-buying choices.

To make this happen, we:

- Influence politicians and businesses to make policy, legislative and practical changes. We challenge those responsible when laws are not enforced, and we influence investment and procurement decisions.
- Engage communities to get involved in our campaigns and call for action to protect our seas.
- Educate and influence people and businesses to understand the value of a healthy ocean and change their behaviour.
- Carry out practical conservation activities with volunteers and partners to collect and share scientific evidence, using this data to better understand our seas and inform our work.

For more than 30 years, we've been the voice of the ocean, defending habitats and species. We work to protect the UK's seas and contribute to international data and legislation wherever possible.

This is vital not only to protect wildlife but to support communities and jobs. And the ocean gives back, improving our physical and mental health when we connect with it.

Our work has resulted in bans on single-use items, legislation to better manage fisheries, and greater awareness among supermarkets of the need to stock sustainable seafood. But there is much more to do.



One ocean for everyone

Whoever and wherever we are, we share one ocean. We all must have equal opportunities to benefit from it. And everyone has their part to play in learning about and protecting it. By working together, we can achieve our shared vision of seas full of life, where nature flourishes and people thrive.

Our action plan

This action plan sets out how we'll make social, political and cultural change happen to recover the health of our ocean.

Ocean goals



For a better-protected ocean

We'll ensure our seas are better-protected and their value for biodiversity and climate change mitigation is recognised. We will improve marine management and secure well-managed protected areas to recover, nurture and protect species and habitats. And we will track the progress of ocean recovery.

By 2030, we're calling for a third of our ocean to be truly protected, so nature can recover.



For a cleaner ocean

We'll measure the health of our seas, identify and prevent the main sources of pollution, and work with businesses and governments towards a cleaner ocean.

By 2030, we're calling for ocean pollution levels to show a clear downward trend.

Operational goals

An expert and professional organisation

We'll deliver first-class science and practical conservation that supports engaging, inclusive and effective campaigns, outreach and education. **All this will be based on strong finances, professional IT and our valued team.**



For a healthier ocean

We'll aim for more fish in healthier seas, improve the way wild fisheries and fish farming are managed, and help businesses and consumers to be more responsible in their buying choices.

By 2030, we're calling for our fish stocks to be at sustainable levels.



For everyone

We'll work hard to ensure everyone is able to enjoy the ocean and what it has to offer, while fulfilling their responsibility to protect it.

We will promote the value of the ocean for our health and wellbeing.



We'll be the UK marine conservation charity of choice for funders and supporters, with a high profile and a large, diverse and sustainable income base. **We will spend our money effectively, responsibly and transparently.**



Working together for a healthy ocean

One ocean for everyone.

There are so many ways to get involved and make a difference. Campaign, donate or volunteer and you'll join a movement of people all over the country as the voice of the ocean.

Data and evidence are essential.

Our citizen science programmes underpin our work. Could you collect vital data on the litter plaguing our beaches and on underwater species? With your help, we can campaign for real change from individuals, businesses and governments.

Young people will inherit the ocean.

Our schools programme is aimed at young people from primary-age upwards. With our free resources, it's easy to engage your school or family in our seas.

Good business makes good sense.

Businesses have the power to make a big impact on our planet – for good or for bad. Ocean-friendly businesses will be crucial in the fight for our ocean's health. Could you support us at work?

Whoever you are and wherever you live, now is the time to get involved and take action for our planet. We can only achieve a healthy ocean together. Visit www.mcsuk.org to find out more.





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The Marine Conservation Society fights for the future of our ocean through people-powered action – with science on our side.

We defend habitats and species, with communities, businesses and governments.

Together, we work towards a cleaner, better-protected, healthier ocean. For seas full of life, where nature flourishes and people thrive.

This is our action plan.

Together, we can make it happen




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