

Healthy Oceans



Jeff Hunter/Getty Images

Oceans sustain our coastal economies and are essential to the health of the planet's air and water systems.

PROTECTING A PRICELESS RESOURCE

The increasing industrialization of our oceans threatens the fragile health of marine ecosystems. If poorly planned or managed, drilling for oil and natural gas in federal waters, developing aquaculture and building wind, wave and tidal energy facilities all have the potential to damage America's marine environment. Currently, several federal agencies manage industrial activities in our oceans under a number of statutes, and there is little coordination or consideration of the cumulative impact their decisions have on the health and productivity of marine ecosystems and coastal communities

Among its cardinal recommendations, the Pew Oceans Commission called for establishing an enforceable national policy to protect, maintain and restore the

health of marine ecosystems. This will not only support economically and culturally valuable fisheries, but also provide countless recreational opportunities for the public and protect critically important ecological services, such as air and water purification. The commission also recommended changing the organizational structure and laws governing our oceans to make their protection and productivity a priority, and it urged better coordination and management of the full spectrum of activities affecting marine resources. Finally, it proposed establishing a permanent source of funding for ocean and coastal conservation and management.

Pew's Campaign for Healthy Oceans is working with Congress and the new administration to:

- establish a national policy to protect, maintain and restore the health of marine ecosystems.
- provide a guaranteed, steady source of funding for ocean and coastal conservation and management to implement the new policy.
- ensure it is carried out by the federal government and, to the extent possible, by the states, through comprehensive, science-based and precautionary management of marine resources.

Oceans sustain our coastal economies, but more importantly they are essential to the health of the planet's air and water systems. Pew's Campaign for Healthy Oceans seeks the changes needed to restore and protect this vital part of our natural environment.