



# Can You Hear Me Now? :

## *Research and Tools on Ocean Communication*

DECEMBER 13, 2012

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# Today's Presentation

- Background
  - Organization
  - Market Research Initiative
- Communications Research
  - Key findings & Implications
  - Case studies

# Background

## Organizational Overview

- Collaborative NGO
- Founded by aquarium leaders
- Partner network of >1,600 aquariums, zoos, science museums (ZAMs) and other organizations
- North American focus but growing internationally

*Our mission is to inspire action to protect the world's ocean.*

# Market Research Initiative: Goals

1. Improve understanding of public opinion on the ocean, conservation, and related issues
  - Track changes in awareness, attitudes, and behaviors
  - Provide benchmarking on emerging issues
2. Perceptions of zoos, aquariums, & museums (ZAMs) and their role in conservation
3. Assist partners in integrating the research
4. Support outreach efforts to connect the ocean/individual action
5. Identify strategic opportunities with specific audiences/issues

# Market Research Initiative

## Phase 1: Baseline data

Time frame	Sample population
Aug – Nov 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 22,000+ US adults</li><li>• Oversampling in 10 US markets, 2 in Canada</li><li>• Additional data on youth, and 7 other nations</li></ul>

## Phase 2: Tracking data

Timeframe	Sample population
Summer 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4,800+ adults</li></ul>
Summer 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8,500+ adults</li></ul>
Spring 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12,000+ adults</li></ul>
Spring 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 17,000+ adults</li></ul>

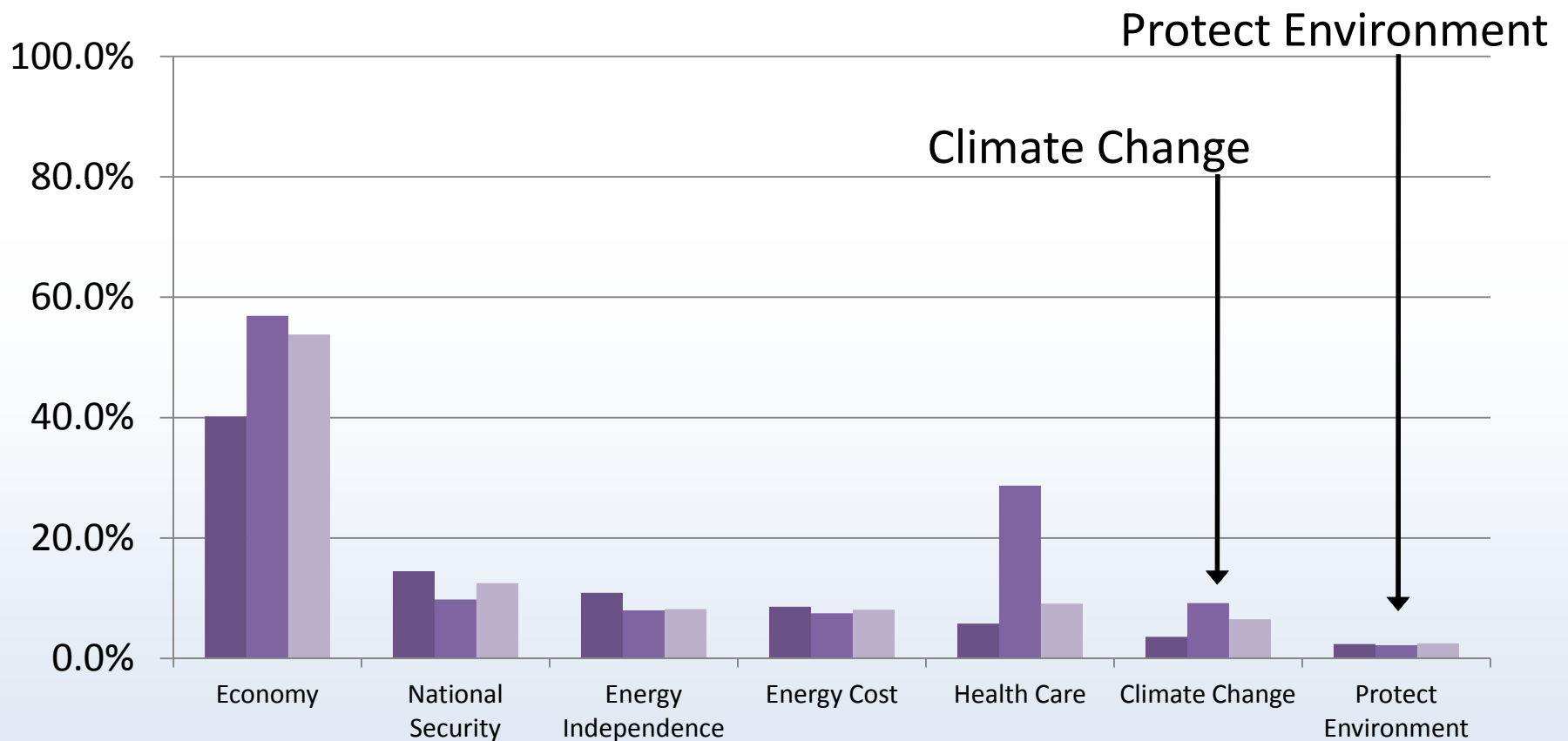
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# Key findings

1. Knowledge & awareness
2. Concern for the ocean
3. Understanding of threats
4. Willingness to act
5. Important constituencies
6. Perception of Marine Sanctuaries and ZAMs

# What are the three most important issues currently confronting the United States?





## Knowledge & awareness

- No evidence to indicate that the public's awareness and understanding of the major ocean threats has increased

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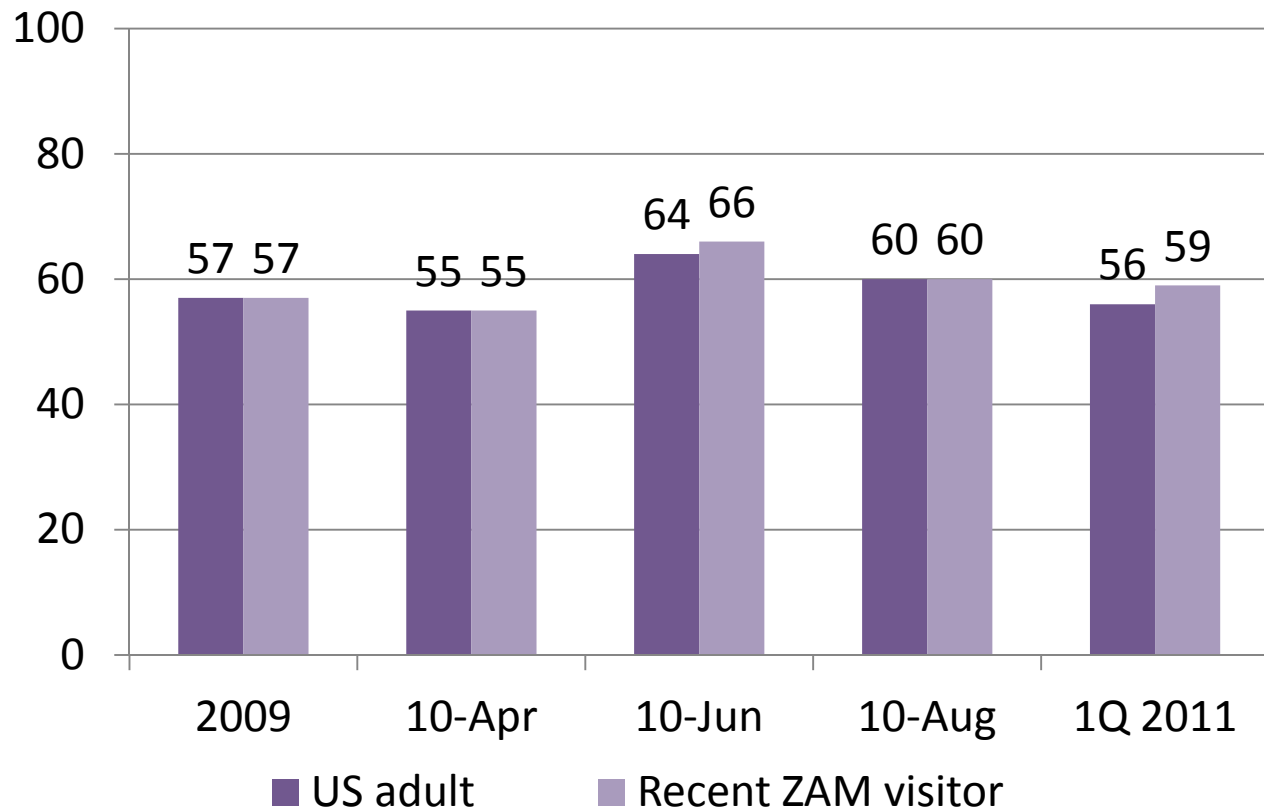
### ❖ *Implications*

- Shift from knowledge/literacy building to action inspiring

## Concern for the ocean

- Want ocean to be protected on principle, but ocean generally seen as healthy
- Lack of urgency (except in times of major catastrophe, e.g. BP oil spill)

# “The world’s ocean is endangered”



# Concern for the ocean

- Ocean generally seen as healthy
- Lack of urgency (except in times of major catastrophe, e.g. BP oil spill)

## ❖ *Implication*

- Focus on conveying urgency
- Guidance on what to do, especially in times of heightened awareness

## Understanding of the threat

- Climate change increasingly seen as “overrated”, disconnected, and politicized

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- Climate change increasingly seen as “overrated”, disconnected, and politicized
- Ocean seen as overall healthy

### ❖ *Implication*

- Connect abstract concepts (e.g. climate change) to specific place/animal that resonate for your audience

## Willingness to act

- See themselves as “green friendly”
- Disconnected from level of understanding





## What are you doing to support a “green-friendly lifestyle?”

- Using natural and organic products
- Changing lightbulbs in homes to CFLs/LEDs
- Nothing
- DNK
- Driving a hybrid

# Willingness to act

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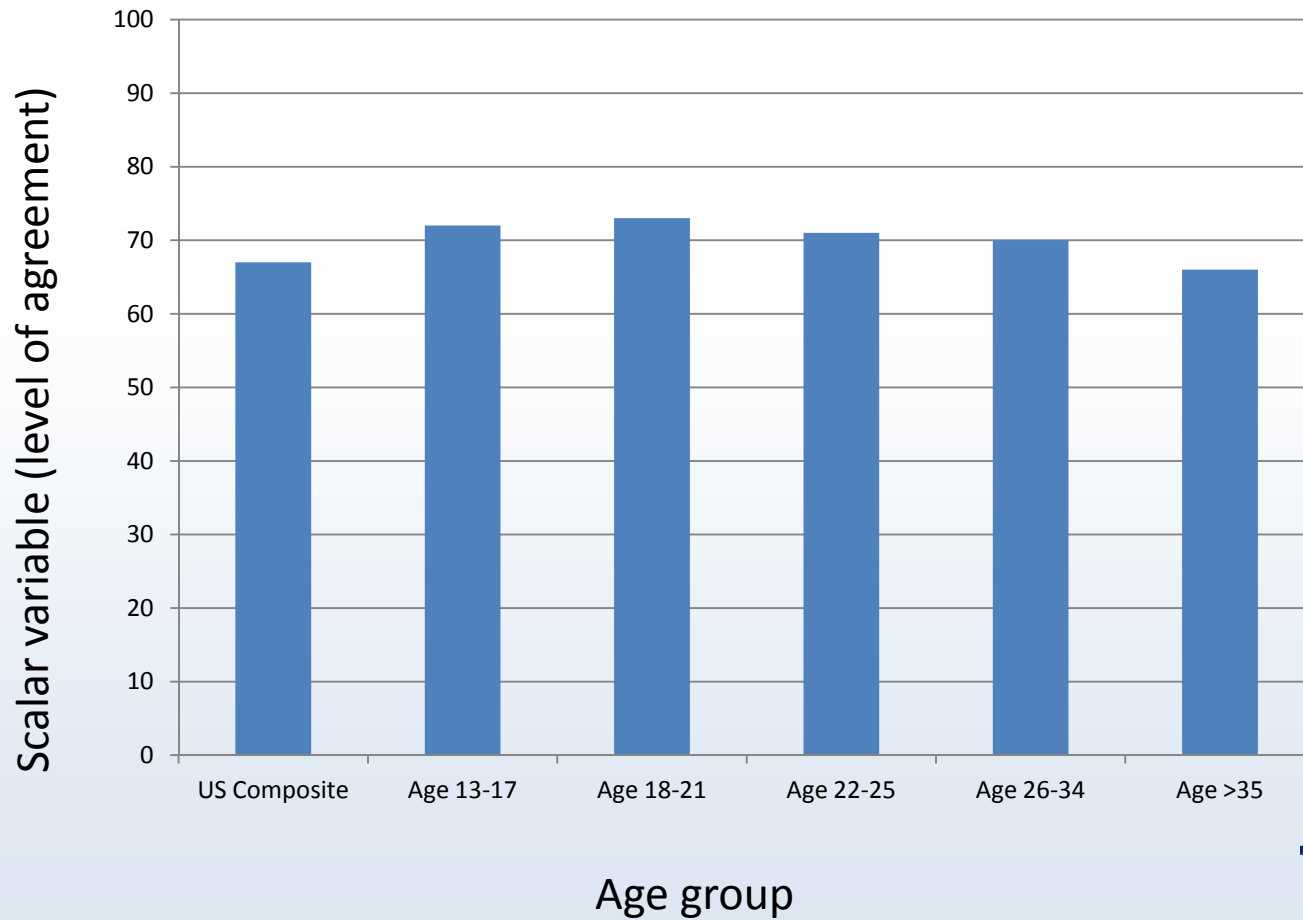
## ❖ *Implications*

- Start with the solution
- Act first, learning follows

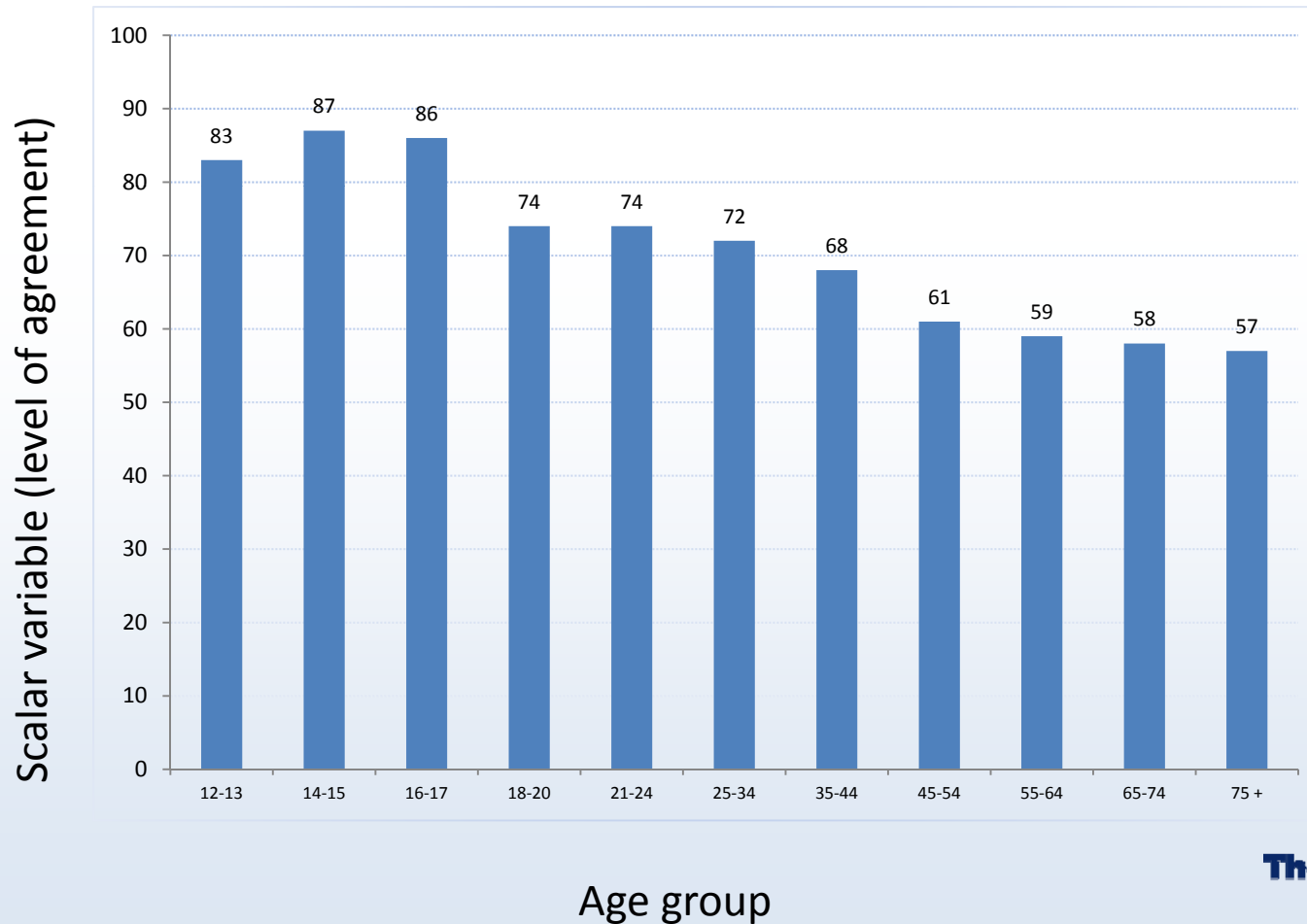
## Important constituency: Youth

- Most environmentally/socially conscious
- Strongest believers in the importance of personal action
- Influencers of household decisions

# I am “green friendly”



Individual citizens are personally responsible for protecting the environment.”





## Important constituency: Youth

- Most environmentally/socially conscious
- Strongest believers in the importance of personal action
- Influencers of household decisions

### ❖ *Implications*

- Focus on youth
- Provide guidance

# Minorities

- Self report as *less knowledgeable* about environmental issues, but *more willing to act* for conservation
- More likely to vote for politician based on politician's position on environmental issues

## ❖ *Implications*

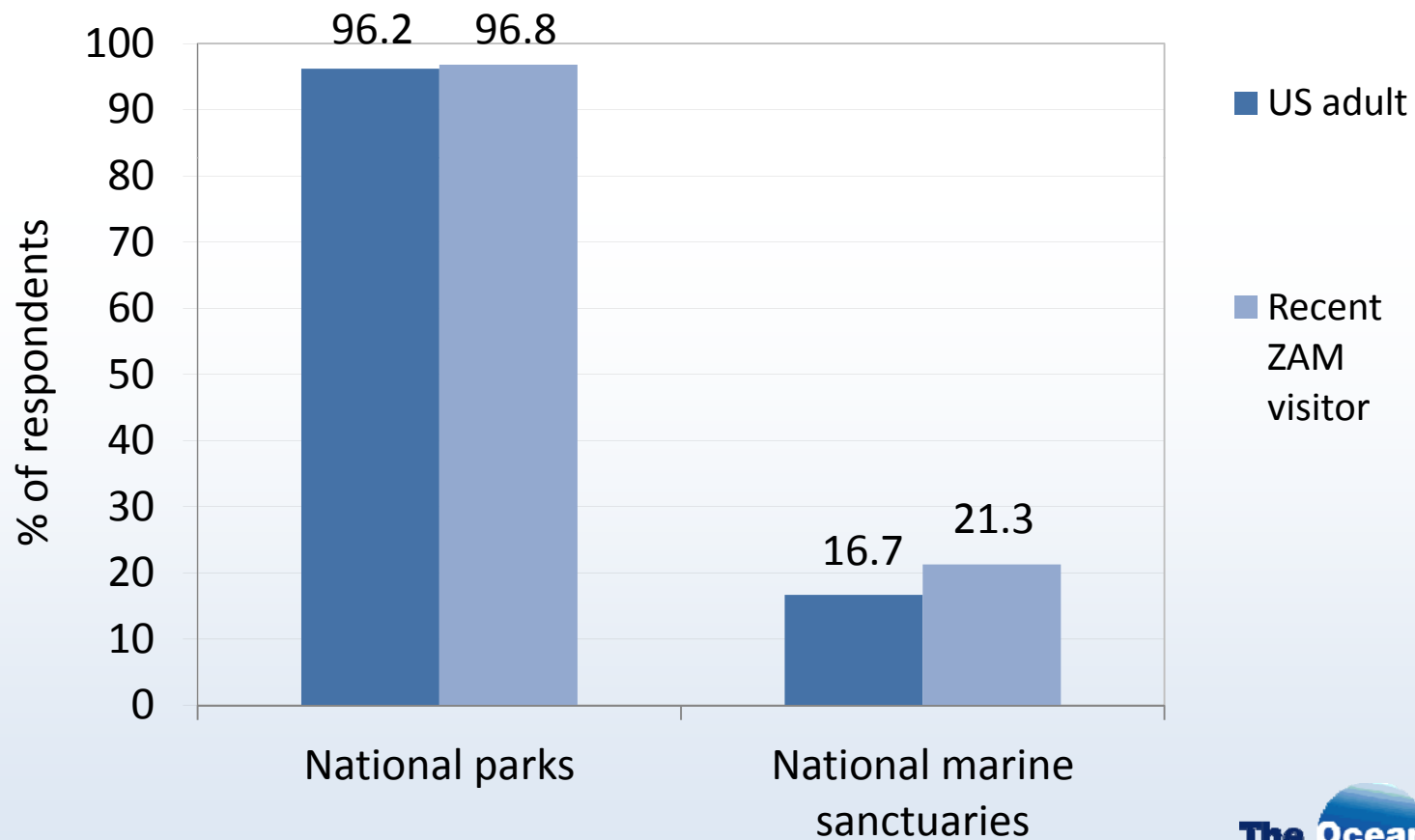
- Reach out to diverse audience

# Perception of Marine Sanctuaries & ZAMs

- Low awareness of marine sanctuaries
- ZAMs seen as one of the most trusted sources of conservation information
- ZAMs expected to provide guidance on conservation actions



# Have you heard of ... ?



# What is a Marine Sanctuary?

Rank	Description	Index
1	DNK	565.0
2	A protected part of the ocean	49.9
3	A part of the ocean where no fishing is allowed	28.3
4	A part of the ocean where no recreational boating is allowed	19.4
5	A safe place for dolphins	15.9
6	A park by the water	13.7
7	A place to see sea birds	7.9

# Perception of ZAMs

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- ZAMs seen as one of the most trusted sources of conservation information
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## ❖ *Implications*

- Important & unique role of ZAMs
- Opportunities to work with ZAMs

# Market Research: Summary of findings



## **Problem**

- The public cares, but needs to be reminded
- Climate change is the big concern, but also seen as overstated (and as yet unconnected to ocean health)
- The public believes the ocean is in good health, and even disasters don't do much to dent this impression

# Market Research: Summary of findings

## **Solution**

- High interest in personal actions
- Seeking suggestions from trusted sources
- Actions are the gateway to education, not vice versa

# Market Research: Summary of findings

## Motivation

- People want and expect ZAMs to offer guidance; ZAMs are credible messengers
- People increasingly want to be seen as "green"

# Market Research: Summary of findings

## **Audience**

- Youth especially interested and surprisingly influential
- Minorities self-report as less knowledgeable but more likely to take action

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# Test case in online engagement

Activating their underlying concern for conservation (Online)

## Make a Difference Today



Plastics kill thousands of sea turtles and pollute our ocean. Start making a difference today. Be part of the solution.

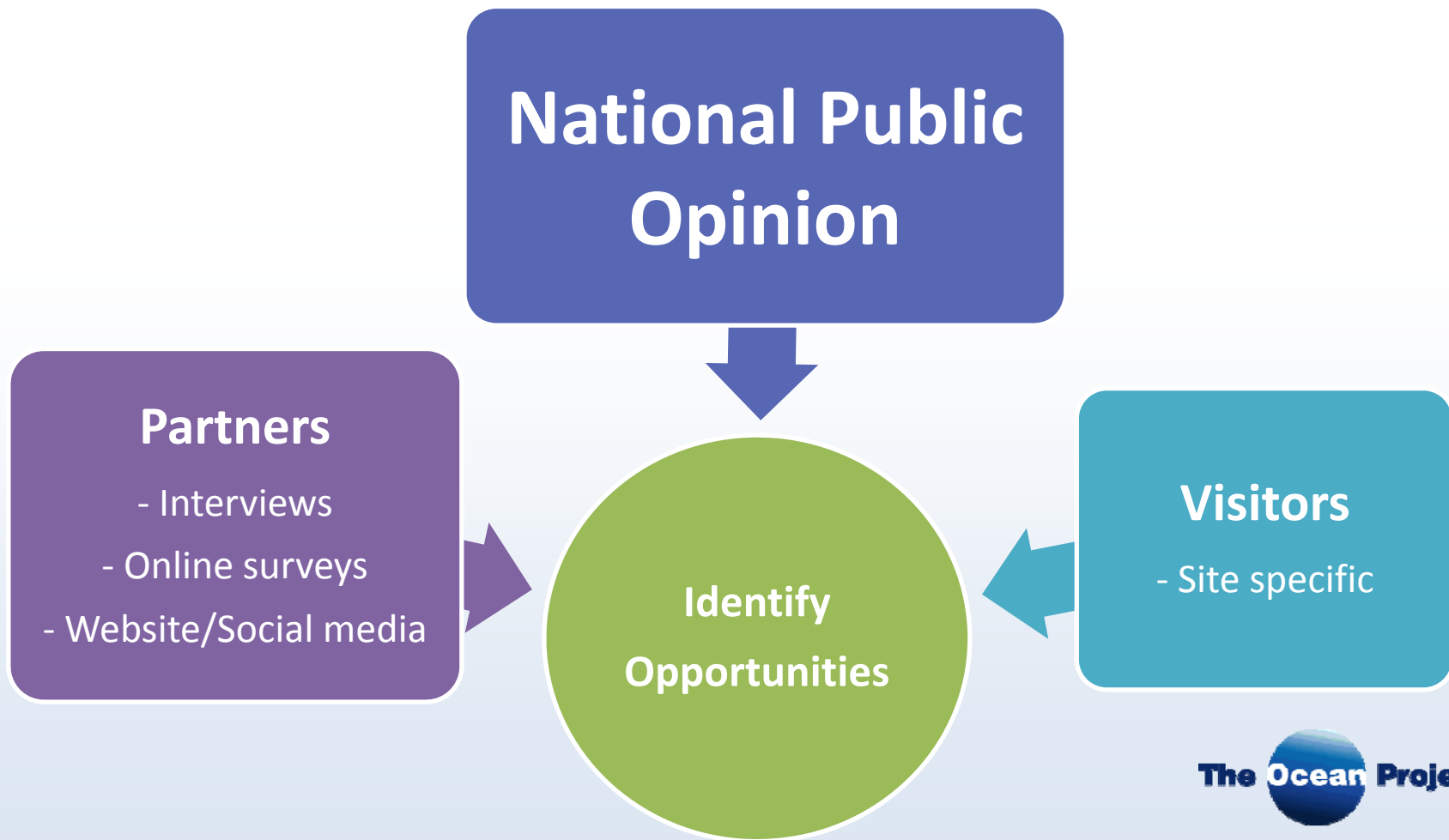


# Test case in online engagement

## Youth sentiment post-campaign

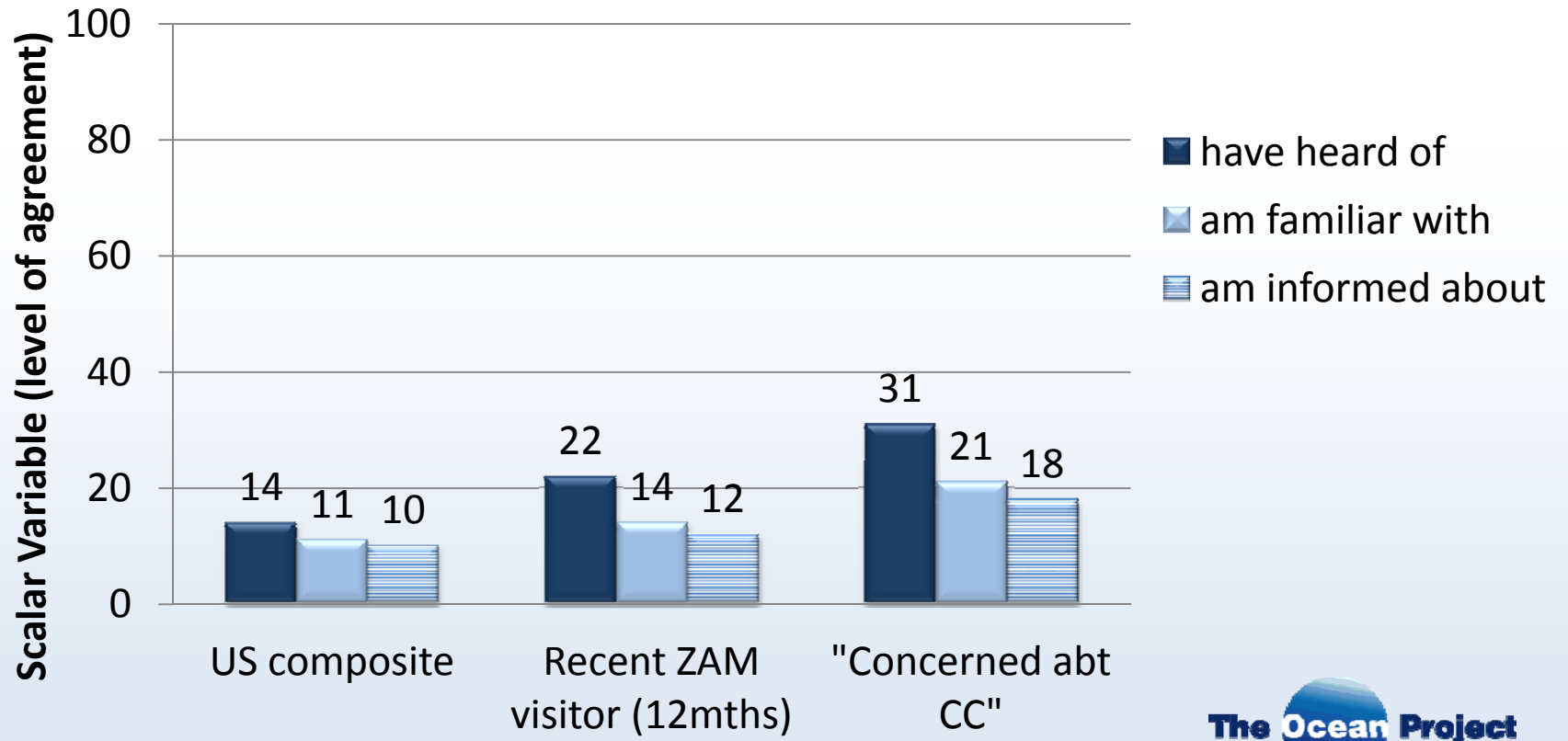
	End of campaign	Campaign + 1year
The world's ocean is endangered	+14.8%	+9.3%
The ocean is affected by the actions of people	+10.1%	+10.1%
Climate change threatens ocean health	+18%	+12%

# The Ocean Project's OA study



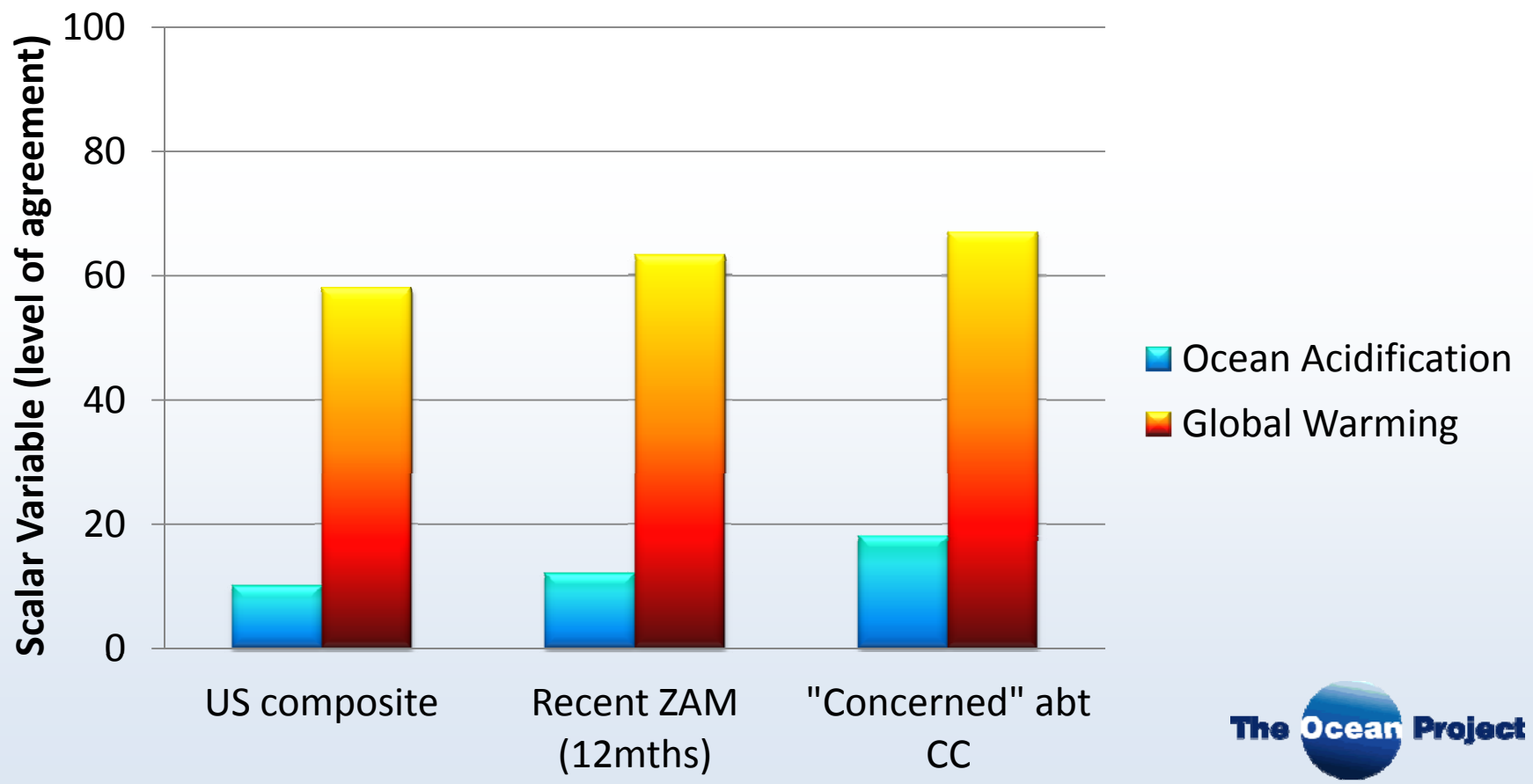
# Market Research – National Data

## I ... “ocean acidification”

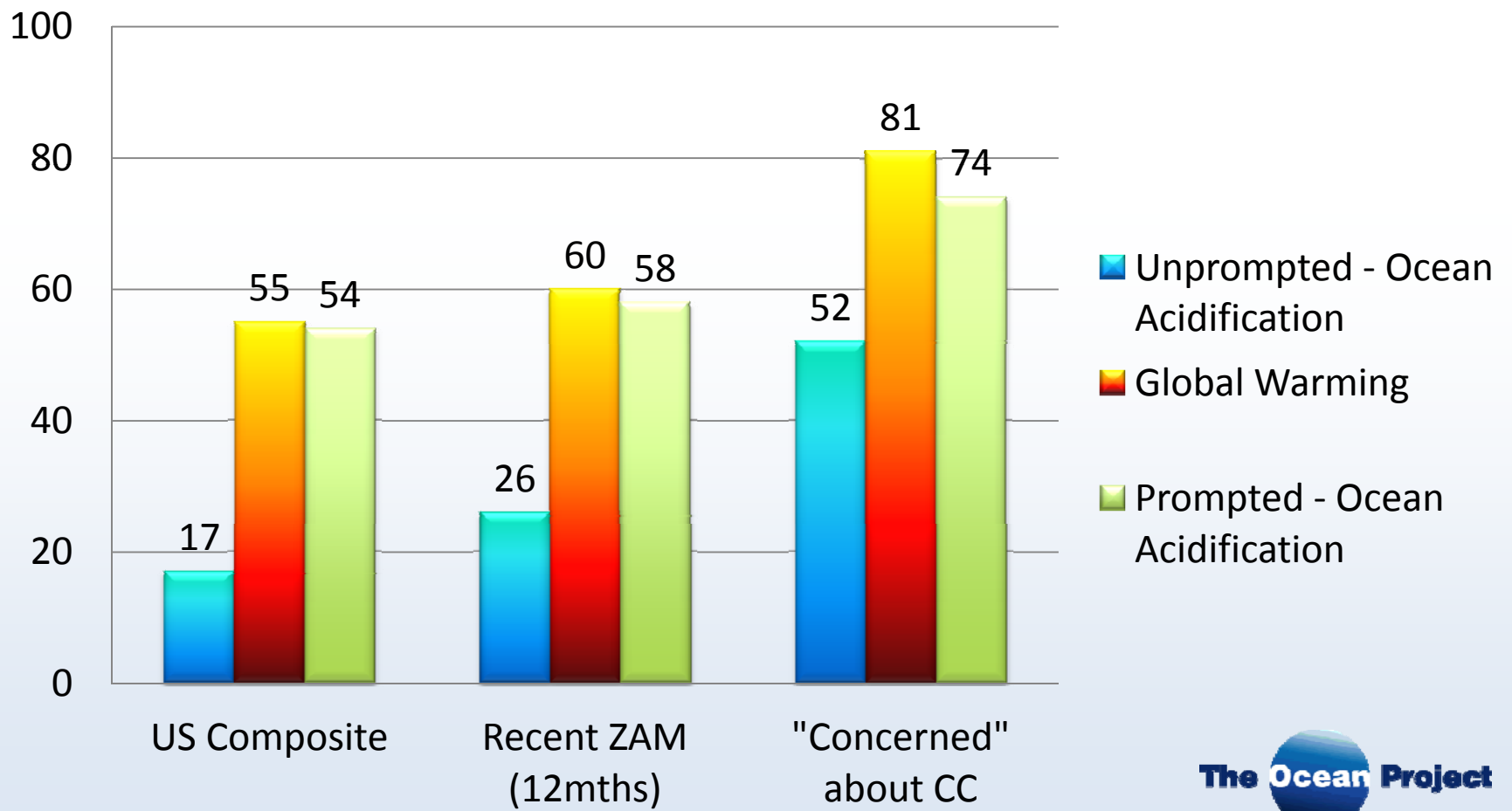


# Market Research – National Data

## I have heard of...



# I am worried about...



# OA Study summary

1. Visitor awareness and concern about ocean acidification (low, with great potential)
2. Visitor expectations and appreciation of conservation information (high)
3. Aquarium and science center visits as activation points (critical)



# Acknowledgements

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# Thank you! Questions?

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