



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE OCTOBER 5, 2015

OCEAN HEALTH INDEX RELEASES 2015 UPDATE AT OUR OCEANS CONFERENCE: GLOBAL SCORE 70 OUT OF 100

22 Nations Are Using the Ocean Health Index's Regional Assessment Tool to Improve Ocean Management

Valparaíso, Chile/Arlington, Va. USA (October 5, 2015) – At the second annual Our Ocean Conference held this week in Valparaíso, Chile, the Ocean Health Index announced its 2015 global score. With the updated methodology, the global ocean score for 2015 was 70 out of 100, unchanged from 2013 and 2014. This was the fourth annual update from the Index, a partnership led by scientists from the [National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis](#) (NCEAS) at UC Santa Barbara and [Conservation International](#).

“A global score of 70 is a far cry from the perfect score of 100 that we would like to see for our oceans,” said Dr. Sebastian Troëng, the Senior Vice President of CI’s Moore Center for Science and Oceans. “Clearly we still have a long way to go to achieve the fully sustainable use of the blue part of our planet. The Index gives us insights on where we are falling short and provides us with a versatile tool to help nations improve ocean health. At the Our Oceans Conference, senior government officials, corporate officers and civil society leaders are committing to change how we manage our oceans, and the global Ocean Health Index provides them with a blueprint for setting priorities and identifying where governments, industries, and individuals need to take action.”

The Index combines biological, physical, economic and social indicators that are fundamental for healthy oceans. The scores, which range on a scale from 0 to a 100, assess how sustainably people are using this ecosystem in a given region. It was designed to be scalable to national and regional levels to provide governments a holistic tool to measure their health and promote action to maintain healthy oceans.

The 2015 update showed continued low global scores for the Food Production (58) and Natural Products (52). On the other end of the spectrum, Biodiversity (88) and Coastal Protection (87) were the highest scores, though their distance from a perfect score of 100 indicates that that species and habitats remain well below the target goal for sustainability.

“What is really exciting about having several years of assessment done, and critical for management and monitoring of ocean health, is that we can start to see where and by how much scores are changing year to year, and begin to understand the causes and consequences of those changes,” said Ben Halpern, Chief Scientist for the Ocean Health index project. “We finally have a comprehensive picture of where we’ve come from and where we’re heading in terms of global ocean health.”



As in previous years, remote uninhabited islands achieved the highest scores. Although the Ocean Health Index emphasizes that a healthy ocean is one that sustainably provides benefits to people now and in the future, relatively undeveloped locations can still score high. The ten lowest scoring countries are all developing nations, and many have a recent history of conflict, dictatorship or natural disasters. Those conditions are likely impacting their ocean health scores.

While this Ocean Health Index update offers insight from a global perspective, it also provides a framework for the use of Index assessments for individual countries and regions. Since its launch in 2012, more than 22 countries, including Colombia, Ecuador, Israel and China have engaged with the Ocean Health Index as a means to guide the sustainable management of their marine resources.

“The Index’s framework applied at the decision-making scale is a comprehensive, user-friendly decision-support tool for the management of marine and coastal resources,” said Dr. Johanna Polsenberg, the Director of the Ocean Health Index at CI. “We have been assisting governments and stakeholders around the world in using the OHI as a cross-sectoral coordinating platform to assess the tradeoffs and impacts of activities in one sector upon other sectors, managing entire EEZs, and providing a scientifically-rigorous framework for blue economy discussions.”

###

Available content for media (*Please Provide Image Credits***)**

Learn more at: <http://www.oceanhealthindex.org>

For more information, contact:

Kevin Connor, Media Manager, Conservation International

Office +1 703 341 2405/ mobile +1 410 868 1369/ email kconnor@conservation.org

About the Ocean Health Index

The Ocean Health Index is the first assessment tool that scientifically compares and combines key elements from all dimensions of the ocean’s health – biological, physical, economic and social. The Index’s ten goals provide leaders with the portfolio of information they need to promote a more sustainable human-ocean ecosystem. The Index can be used globally, regionally or for an individual bay. It allows for direct comparison across different aspects of ocean health and different locations in a way that is not possible with current assessment tools.

The Ocean Health Index was developed with the contributions of more than 65 ocean experts including the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis and the University of British Columbia’s Sea Around Us project. The founding partners of the Index are Conservation International, National Geographic, and The New England Aquarium. The Founding Presenting Sponsor of the Ocean Health Index is the Pacific Life Foundation. The founding grant was provided by Beau and Heather Wrigley. For more information, please see www.oceanhealthindex.org or visit us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).