ABOUT THE OCEAN HEALTH INDEX

OVERVIEW

The Ocean Health Index (OHI) is an innovative tool that creates a series of ocean health scores for coral reefs, beaches, and key marine habitats. The OHI is designed to improve the management of ocean health by providing clear, actionable information to stakeholders.

WHAT IS THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THE INDEX?

The primary objective of the index is to provide a simple, transparent, and easily understandable way to assess the health of our oceans and marine ecosystems. The index aims to identify areas where improvements are needed and to help guide decision-making for conservation and management efforts.

WHAT DOES THE INDEX TELL US THAT WE DON’T ALREADY KNOW?

The index provides a comprehensive and standardized way to measure the health of our oceans. It assesses a wide range of indicators, including biodiversity, habitat health, and human impacts, to provide a holistic view of ocean health.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY OCEAN?

A healthy ocean is one that maintains its natural processes, supports a diverse range of species, and provides a range of ecosystem services. It is resilient to disturbances and has the capacity to recover from environmental stressors.

WHY IS A HEALTHY OCEAN IMPORTANT?

A healthy ocean is essential for the survival and well-being of many species, including humans. It provides critical goods and services, such as food, medicine, and transportation, and plays a crucial role in regulating the global climate system.

WHAT ARE THE Top THREATS TO THE HEALTH OF THE OCEANS?

The top threats to ocean health include climate change, overfishing, pollution, habitat loss, and invasive species. These threats interact and exacerbate one another, making it challenging to address them independently.

IS THE OCEAN HEALTH INDEX AT ODDS WITH CONSERVATION BECAUSE OF ITS FOCUS ON HUMAN BENEFITS?

The OHI is designed to be inclusive and prioritizes human well-being, recognizing that healthy oceans are essential for human survival and prosperity. The index aims to strike a balance between biodiversity conservation and human needs.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SCORES

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOAL AND A BENEFIT?

A goal is a specific, measurable objective that seeks to improve or protect ocean health. A benefit is a positive outcome that results from meeting the goal. The OHI quantifies progress towards goals and tracks the associated benefits.

HOW WERE THE 10 GOALS OF THE INDEX SELECTED?

The goals were selected based on their alignment with global ocean health priorities, such as climate change, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable fisheries. They were also selected to be measurable and to specifically address human well-being.

HOW DOES THE OCEAN HEALTH INDEX RELATE TO OTHER INDICIES?

The OHI is part of a broader suite of ocean health indicators, which are used to assess the health of marine systems at various scales. The OHI complements these indicators by providing a more holistic and integrated perspective on ocean health.

WHERE DOES THE DATA COME FROM?

The OHI relies on a variety of data sources, including scientific publications, government reports, and citizen science programs. The data is collected from multiple sectors and regions to ensure a comprehensive assessment of ocean health.

HOW ARE THE GOALS WEIGHTED?

The goals are weighted based on their relative importance and the potential for impact. The weighting is designed to ensure that the most critical goals receive the most attention and that the index reflects the priorities of stakeholders.

HOW IS A GOAL SCORED?

The OHI score for a goal is determined by comparing the score of the goal to a reference point. The reference point is a threshold that represents a level of performance that is considered to be healthy and sustainable.

WHAT DRIVES GOAL SCORES?

Goal scores are driven by a range of factors, including scientific evidence, stakeholder input, and policy frameworks. The OHI aims to be transparent and collaborative, ensuring that the scores are based on robust and reliable data.

HOW WERE REFERENCE POINTS DETERMINED?

Reference points are based on scientific evidence and expert consensus. The OHI uses a scientific process to establish reference points that are informed by the latest research and best practices in ocean management.

THE OHI PROVIDES A SIMPLE WAY TO ASSESS THE HEALTH OF OUR OCEANS AND MAKES IT EASIER TO TAKE ACTION TO IMPROVE OCEAN HEALTH.
MORE INFORMATION

ARE THERE ANY TRADEOFFS BETWEEN THE GOALs? DO SOME GOALS REQUIRE MORE EFFORT THAN OTHERS?

The evaluation of the Ocean Health Index data in 2014 revealed that the most challenging task is ensuring the health of marine ecosystems. This is due to the interdependence of various components of the marine environment, which means that achieving one goal may negatively impact another. For example, protecting marine habitats from pollution may require reducing fishing activities, which could affect the abundance of certain species. Therefore, policymakers need to carefully consider the tradeoffs between different goals to ensure sustainable management of the ocean.

HOW MANY REGIONS ARE COVERED?

The Ocean Health Index covers over 10,000 regions globally. These regions are assessed for their marine health based on a variety of indicators, such as water quality, biodiversity, and fishing pressure. The index aggregates data from multiple sources, including satellite imagery, scientific studies, and local reports.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE INDEX?

The Ocean Health Index has four main goals:

1. Protecting marine habitats
2. reducing pollution
3. sustainably managing fisheries
4. enhancing ecosystem services

These goals were set to ensure a healthy and productive ocean that can support human well-being.

WHY DO SOME REGIONS SCORE 100 ON SOME GOALS?

There are several reasons why some regions score 100 on certain goals. This could be due to the region having exceptionally high levels of biodiversity, low pollution, or sustainable fishing practices. Another possibility is that the region has not been assessed for that particular goal, leading to a score of 100.

HOW IS THE GLOBAL SCORE CALCULATED?

The Ocean Health Index uses a weighted average of regional scores to calculate a global score. Each regional score is weighted based on the region's size, population, and economic importance. The global score is then used to rank countries based on their overall marine health.

WHAT DOES THE SCORE MEAN?

The score represents the percentage of the region's marine environment that is healthy. A score of 0% indicates poor health, while a score of 100% indicates excellent health. The score is a measure of how well a region is achieving the Ocean Health Index goals.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO SCORE 100?

Yes, it is possible to score 100 on the Ocean Health Index. Regions that are well-managed and have healthy marine ecosystems can achieve this score. However, it requires significant efforts to maintain high levels of marine health.

DOES THE OCEAN HEALTH INDEX EXPLAIN WHY A SCORE IS HIGH OR LOW?

The Ocean Health Index provides a comprehensive overview of the marine health of a region. It explains why a score is high or low based on the specific indicators of each goal. This information can be used to identify areas for improvement and support decision-making.

DOES THE SCORE TELL THE CONDITION OF THE OCEAN RIGHT NOW?

The score is a snapshot of the current state of the ocean health in a region. It reflects the status of the marine environment over the past several years and does not account for future changes or planned interventions.

WHAT SPATIAL SCALE IS APPROPRIATE FOR CALCULATING AN OCEAN HEALTH INDEX SCORE?

The spatial scale for calculating an ocean health index score depends on the specific region and the goals being assessed. For example, a regional scale may be appropriate for countries with a wide range of marine environments, while a more detailed scale may be required for smaller regions with unique marine characteristics.

HOW WILL THE OCEAN HEALTH INDEX BENEFIT A COUNTRY?

The Ocean Health Index can benefit a country in several ways:

1. Improved decision-making: By providing a comprehensive overview of the marine health of a region, the index can help policymakers make informed decisions about marine conservation and management.
2. Increased transparency: The index can help increase transparency and accountability in marine management, allowing stakeholders to track progress and hold decision-makers accountable.
3. Enhanced collaboration: The index can facilitate collaboration between different stakeholders, including governments, scientists, and businesses, to ensure the sustainable management of the ocean.

WHERE IS CLIMATE CHANGE MEASURED IN THE INDEX?

Climate change is measured in the Ocean Health Index through various indicators, such as sea surface temperature, ocean acidity, and sea level rise. These indicators are used to assess the impact of climate change on marine ecosystems and human well-being.
If change is frequent, unpredictable and unmeasurable, how can the Ocean Health Index help to detect meaningful signals of change given the many unpredictable changes ('background noise') in the human-ocean ecosystem? What level of change is meaningful? How can the Ocean Health Index inform ecosystem-based management (EBM) and coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP)?

Who collaborated on the Ocean Health Index? What are the primary sources of financing for the Ocean Health Index? Looking forward, what are the biggest aims of the Ocean Health Index?