**Horizon Research**

**Oceans Survey**

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# Executive Summary

This report summarises the results of a survey of New Zealanders’ opinions and attitudes towards the marine environment to. The results from the research provide insights into:

* How New Zealanders’ perceive the health of our ocean, the threats it faces, and the need for more marine protection
* How they prioritise marine protection among other environmental issues, and
* How they rate the current government’s actions on marine issues.

The survey was conducted between 15th and 21st October 2024 among 1,049 adults nationwide who are members of Horizon Research’s HorizonPoll nationwide adult panel, the Horizon Research Māori Panel, and a third-party online research panel used for source diversity.

The sample was weighted on age, gender, ethnicity, personal income, region and party vote at the 2023 general election to reflect the New Zealand population.

The survey has a maximum margin of error, at a 95% confidence level of ±3% overall.

## Summary of Findings

**Importance of ocean and threats**

**91%** of New Zealanders (equivalent to around 3,513,000 adults[[1]](#footnote-1)) say that the ocean is *important[[2]](#footnote-2)* to them.

The main reasons for this are:

* It provides life/part of ecosystem
* It provides food/kai, and
* They enjoy being around the ocean and is a big part of recreational activities such as swimming.

There is concern about the health of Aotearoa New Zealand’s ocean:

* **69%** (2,644,000 adults) are *concerned*[[3]](#footnote-3)*, of whom*
* **27%** (1,028,000 adults) are *very concerned*.

People consider the top three biggest threats to Aotearoa New Zealand’s marine environment are:

* *Plastic pollution* - **54%** (2,095,000 adults)
* *Pollution from the land (e.g. chemical waste, agricultural run-off, sewage) -* **49%** (1,886,000 adults), and
* *Commercial fishing methods such as bottom-trawling (dragging weighted nets along the seafloor) -* **37%** (1,446,000 adults).

**Marine Protected Areas**

**40%** (1,538,000 adults) think that **zero to 10 percent** of New Zealand’s ocean territory is in Marine Protected areas.

* **23%** (885,000 adults) were not sure how much was a Marine Protected area**.**

**41%** (1,589,000 adults) think that **more than 20 percent** of New Zealand’s ocean territory **should** be in Marine Protected areas.

**81%** (3,142,000 adults) think that marine protection should be expanded.

**79%** (3,038,000 adults) said that New Zealand should be actively involved in global efforts to protect the ocean and honour the international commitment to protect 30% of the ocean in Marine Protected Areas by 2030.

**Government action**

**71%** (2,729,000 adults) believe that policies to protect our marine environment should be given *top or more priority* than now.

* **23%** (874,000 adults) say it should be *top priority.*

The survey finds there are a number of environmental actions the Government should prioritise. The top three given *high priority* are:

* *Reducing plastic waste* – **62%** (2,393,000 adults)
* *Protecting New Zealand’s threatened species from going extinct and helping species to recover* – **59%** (2,277,000 adults)
* *Protecting the health of our ocean* – **58%** (2,242,000 adults).

The top three actions the Government should take to **protect the marine environment** are:

* *Take stronger action to reduce pollution from the land (e.g. chemical waste, agricultural run-off, sewage) entering the ocean -* **39%** (1,488,000 adults)
* *Reduce the amount of plastic pollution that enters the ocean -* **37%** (1,426,000 adults)
* *Create more Marine Protected Areas to protect species and habitats from activities like fishing or mining* - **37%** (1,426,000 adults).

**Current Government record on marine protection**

**42%** (1,616,000 adults) rated the current Government's record on marine conservation and protection *poor/very weak*.

* **18%** (692,000 adults) rated it *very strong/good*.

Overall, there is a feeling of concern and disappointment about how the current Government is managing oceans and marine life.

* **32%** (1,237,000 adults) are *concerned*
* **30%** (1,167,000 adults) are *disappointed*
* **22%** (862,0000 adults) are *frustrated*.

**19%** (723,000 adults) are *hopeful*.

**Action people would take to protect our ocean**

The top three actions people would personally take to encourage the Government to protect the ocean are:

* *Signing a petition* – **47%** (1,805,000 adults)
* *Talk to family and friends* - **29%** (1,117,000 adults)
* *Change their vote during a General election* - **27%** (1,024,000 adults).

**Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary**

**71%** (2,911, 000 adults) *support[[4]](#footnote-4)* setting up a Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary, of whom

* **40%** (1,562,000 adults) strongly support it.

**Associating organisations with advocacy to protection the marine environment**

*Greenpeace Aotearoa* is the organisation most highly associated with advocating for the protection of the marine environment - **41%** (1,565,000 adults).

The *World Wide Fund for Nature New Zealand (WWF-New Zealand)* is recognised by **20%** (761,000 adults).

The people more likely to associate *World Wide Fund for Nature New Zealand (WWF-New Zealand)* with marine protection are:

* Aged 75+ years - **34%**
* Have a personal income $30k-$50k – **28%**
* Voted Green Party in 2023 – **32%.**

**Report**

## Importance of the ocean

**91%** of New Zealanders (3,513,000 adults) say that the ocean is *important[[5]](#footnote-5)* to them. Only 6% say it is not important.

**Total important**

**91%**

*Sample: n=1,049*

The respondents who are more likely[[6]](#footnote-6) to say that the Ocean is *very important* are:

* Aged 45-54 years **60%**
* Aged 55+ years **60%**
* Māori **64%**
* Voted Green Party in 2023 **67%**
* Voted Labour Party in 2023 **61%**
* Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 **78%**
* Living in Wellington **62%.**

## Why is the ocean important?

The **91%** who said the ocean was important to them were asked to say why.

The word cloud shows the most frequently mentioned words in their responses. Larger words representing more common answers.

Key themes that come through are food, climate, and recreation.



Key themes that come through are:

**29%** saying it is a source of food for us.

Respondents frequently mention the ocean as essential for food and water, with terms like "food," "fish," and "source" indicating reliance on the ocean for basic needs.

*Because it surrounds NZ and provides a large amount of food.*

*It is the food bowl for the world. It provides the vital parts of every life cycle on this planet*

*Our food comes from the ocean. It’s needs to be clean so we need to care for the ocean. Not destroy it.*

*The ocean sustain us .It provides oxygen and food and medicine it’s a source of recreation, discovering ,identifying and culture.*

**28%** talk about providing sea life, providing the planet with life (it is essential part of the ecosystem). Also much of New Zealand life is based around the ocean. Words such as "climate" and "planet" suggest a strong awareness of the ocean's role in controlling climate.

*Because it provides our planet with life, from weather, food, enjoyment, adventure. The earth could not exist as we know it without the Oceans.*

*Source of life - for us and what lives and grows in it.*

*So much of New Zealand life is based around the ocean and we are lucky to live in a country where for most the ocean is accessible from a beach that is at most a few hours drive away or much less in the main population centres.*

*Because water is necessary for everything in life and as we destroy the ocean we compromise all life. The state of the animals and how we disregard them is an indictment on humanity.*

**25%** talk about enjoying the ocean for swimming/relaxing and general recreation, showing they not only value the ocean not only for its environmental importance but also for personal activities like leisure, travel, and connection to nature.

*It surrounds us, it provides us food and I like to swim in it and use it for recreation.*

*Apart from the recreational aspects it is a source of food and a climate equaliser. It's overall health is important to us all.*

*It's where I go to relax I spend countless hours swimming in it, going on boats, relaxing on the beach and it's where I spend a lot of my free time so it's really important to me that it's clean.*

Many respondents also express concern about the ocean's health, emphasising that it must remain *important* and *healthy* for the survival of future generations.

# Concern about the health of Aotearoa New Zealand's ocean

**69%** (2,644,000 adults) are concerned[[7]](#footnote-7) about the health of Aotearoa New Zealand’s ocean.

**27%** (1,028,000 adults) are very concerned.

**Total concern**

**69%**

*Sample: n=1,049*

The **27%** (1,028,000 adults) who are *very concerned* about the health of Aotearoa New Zealand’s ocean are more likely to be:

* Aged 55-64 years **38%**
* Have personal income between $30k-$50k per year **37%**
* Have household income between $30k-$50k per year **38%**
* Māori **46%**
* Voted Green Party in 2023 **52%**
* Voted Labour Party in 2023 **35%**
* Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 **58%.**

# Biggest threats to Aotearoa New Zealand's marine environment

Respondents were asked to select from a list what they thought were the top three biggest threats to Aotearoa New Zealand’s marine environment.

* **54%** (2,095,000 adults) thought *plastic pollution* was the biggest threat, followed by
* **49%** (1,886,000 adults) who said *pollution from the land (e.g. chemical waste, agricultural run-off, sewage),* and
* **37%** (1,446,000 adults) said *commercial fishing methods such as bottom-trawling (dragging weighted nets along the seafloor).*

*Sample: n=1,049*

The table below shows different groups who are significantly more likely to believe these are biggest threats to Aotearoa New Zealand’s marine environment.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***What do you think are the biggest threats to Aotearoa New Zealand's marine environment?*** | **Total** | **Significantly more likely[[8]](#footnote-8)▲** | |
| Plastic pollution | 54% | 75+ years  Household income $150k-$200k  Voted National Party in 2023 | 75%  71%  64% |
| Pollution from the land (e.g. chemical waste, agricultural run-off, sewage) | 49% | Personal income less than $20k  Household income less than $20k | 63%  66% |
| Commercial fishing methods such as bottom-trawling (dragging weighted nets along the seafloor) | 37% | 55-64 years  Household income $100k-$150k  NZ European/Pākehā  Voted Green Party in 2023 | 50%  47%  43%  52% |
| Commercial overfishing | 33% | No significant differences |  |
| Climate change, over-warming, and acidification | 32% | 18-24 years  Personal income $100k-$150k  Household income more than $200k  Asian  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 43%  43%  43%  50%  56%  47% |
| Pollution from activities at sea (e.g. shipping emissions) | 19% | 25-34 years  Indian | 27%  39% |
| Seabed mining | 19% | 55-64 years  Māori  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 27%  33%  39%  27%  47% |
| Fisheries bycatch (when other species like seabirds and dolphins are accidentally caught in fishing nets) | 16% | Indian | 31% |
| Coastal Development | 7% | No significant differences |  |
| Recreational overfishing | 6% | No significant differences |  |

# Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

Respondents were shown the following information.

*Highly-protected Marine Protected Areas are areas set aside to protect biodiversity by limiting human activities such as fishing or dredging. The highest form of protection in New Zealand is a marine reserve.*

They were then asked what percentage of New Zealand's ocean territory they think is within highly protected Marine Protected Areas.

They were then shown more information.

*Less than 1% (currently 0.4%) of New Zealand’s ocean has protections meeting IUCN [International Union for Conservation of Nature] Category 1 standards.*

And then asked what percentage they believe should be in Marine Protected Areas.

**40%** (1,538,000 adults) think that **zero to 10 percent** of New Zealand’s ocean territory is Marine Protected areas.

* **23%** (885,000 adults) were not sure how much was in Marine Protected Areas**.**

**41%** (1,589,000 adults) think that **more than 20 percent** of New Zealand’s ocean territory **should** be in Marine Protected areas.

*Sample: n=1,049*

There are different groups who are more likely to think that Marine Protected Areas should be 20% or more of New Zealand’s ocean territory. These groups are:

* Aged 25-34 years **50%**
* Aged 45-54 years **51%**
* Females **49%.**

Labour and Te Pāti Māori voters are more likely to think that more than 20% of New Zealand’s ocean should be Marine Protected areas.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***What percentage do you believe should be in Marine Protected Areas?*** | **ALL** | **PARTY VOTE 2023** | | | | | |
| **ACT** | **Green Party** | **Labour Party** | **National Party** | **New Zealand First** | **Te Pāti Māori** |
| Zero to one percent | 3% | 9% | 1% | 1% | 2% | 6% | 4% |
| One to five percent | 7% | 12% | 5% | 3% | 10% | 15% | 0% |
| five to 10 percent | 10% | 17% | 10% | 7% | 16% | 13% | 10% |
| 10 to 15 percent | 12% | 6% | 11% | 10% | 16% | 5% | 2% |
| 15 to 20 percent | 14% | 17% | 15% | 19% | 13% | 10% | 12% |
| 20 to 30 percent | 11% | 9% | 16% | 13% | 10% | 15% | 15% |
| 30 to 50 percent | 12% | 9% | 14% | 17% | 10% | 11% | 16% |
| 50 percent or more | 18% | 7% | 19% | 19% | 11% | 11% | 37% |
| I am not sure | 14% | 12% | 9% | 11% | 13% | 14% | 3% |
| **20% or more** | **41%** | **26%** | **48%** | **49%** | **30%** | **37%** | **68%** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N (unweighted) | 1,049 | 85 | 159 | 253 | 293 | 70 | 48 |

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

## Should marine protection be expanded?

Overall, **81%** (3,142,000 adults think that marine protection should be expanded

* **14%** (522,000 adults) were unsure.

*Sample: n=1,049*

There are no significant differences across demographic groups who are more likely to think that marine protection should be expanded.

Among voters, Green and Labour Party voters are most likely to want marine protection expanded. Support for this is 70% or higher among parties which form the current coalition government.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Overall, do you believe marine protection should be expanded?*** | **ALL** | **PARTY VOTE 2023** | | | | | |
| **ACT** | **Green Party** | **Labour Party** | **National Party** | **New Zealand First** | **Te Pāti Māori** |
| Yes | 81% | 74% | 93% | 89% | 77% | 70% | 88% |
| No | 5% | 8% | 3% | 3% | 6% | 12% | 5% |
| Don't know | 14% | 18% | 4% | 8% | 17% | 17% | 7% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N (unweighted) | 1,049 | 85 | 159 | 253 | 293 | 70 | 48 |

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

**15%** of people with a personal income between $100k and $150k a year do not want marine protection to be expanded. This is significantly higher than **5%** of total sample.

**15%** of people with a household income above $200k also do not want marine protection expanded.

# New Zealand’s International Commitments

Respondents were shown the following information:

*In 2022, New Zealand joined countries around the world in signing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which sets out a range of targets to halt and reverse nature loss. This includes a commitment to protect 30 percent of the ocean in Marine Protected Areas by 2030 (known as ‘30 by 30’).*

**79%** (3,038,000 adults) said that New Zealand should be actively involved in global efforts to protect the ocean and honour this international commitment.

*Sample: n=1,049*

The groups more likely to believe that we should be actively involved in New Zealand’s international commitments are:

* Have personal income between $70k - $100k a year **85%**
* Māori **86%**
* Pasifika **89%.**

Green, Labour and Te Pāti Māori voters are more likely to want New Zealand to be involved in global efforts to protect the ocean.

Voters for the three coalition parties are less likely to want New Zealand to be actively involved.

* **26%** of ACT and **20%** of New Zealand First voters say New Zealand should not be actively involved although **62%** or more of voters for parties in the governing coalition think the country should be actively involved.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Should New Zealand be actively involved in global efforts to protect the ocean and honour this international commitment?*** | **ALL** | **PARTY VOTE 2023** | | | | | |
| **ACT** | **Green Party** | **Labour Party** | **National Party** | **New Zealand First** | **Te Pāti Māori** |
| Yes | 79% | 62% | 95% | 93% | 72% | 63% | 93% |
| No | 10% | 26% | 4% | 3% | 11% | 20% | 3% |
| Don't know | 12% | 11% | 1% | 4% | 17% | 16% | 4% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N (unweighted) | 1,049 | 85 | 159 | 253 | 293 | 70 | 48 |

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

# What should the Government do to protect marine environment?

Respondents were asked to select from a list the top actions they thought the Government should take to protect the marine environment.

The chart below shows the top 5 actions:

* **39%** (1,488,000 adults) think the Government *should take stronger action to reduce pollution from the land (e.g. chemical waste, agricultural run-off, sewage) entering the ocean*
* **37%** (1,426,000 adults) think they should *reduce the amount of plastic pollution that enters the ocean*
* **37%** (1,426,000 adults) think they should *create more Marine Protected Areas to protect species and habitats from activities like fishing or mining*.

*Sample: n=1,039*

The table below shows different groups who are significantly more likely to believe these are biggest threats to Aotearoa New Zealand’s marine environment.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Overall, what do you think are the top actions the Government should take to protect the marine environment?*** | **Total** | **Significantly more likely[[9]](#footnote-9)▲** | |
| Take stronger action to reduce pollution from the land (e.g. chemical waste, agricultural run-off, sewage) entering the ocean | 39% | 55+ years  Living in Northland | 45%  59% |
| Take action to reduce the amount of plastic pollution that enters the ocean | 37% | Household income $30k-$50k  Voted National in 2023  Voted New Zealand First in 2023 | 49%  44%  49% |
| Create more Marine Protected Areas to protect species and habitats from activities like fishing or mining | 37% | Voted Green Party in 2023 | 49% |
| Restrict commercial fishing methods such as bottom-trawling (dragging weighted nets along the seafloor) | 33% | 45-54 years  65-74 years  75+ years | 41%  43%  47% |
| Restrict seabed mining | 22% | 35-44 years  Household income $20k-$30k  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 30%  32%  33%  30%  39% |
| Roll out cameras on board all commercial fishing vessels in New Zealand so we have a clear idea of what is happening out at sea | 18% | 45-54 years  Voted National in 2023 | 26%  24% |
| Create new legislation for marine protection | 15% | 35-44 years  Voted Labour in 2023 | 33%  21% |
| Mitigate climate change to prevent further ocean warming and acidification | 15% | Māori  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 23%  40%  33% |
| Reform New Zealand's Quota Management System (the system which controls the amount of fish taken by commercial fishers) | 15% | Voted National in 2023 | 20% |
| Reduce fisheries bycatch (when other species like seabirds and dolphins are accidentally caught in fishing nets) | 13% | No significant differences |  |
| Take action to reduce fisheries by catch (when other species are caught accidentally in fishing nets) | 12% | Pasifika | 28% |
| Fund more research into our marine environment and the threats it faces | 11% | 25-34 years  Pasifika | 20%  26% |

# What priority should policies to protect the environment be given?

**71%** (2,729,000 adults) believe that policies to protect our marine environment should be given *top priority or more priority* than now.

* **23%** (874,000 adults) say it should be *top priority*
* **48%** (1,855,000 adults) say it should be given *more priority than now*.

**Top/More priority than now**

**71%**

*Sample: n=1,038*

The table below shows groups which are more likely to think the Government should give either *top priority* or *more priority than now* to policies to protect our marine environment.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***What priority do you think policies to protect our marine environment should be given by political parties?*** | **Total** | **Significantly more likely▲** | |
| Top priority | 23% | Personal income $30k-$50k  Household income less than $50k  Māori | 35%  29%  35% |
| More priority than now | 48% | 65-74 years  Household income $150k-$200k | 59%  65% |

Green and Labour Party voters are more likely to think policies should be given at least *top priority* or *more priority than now*.

National and ACT voters are more likely to think the priority should stay the *same as now*.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***What priority do you think policies to protect our marine environment should be given by political parties?*** | **ALL** | **PARTY VOTE 2023** | | | | | |
| **ACT** | **Green Party** | **Labour Party** | **National Party** | **New Zealand First** | **Te Pāti Māori** |
| Top priority | 23% | 17% | 32% | 30% | 17% | 16% | 33% |
| More priority than now | 48% | 37% | 57% | 57% | 44% | 43% | 61% |
| About the same priority as now | 22% | 40% | 7% | 10% | 35% | 32% | 1% |
| Less priority than now | 1% | 3% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 6% | 2% |
| No priority at all | 1% | 3% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% | 3% |
| Don't know | 6% | 0% | 2% | 2% | 3% | 2% | 0% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N (unweighted) | 1,038 | 84 | 159 | 252 | 291 | 68 | 45 |

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

# Current Government’s record on marine conservation and protection

Overall the current Government's record on marine conservation and protection is not highly rated.

**18%** (692,000 adults) rated the current Government's record on marine conservation and protection as *very strong/good*.

* **4%** (170,000 adults) said it was *very strong*
* **14%** (522,000 adults) said it was *good*.

**42%** (1,616,000 adults) rated the current Government's record on marine conservation and protection *poor/very weak*.

* **24%** (928,000 adults) said it was *poor*
* **18%** (688,000 adults) said it was *very weak*.

**Very strong/Good**

**18%**

**Poor/Very weak**

**42%**

*Sample: n=1,038*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***How would you rate the current Government's record on marine conservation and protection?*** | **Total** | **Significantly more likely▲** | |
| Very strong | 4% | Personal income $100k-$150k  Household income more than $200k | 14%  14% |
| Good | 14% | Males  Personal income more than $150k  Indian | 18%  27%  37% |
| Okay | 24% | No significant differences |  |
| Poor | 24% | Personal income $20k-$30k  Living in Otago | 35%  41% |
| Very weak | 18% | 45-54 years  Māori  Living in Canterbury | 25%  28%  26% |
| Don't know | 17% | 25-34 years | 26% |

Green, Labour and Te Pāti Māori voters are more likely to think the Government’s record is *very weak.*

**26%** of National Party voters say it is *good* and **33%** rated it as *okay*.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***How would you rate the current Government's record on marine conservation and protection?*** | **ALL** | **PARTY VOTE 2023** | | | | | |
| **ACT** | **Green Party** | **Labour Party** | **National Party** | **New Zealand First** | **Te Pāti Māori** |
| Very strong | 4% | 8% | 2% | 6% | 4% | 8% | 3% |
| Good | 14% | 20% | 3% | 4% | 26% | 16% | 4% |
| Okay | 24% | 27% | 12% | 19% | 33% | 28% | 12% |
| Poor | 24% | 14% | 21% | 34% | 19% | 27% | 30% |
| Very weak | 18% | 6% | 56% | 26% | 3% | 13% | 48% |
| Don't know | 17% | 25% | 6% | 12% | 16% | 8% | 4% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N (unweighted) | 1,038 | 84 | 159 | 252 | 291 | 68 | 45 |

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

# Feeling on how the current Government is managing oceans and marine life.

Overall, there is a feeling of concern and disappointment about how the current Government is managing oceans and marine life.

* **32%** (1,237,000 adults) are *concerned*
* **30%** (1,167,000 adults) are *disappointed*
* **22%** (862,0000 adults) are *frustrated*.

**19%** (723,000 adults) say they are *hopeful*.

*Sample: n=1,036*

Feelings of disappointment and frustration are highest among 35-44 year olds.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Which of these feelings do you have when you think about how the current government is managing oceans and marine life?*** | **ALL** | **AGE** | | | | | | |
| **18-24 years** | **25-34 years** | **35-44 years** | **45-54 years** | **55-64 years** | **65-74 years** | **75 years or over** |
| Concerned | 32% | 32% | 33% | 33% | 33% | 32% | 33% | 26% |
| Disappointed | 30% | 19% | 23% | 44% | 35% | 36% | 24% | 25% |
| Frustrated | 22% | 18% | 21% | 30% | 19% | 26% | 19% | 22% |
| Hopeful | 19% | 17% | 23% | 13% | 16% | 17% | 23% | 25% |
| Angry | 17% | 8% | 13% | 14% | 24% | 21% | 22% | 12% |
| Ambivalent | 10% | 5% | 9% | 13% | 10% | 8% | 7% | 15% |
| Pleased | 7% | 2% | 7% | 9% | 11% | 6% | 9% | 7% |
| Inspired | 5% | 16% | 8% | 4% | 3% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Proud | 4% | 9% | 7% | 2% | 3% | 2% | 3% | 1% |
| Excited | 3% | 6% | 8% | 3% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 0% |
| None of these | 13% | 24% | 22% | 16% | 7% | 9% | 4% | 7% |
| Something else | 3% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 6% | 9% | 5% | 1% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N (unweighted) | 1,036 | 106 | 192 | 194 | 167 | 163 | 115 | 99 |

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

Green and Labour Party voters are most likely to be concerned, disappointed and frustrated with the Current Government’s management of oceans and marine life. Te Pāti Māori voters are more likely to be angry.

**33%** of National Party voters are hopeful and also more likely to be pleased (**13%** vs total **7%**)**.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Which of these feelings do you have when you think about how the current government is managing oceans and marine life?*** | **ALL** | **PARTY VOTE 2023** | | | | | |
| **ACT** | **Green Party** | **Labour Party** | **National Party** | **New Zealand First** | **Te Pāti Māori** |
| Concerned | 32% | 15% | 55% | 39% | 21% | 31% | 45% |
| Disappointed | 30% | 21% | 48% | 42% | 17% | 35% | 57% |
| Frustrated | 22% | 10% | 54% | 35% | 13% | 15% | 31% |
| Hopeful | 19% | 24% | 6% | 11% | 33% | 12% | 4% |
| Angry | 17% | 4% | 56% | 25% | 5% | 9% | 43% |
| Ambivalent | 10% | 13% | 5% | 9% | 14% | 12% | 6% |
| Pleased | 7% | 12% | 3% | 4% | 13% | 13% | 2% |
| Inspired | 5% | 9% | 1% | 3% | 5% | 6% | 3% |
| Proud | 4% | 5% | 3% | 4% | 4% | 7% | 3% |
| Excited | 3% | 4% | 1% | 5% | 4% | 1% | 3% |
| None of these | 13% | 13% | 4% | 7% | 10% | 9% | 6% |
| Something else | 3% | 7% | 4% | 2% | 3% | 2% | 5% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N (unweighted) | 1,036 | 84 | 159 | 251 | 290 | 68 | 45 |

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

# Actions would you be most likely to take to encourage the Government to protect our ocean

At **47%** (1,805,000 adults) signing a petition is the top action people would take to encourage the Government to protect our ocean.

**29%** (1,117,000 adults) would *talk to family and friends*.

**27%** (1,024,000 adults) would *change their vote during a General election*.

*Sample: n=1,030*

The table below shows which actions different groups are more likely to take to encourage the Government to protect our ocean.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***What actions would you be most likely to take to encourage the Government to protect our ocean?*** | **Total** | **Significantly more likely▲** | |
| Sign a petition | 47% | Females  Personal income $20k-$30k  Māori  Living in Wellington  Living in Otago | 53%  58%  55%  58%  69% |
| Talk to your family and friends about the issue | 29% | Personal income $50k-$70k  Pasifika | 38%  45% |
| Change your vote during a General Election | 27% | 35-44 years  Māori  Living in Otago | 40%  37%  47% |
| Share content on social media | 23% | Household income $20k-$30k  Indian  Māori  Pasifika | 34%  46%  36%  48% |
| Donate to environmental groups or charities | 19% | 18-24 years  Females  Personal income $30k-$50k | 29%  23%  27% |
| Join a protest march | 16% | Māori  Living in Otago | 30%  38% |
| Write a letter to your MP or elected official | 15% | No significant differences |  |
| None of these | 19% | Males  Living in Manawatu/ Whanganui | 24%  32% |

Green and Te Pāti Māori voters are most likely to take action to encourage the Government to protect the ocean.

ACT and National voters are least likely to take any action.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***What actions would you be most likely to take to encourage the Government to protect our ocean?*** | **ALL** | **PARTY VOTE 2023** | | | | | |
| **ACT** | **Green Party** | **Labour Party** | **National Party** | **New Zealand First** | **Te Pāti Māori** |
| Sign a petition | 47% | 30% | 67% | 60% | 42% | 43% | 75% |
| Talk to your family and friends about the issue | 29% | 21% | 45% | 31% | 27% | 25% | 37% |
| Change your vote during a General Election | 27% | 18% | 36% | 32% | 14% | 25% | 36% |
| Share content on social media | 23% | 12% | 32% | 28% | 14% | 17% | 52% |
| Donate to environmental groups or charities | 19% | 12% | 36% | 25% | 14% | 6% | 35% |
| Join a protest march | 16% | 5% | 43% | 26% | 6% | 16% | 39% |
| Write a letter to your MP or elected official | 15% | 8% | 29% | 19% | 13% | 7% | 39% |
| None of these | 19% | 35% | 6% | 7% | 28% | 24% | 4% |
| Something else | 3% | 3% | 6% | 1% | 2% | 4% | 2% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N (unweighted) | 1,030 | 82 | 159 | 251 | 289 | 66 | 44 |

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

# Actions Government should prioritise

Respondents were asked what priority, if any, the Government should give to a list of environmental actions.

The top three environmental actions that should be a *high priority* are:

* *Reducing plastic waste* – **62%** (2,393,000 adults) said it should be a *high priority*
* *Protecting New Zealand’s threatened species from going extinct and helping species to recover* – **59%** (2,277,000 adults)
* *Protecting the health of our ocean* – **58%** (2,242,000 adults).

*Total Sample*

The table below shows the different groups who are more likely to think the Government should give the actions *high priority*.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***What priority, if any, should the Government give these environmental actions?*** | **High Priority** | **Significantly more likely▲** | |
| Reducing plastic waste | 62% | 65-74 years  Māori  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 74%  70%  70%  81% |
| Protecting New Zealand’s threatened species from going extinct and helping species to recover | 59% | 45-54 years  Personal income $30k-$50k  Household income $30k-$50k  Māori  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 71%  71%  70%  74%  71%  66%  87% |
| Protecting the health of our ocean | 58% | 45-54 years  Personal income $30k-$50k  Household income $30k-$50k  Māori  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 72%  77%  71%  73%  81%  70%  83% |
| Improving the quality of our freshwater habitats (e.g. lakes and rivers) | 57% | 45-54 years  Females  Personal income $30k-$50k  Household income $30k-$50k  Māori  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 71%  63%  69%  68%  75%  77%  69%  79% |
| Tackling pest incursions and biosecurity threats | 53% | 45-54 years  55-64 years  65-74 years  Māori  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023  Living in Wellington | 67%  63%  69%  70%  64%  73%  66% |
| Tackling climate change through reducing carbon emissions | 43% | 45-54 years  Personal income $30k-$50k  Indian  Māori  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 52%  55%  63%  60%  81%  64%  70% |
| ***What priority, if any, should the Government give these environmental actions?*** | **High Priority** | **Significantly more likely▲** |  |
| Improving our resilience to the climate change already happening | 42% | 45-54 years  Personal income $30k-$50k  Indian  Māori  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023  Living in Otago | 51%  51%  62%  58%  70%  59%  64%  60% |
| Improving soil health | 41% | 45-54 years  Personal income $30k-$50k  Māori  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023  Living in Waikato/ Coromandel | 55%  52%  55%  56%  49%  61%  53% |
| Improving air quality | 40% | 45-54 years  Personal income $30k-$50k  Māori  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 53%  54%  59%  50%  56%  58% |

# Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary

Respondents were shown the following information.

*In March 2024 the Government announced it would scrap the proposed Kermadec Rangitāhua Ocean Sanctuary - a large Marine Protected Area around 1,000 kilometres north-east of New Zealand.*

*Some argue having a protected area here would allow our country to protect our most northern ocean scape and would safeguard one of the last remaining pristine places on the planet, protecting whales, dolphins, turtles and other sea life. It would also see around 15% of New Zealand’s Exclusive Economic Zone protected, bringing the country closer to its target of 30% protection by 2030.*

*Others argue it would mean that no one would be able to develop commercial fishing or seabed mining in the Sanctuary now or in the future, removing potential economic benefits.*

**71%** (2,911, 000 adults) *support[[10]](#footnote-10)* setting up Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary.

* **40%** (1,562,000 adults) strongly support it.

**Total support**

**71%**

*Sample: n=1,025*

The people more likely to *strongly support* setting up a Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary are:

* Aged 55+ years - **48%**
* Have personal income between $70k - $100k - **50%**
* Māori – **54%.**

**32%** of people living in Auckland *strongly support* a Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary, which is significantly lower than a total of **40%.**

Biggest support for setting up a Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary comes from Green, Labour Party and Te Pāti Māori voters.

**70%** of National Party voters support a sanctuary, with **27%** *strongly supporting* and **43%** *supporting*.

Although **65%** of ACT voters support the sanctuary, the highest opposition to it is among ACT voters: **20%** *strongly opposing/opposing* a sanctuary.This is significantly higher than **8%** of total sample.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Do you support or oppose setting up a Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary?*** | **ALL** | **PARTY VOTE 2023** | | | | | |
| **ACT** | **Green Party** | **Labour Party** | **National Party** | **New Zealand First** | **Te Pāti Māori** |
| Strongly support | 40% | 38% | 74% | 51% | 27% | 31% | 73% |
| Support | 35% | 27% | 18% | 36% | 43% | 45% | 15% |
| Oppose | 5% | 16% | 3% | 3% | 8% | 3% | 1% |
| Strongly oppose | 2% | 4% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 5% | 7% |
| I really don't know | 17% | 15% | 5% | 9% | 21% | 16% | 4% |
| Strongly support/Support | 75% | 65% | 92% | 87% | 70% | 76% | 88% |
| Strongly oppose/Oppose | 8% | 20% | 4% | 5% | 10% | 8% | 8% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N (unweighted) | 1,025 | 81 | 159 | 250 | 287 | 66 | 44 |

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

# Organisations who advocate for the protection of our marine environment

Respondents were shown a list of organisations and asked which they most associate with advocating for protection of our marine environment.

*Greenpeace Aotearoa* is recognised by **41%** (1,565,000 adults) as an advocate.

The *World Wide Fund for Nature New Zealand (WWF-New Zealand)* is recognised by **20%** (761,000 adults).

*Sample: n=1,022*

The table below shows people who are more likely to associate different environmental associations with advocating for the protection of our marine environment.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Which non-governmental environmental organisations in New Zealand do you most associate with advocating for the protection of our marine environment?*** | **Total Sample** | **Significantly more likely▲** | |
| Greenpeace Aotearoa | 41% | 35-44 years  45-54 years  Females  Māori  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 49%  51%  48%  50%  70%  61%  63% |
| Forest & Bird | 26% | 75+ years  Personal income $30k-$50k  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023 | 41%  39%  38%  34% |
| Sea Shepherd New Zealand | 25% | 45-54 years  Personal income $20k-$30k  Voted Green Party in 2023  Voted Labour Party in 2023 | 33%  33%  44%  32% |
| The World Wide Fund for Nature New Zealand (WWF-New Zealand) | 20% | 75+ years  Personal income $30k-$50k  Voted Green Party in 2023 | 34%  28%  32% |
| Sustainable Coastlines | 16% | 45-54 years | 25% |
| Our Seas our Future | 15% | Māori  Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 | 25%  29% |
| Live Ocean Foundation | 12% | 45-54 years  Asian  Māori | 22%  22%  20% |
| LegaSea | 11% | Males | 15% |
| The Environmental Defence Society | 8% | No significant differences |  |
| The Nature Conservancy | 8% | 18-24 years  Māori | 16%  14% |
| Blue Cradle | 4% | No significant differences |  |
| None of these | 23% | 18-24 years  Personal income $150k +  Household income $200k +  Voted ACT in 2023 | 49%  45%  35%  36% |

# Appendix – Methodology and Sample

1,049 members from Horizon Research’s online panels and a third-party research panel, representing the New Zealand population 18+, responded to the survey between 15th and 21st October.

The sample was weighted on age, gender, ethnicity, personal income, region and party vote at the 2023 general election to reflect the New Zealand population.

The survey has a maximum margin of error, at a 95% confidence level of ±3% overall.

**Contact**

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1. All population estimates based on Stats NZ Census 2023 data. Adults aged 18+ = 3,865,235. All numbers rounded to nearest thousand. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Very important/Important [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Very concerned/concerned [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Strongly support/support [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Very important/Important [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In this report statistical significance is only shown for sample sizes of 30 or more. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Very concerned/concerned [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Demographic groups with sample sizes below 30 are not included in significance tables in this report. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Demographic groups with sample sizes below 30 are not included in significance tables in this report. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Strongly support/support [↑](#footnote-ref-10)