

Youth forum on Green Paper consultation on the 8th June 2007, World Ocean Day, NATIONAL MARINE AQUARIUM, PLYMOUTH

On the 8th of June, some 14 year-old pupils from Saltash.net Community School, were involved in an Oceans Workshop, supported by the European Commission as part of a Green Paper consultation process. The pupils spent an hour with Paul COX, the Aquarium Manager, discussing ocean issues. The session began with the pupils sharing their views on the oceans, followed by a presentation about Climate Change in the Arctic and an introduction to the EU Green Paper – “Towards a Future Maritime Policy for the EU”. The session ended with a debate amongst the pupils about the policy, the value of political action and the role of the individual in tackling environmental issues.

Our Oceans Summary of Workshop Discussion



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The pupils discussed in small groups the following questions:

- **What does the sea mean to you?**
- **In what ways does the sea affect your life?**
- **How might the sea be involved in your future?**



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CLIMATE AND
OCEANS PROJECT



Plymouth Marine Sciences Partnership

The sea means...

Fun, food and fish!

Many of the responses were based around leisure; swimming, fishing, sailing, beach parties, diving, holidays and sandcastles.

Some of the pupils also brought in the importance of the sea as a provider of food (and water?)

Only one group discussed the importance of marine life (outside of what you could eat). When prompted they also appreciated the importance of the sea for transport and a variety of employment. Several of the pupils' parents had jobs related directly or indirectly to the sea.

The sea affects my life...

The sea can be a threat when it floods, when tsunamis hit and when we drown. We take things from the sea (fish) and we add things to it ("it's where our waste goes"). It also provides a place to play, to look at and to take holidays. It is a place to meet girls (especially surfers).

The sea and my future...

Changes in the sea – freezing over, flooding, sea level rise – could affect my life and the place that I live. I might wish to take up a career that relies on the sea (careers suggested included; Marine Biologist, Deep Sea Diver, Pro Golfer!, Pro Surfer, fisherman, water sports instructor, tourism or Navy). I will want to take my family on days out. The sea might be the way that I travel from place to place.

Following this discussion, the pupils were given presentations on the impacts of climate change in the Arctic and were introduced to the Green Paper – *Towards a Future Maritime Policy for the Union*. As a group they discussed their concerns about climate change and what they, as individuals, could do about it.

The pupils listed actions that each person could take – switching off computers and lights, turning down the heating, walking and cycling, using green electricity, recycling.

The discussion was then led towards other individual actions – using your power as a consumer and customer to influence retailers and exercising your citizens rights from writing to MP's to contributing to the Green Paper consultation.

Overall pupils showed an interest in engaging with the issues and had strong opinions – particularly about climate change and environmental issues. However they expressed the view that there was little that they could do to influence other countries – particularly America and China – and some felt that nobody would listen to them as they "were only kids".

They were encouraged to go online to register their views on the website www.ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs and to continue their discussion when they returned to school.