

Turn your heart blue this Valentine's, say ocean scientists

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For the first time, a global community of marine scientists is asking you to make space in your heart for the oceans this Valentine's week. On February 12, members of The Society for Conservation Biology Marine Section (SCB Marine Section) will share their love of the oceans with the public on the inaugural [Heart the Oceans](#) Day. By attending locally organized events like film-screenings and by following the hashtag #HeartTheOceans on social media, the Society's members hope you will join them in a mass outpouring of affection for the ocean.

In addition to events SCB Marine Section members are organizing, they are inviting you, as a conservation-minded institution, retailer, or individual to celebrate Heart the Oceans Day by organizing your own local event to promote [ocean](#) awareness. You can find details of events already organized, and post details of your own event, by using the #HeartTheOceans tag on Facebook and Twitter. Suggested events include social activities such as a beach cleanup, a visit to a local aquarium or marine research facility, presentations to school children or local youth groups, or having a romantic responsibly sourced seafood dinner with your significant other. The SCB Marine Section hopes that fun, engaging events will inspire an even greater love of the oceans in the general public that will support [marine conservation](#) efforts.

"It is imperative that people care about protecting and conserving our oceans," said event organizer, Matt Tietbohl. "Although oceans are out of site for many people, they should never be out of mind." Oceans play a vital role in all societies, coastal and inland. They help to regulate

Earth's climate, and many marine species are commercially and medically valuable.

Heart the Oceans Day is an opportunity for those who understand the value of the oceans to remind us all of marine importance. Australian marine conservationist, Toni Mizerek plans to honor the day with art. She has asked friends, family, and [social media](#) contacts to produce an ocean-themed work of art on February 12th. She downloaded pictures for children and adults to color and has garnered interest from a wide range of participants. "It doesn't matter where you are geographically," Mizerek said, "art is everywhere. This is an easy way to reach out to many people and particularly those who may not be thinking about the oceans often."

The SCB Marine Section hopes that 'I Heart the Oceans' events will empower individuals to share and discuss why they love the oceans, and will promote awareness of marine conservation issues. "We want to begin a conversation," said Tietbohl, "and keep the oceans in the mind of citizens throughout the world."

While awareness is the main focus of Heart the Ocean Day, the SCB Marine Section hopes that through wide-spread participation in developed countries, some events will raise funds to support important ocean conservation research in developing countries and small island states.

The SCB Marine Section encourages event organizers, where appropriate, to raise funds to support marine research in developing countries. This could be done by charging \$2 for access to a movie screening or for a tour of marine facilities. 100 percent of the funds raised will go toward supporting conservation initiatives associated with developing countries administered by the Society for Conservation Biology Marine Section. Fundraising is voluntary and at the discretion of

each event host.

Overall, the SCB Marine Section wants to get the public engaged in caring about the oceans this Valentine's season. "The more people that get involved and are aware of the oceans," Mizerek said, "even by something as simple as a drawing or coloring, the more we are reminded about what we cherish and why."

'Heart the Oceans' organizers couldn't agree more. "People tend only to act if they feel some kind of emotion," said Tietbohl. "Love is a strong emotion, and intense feeling is one way to get people excited and interested in marine conservation. By bringing citizens together with scientists, or other ocean users (and lovers), we hope to show and share this passion with people."

Provided by Society for Conservation Biology Marine Section

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