

## Aquarium Conservation Partnership Ocean and Freshwater Plastic Pollution Initiative Consumer Campaign Overview

### About this Document

The Aquarium Conservation Partnership (ACP) was created to inform, guide and coordinate action by aquariums to increase our collective ocean and freshwater conservation impact. The primary goal of the ACP is to reduce the sources of ocean and freshwater plastic pollution, and we are implementing consumer, business, and policy strategies to accomplish this goal. This document is focused on the consumer campaign. It includes the goals and components of the campaign, main messages and calls to action, and other campaign-related information. For more information about the ACP and the consumer campaign, please contact Kim McIntyre, ACP Coordinator, at [kmcintyre@mbayaq.org](mailto:kmcintyre@mbayaq.org).

**Please note:** This document provides an overview of the consumer campaign. For more information on the components of the consumer campaign, and other background materials on the ACP, please see the following documents posted on the ACP google drive at:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B9nLf7ZIYGUWVG1qWFprczFENTA>

<b>ACP Consumer Campaign Overview</b>	<i>This document: Overview of the major components of the ACP Consumer Campaign.</i>
<b>ACP Consumer Campaign Brief</b>	<i>More detailed information about the components of the ACP Consumer Campaign.</i>
<b>ACP Consumer Campaign Copy Deck</b>	<i>Key messages and copy including press releases, social media posts, etc. to be used by partner communications teams</i>
<b>ACP Ocean &amp; Freshwater Plastic Pollution Background Report</b>	<i>Statistics about the plastic pollution problem and solutions, as well as an explanation of the ACP approach.</i>
<b>ACP Two-Pager</b>	<i>Overview of the ACP and our priority goals, and a list of ACP members.</i>
<b>ACP Conservation Action Agenda 2016-2017</b>	<i>Original ACP agenda that includes priority goals, activities, and outcomes.</i>
<b>ACP Charter</b>	<i>Original ACP charter that includes roles and responsibilities of members and operating rules.</i>
<b>ACP Business Commitment</b>	<i>Commitment to reduce and eliminate single-use plastic at ACP aquariums to be announced at launch of consumer campaign.</i>
<b>ACP Consumer Campaign Toolkit</b>	<i>This toolkit will include: a campaign style guide, campaign messaging, email copy &amp; design, social media copy &amp; design, merchandise asset design, and a reporting framework</i>

### Overarching Consumer Campaign Goals and Strategies

The goals of the consumer campaign are to:

1. Reduce the use of single-use plastic, a major source of aquatic plastic pollution.

2. Increase consumer demand for alternatives to single-use plastic, which will help drive change in the marketplace to meet this demand.
3. Enhance the reputation of aquariums as leaders in ocean and freshwater conservation.

While there are other plastic-focused consumer campaigns, the ACP aims to test the theory that aquariums add unique value in broadening and accelerating consumer engagement in solutions. This value comes from our science-based authority on ocean conservation, and the reach we have with our tens of millions of audience members.

The campaign will include two main components:

1. Earned media strategy around a public commitment by aquariums to reduce and eliminate single-use plastic from our food and retail operations.
2. A digital strategy produced by Blue State Digital and implemented by ACP aquariums.

The campaign will run from Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup> until early September (date TBD), during which time ACP will work with aquariums to help ensure that the campaign is implemented in a coordinated and consistent way. Aquariums will be asked to track and report on metrics of success, and at the conclusion of the campaign, ACP will evaluate outcomes and use this information as the basis for future efforts.

## Components of the Consumer Campaign

### Communication Vehicles

The consumer campaign will include two main communication vehicles:

1. *Owned*: Including a campaign microsite and ACP member aquarium websites, e-newsletters, social media, and onsite exhibits.
2. *Earned*: Including press releases and PSAs.

The ACP does not have a budget for paid media. However, ACP member aquariums may implement their own paid media campaigns using ACP creative assets.

### Main Messages

The tagline for the consumer campaign is “*In Our Hands*”, meaning that the health of the ocean, rivers and lakes—and all aquatic animals—is *in our hands*. By taking individual action on a collective basis (thus “our” not “your”), consumers and aquariums can advance solutions to the plastic pollution problem.

Please use the following messages for the consumer campaign:

- The health of our ocean, rivers and lakes—and the aquatic animals we care love—is *in our hands*.

- Plastic pollution is impacting the health of our ocean, rivers, and lakes—and the aquatic animals we love— at an increasing rate.
- Consumers have the power to make decisions to help reduce ocean and freshwater plastic pollution.
- A key decision consumers can make every day is to refuse single-use plastic and choose alternatives instead.
- Aquariums are joining you in taking action by making a commitment to reduce single-use plastic in our institutions.
- Aquariums are also working to advance solutions through research, education, and inspiring our visitors to care about our ocean, rivers and lakes.

See Appendix 1 for science-based statistics that can also be incorporated into campaign messaging.

### **Calls to Action**

Please use the following calls to action with the campaign. These actions are consistent with the commitment ACP aquariums will make at the campaign launch.

1. Choose reusables instead of single-use plastic.
2. Skip the straw.
3. Bring your reusable bag.

We may add additional calls to action during the campaign. For example, we may ask our audience members to sign an online pledge or Instagram pictures of themselves with reusable bags and bottles to #inourhands #aquarium, or something similar. We will update you on these activities as we move forward.

### **Performance Measures**

BSD will provide a reporting framework with the campaign toolkit, and will include reporting best practices (like tracking and sourcing for Google Analytics) and recommended digital KPIs across channels. Along with tracking for your individual institution, we request that you share this information with the ACP (in a method TBD) to see how the coordinated campaign performed as a whole.

## Appendix 1. Science-based statistics on the problem of aquatic plastic pollution that can be incorporated into messages for the ACP consumer campaign.

These and other statistics about the plastic pollution problem and solutions can also be found in the document, ***ACP Ocean & Freshwater Plastic Pollution Background Report***.

### Scale of the problem.

- Plastic production has grown from 15 million tons in 1964 to 322 million tons in 2015.<sup>1</sup>
- The U.S. is 20th on the list of ocean plastic pollution generating countries; we produce 44 to 121 thousand tons a year.<sup>2</sup>
- U.S. consumers generate more plastic waste per person than any other top plastic polluting country<sup>3</sup> – each person consumes over 220 pounds of plastic each year on average.<sup>4</sup>
- Approximately 8.8 million tons of plastic enters the ocean each year<sup>5</sup>– equivalent to one dump truck full of plastic per minute.<sup>6</sup>
- Plastic debris can now be found in almost every marine habitat on Earth – from polar sea ice to major ocean gyres to the bottom of the deepest ocean trench.<sup>7</sup>
- If current practices continue, plastic input into the ocean is expected to double by 2025.<sup>8</sup>
- Plastic debris in lakes and rivers has been found to be as high, or higher, than in oceanic gyres.<sup>9</sup>
- About 22 million pounds of plastic flows into the Great Lakes each year<sup>10</sup>– equivalent to 100 Olympic-sized pools full of plastic bottles dumped into the lake every year.<sup>11</sup>

### Impact on aquatic animals.

- Nearly 700 species of marine animals are known to be impacted by marine debris, most of which is plastic.<sup>12</sup>
- Plastic debris accounts for 92 percent of encounters between marine animals and debris.<sup>13</sup>
- All known species of sea turtle, 54 percent of all marine mammal species, and 56 percent of all seabird species have been affected by entanglement (mostly by plastic rope and netting) or

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<sup>1</sup> *The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the Future of Plastics*, World Economic Forum, 2016, [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_The\\_New\\_Plastics\\_Economy.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_New_Plastics_Economy.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> J.R. Jambeck, R. Geyer, C. Wilcox, T.R. Siegler, M. Perryman, A. Andrady, R. Narayan, and K.L. Law, *Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean*, *Science*, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1260352>

<sup>3</sup> Jambeck et al.

<sup>4</sup> Worldwatch Institute, *Global Plastic Production Rises, Recycling Lags*, 2015. <http://www.worldwatch.org/global-plastic-production-rises-recycling-lags-0>

<sup>5</sup> J.R. Jambeck, R. Geyer, C. Wilcox, T.R. Siegler, M. Perryman, A. Andrady, R. Narayan, and K.L. Law, *Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean*, *Science*, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1260352> and World Economic Forum 2016

<sup>6</sup> World Economic Forum 2016

<sup>7</sup> A. Lusher, *Microplastics in the marine environment: distribution, interactions and effects*, *Marine Anthropogenic Litter*, 2015. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-16510-3\\_10](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-16510-3_10)

<sup>8</sup> Jambeck et al.

<sup>9</sup> A.K. Baldwin, S.R. Corsi, S.A. Mason, *Plastic Debris in 29 Great Lakes Tributaries: Relations to Watershed Attributes and Hydrology*, *Env. Sci. Tech.*, 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.6b02917>

<sup>10</sup> A.G.J. Driedger, H.H. Durr, K. Mitchell, P.V. Cappellan, *Plastic debris in the Laurentian Great Lakes: A review*, *J. Great Lakes Res*, 2015. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jglr.2014.12.020>

<sup>11</sup> Hoffman and Hittinger 2017

<sup>12</sup> S.C. Gall, R.C. Thompson, *The impact of debris on marine life*, *Mar. Pollut. Bull.*, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbil.2014.12.041>.

<sup>13</sup> Gall and Thompson

ingestion (mostly by plastic fragments and microplastic) of marine debris, and the frequency of encounters have increased over time.<sup>14</sup>

- 52 percent of sea turtle species worldwide have ingested plastic.<sup>15</sup>
- It's estimated that over 99 percent of all seabird species—and over 90 percent of individual seabirds—will have ingested plastic by 2050.<sup>16</sup>
- At least 26 species of cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) have been documented to ingest plastic debris.<sup>17</sup>
- Entanglement impacts have included drowning, suffocations, and lacerations, while ingestion has led to starvation due to gut obstruction, and reduced fitness.<sup>18</sup>

### Impact on fish, the aquatic food web, and human health.

- The number of fish species found to be affected by marine debris has almost doubled since 1997.<sup>19</sup>
- A further consequence of ingestion is that the chemical constituents of plastic, as well as the toxins they adsorb in the aquatic environment, can travel into the bodies of marine organisms upon consumption<sup>20</sup> where they may concentrate and climb the food chain, ultimately into humans.<sup>21</sup>
- While many experts believe that plastic in seafood does not currently represent a pressing human health concern,<sup>22</sup> a 2015 study found plastics of different concentrations and types in fish sold for human consumption,<sup>23</sup> and plastic has also been found in oysters and mussels.<sup>24</sup>
- As plastic pollution continues to increase, so does the need for more research on the impacts of plastic on aquatic populations and ecosystems, as well as human health.

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<sup>14</sup> Gall and Thompson

<sup>15</sup> Q. Schuyler, B.D. Hardesty, C. Wilcox, K. Townsend, *Global analysis of anthropogenic debris ingestion by sea turtles*, *Cons. Biol.*, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/cobi.12126>

<sup>16</sup> C. Wilcox, E. van Sebille, B.D. Hardesty, *Threat of plastic pollution to seabirds is global, pervasive, and increasing*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.*, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1502108112>

<sup>17</sup> R.W. Baird, and S.K. Hooker, *Ingestion of plastic and unusual prey by a juvenile harbour porpoise*, *Mar. Pollut. Bull.*, 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Gall and Thompson

<sup>19</sup> Gall and Thompson

<sup>20</sup> 1. C.M. Rochman et al. *Ingested plastic transfers hazardous chemicals to fish and induces hepatic stress*, *Sci Rep.*, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/srep03263>. 2. M.A. Browne et al. *Microplastic moves pollutants and additives to worms, reducing functions linked to health and biodiversity*, *Curr Biol*, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2013.10.012>. 3. E.M. Chua et al. *Assimilation of polybrominated diphenyl ethers from microplastics by the marine amphipod, *Allorchestes compressa**, *Environ Sci Technol*, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1021/es405717z>. 4. K. Tanaka et al. *Accumulation of plastic-derived chemicals in tissues of seabirds ingesting marine plastics*, *Mar Pollut Bull*, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2012.12.010>. 5. Besseling E, et al. *Effects of microplastic on fitness and PCB bioaccumulation by the lugworm *Arenicola marina* (L.)*, *Environ Sci Technol*, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1021/es302763x> 6. Thompson RC, et al. *Lost at sea: where is all the plastic?* *Science*, 2004, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.1094559>

<sup>21</sup> reference

<sup>22</sup> UNEP (2016). *Marine plastic debris and microplastics – Global lessons and research to inspire action and guide policy change*. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi. <https://wedocs.unep.org/rest/bitstreams/11700/retrieve>

<sup>23</sup> C. Rochman et al., *Anthropogenic debris in seafood: Plastic debris and fibers from textiles in fish and bivalves sold for human consumption*, *Sci. Reports*, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/srep14340>

<sup>24</sup> S.L. Wright, R.C. Thompson, T.S. Galloway, *The physical impacts of microplastics on marine organisms: A review*, *Env. Pollut.*, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2013.02.031>