

# LIVE OCEAN BAROMETER 23

HOW NEW ZEALANDERS VALUE  
AND PERCEIVE THE OCEAN

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This report summarises the findings of a survey conducted by Horizon Research's HorizonPoll.

Fieldwork done February 2023  
n = 1,189 New Zealanders\*.

Nationally representative 18+  
New Zealand population.

Horizon Research Māori Panel and  
a third-party online research panel  
used for source diversity,

Online survey  
Maximum margin of error, at a 95%  
confidence level of  $\pm 2.8\%$  overall.

# NEW ZEALAND'S VOICE ON THE OCEAN



95%

The ocean is important to me

77%

Concerned about the loss of biodiversity



One of the largest ocean spaces on the planet



92%

It's important to protect the health of the ocean and what it produces



67%

of recreational fishers think marine protection should be expanded in New Zealand



70%

Concerned about the health of New Zealand's ocean

77%

The ocean should be protected & managed for climate response

77%

Marine protection should be expanded

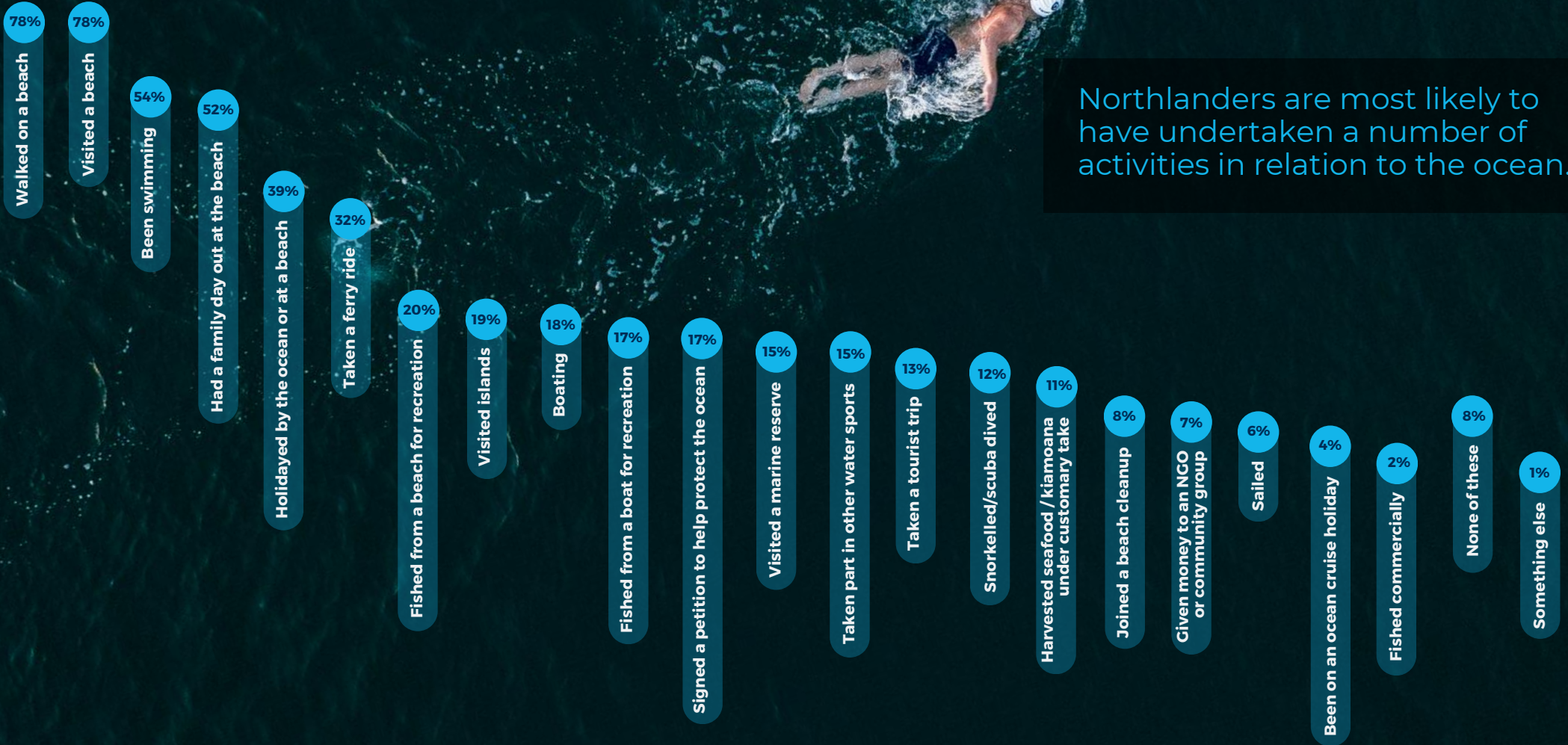


A diver in a blue wetsuit and red mask is swimming horizontally in the upper left quadrant of the frame. The background is a deep blue ocean filled with a large school of small, silvery fish. The lighting is dramatic, with a bright light source from the top left creating a shimmering effect on the water and the diver's gear.

# THE OCEAN AND US



# WHICH OF THESE OCEAN-RELATED ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU DONE IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, IF ANY?





# PERSONALLY, HOW IMPORTANT IS THE OCEAN TO YOU?

# 95%

of respondents said the ocean was important to them.

The equivalent of around

# 3.8m


New Zealand adults.

More than half of respondents, **54%** said that the ocean is “**very important**” to them.

Respondents have very strong feelings towards the ocean with **51%** saying that it is **part of their identity** as a New Zealander.

Overall, the ocean elicits positive feelings with people saying it made them **feel calm** (41%), **happier** (30%) and **healthier** (27%).






Q: In your own words, can you please tell us what you love about our ocean, if anything, and why?

“TO ME THE OCEAN IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE ON THIS PLANET, THE CREATURES IN IT ARE ALL AMAZING, AND UNIQUE - IRREPLACEABLE.”

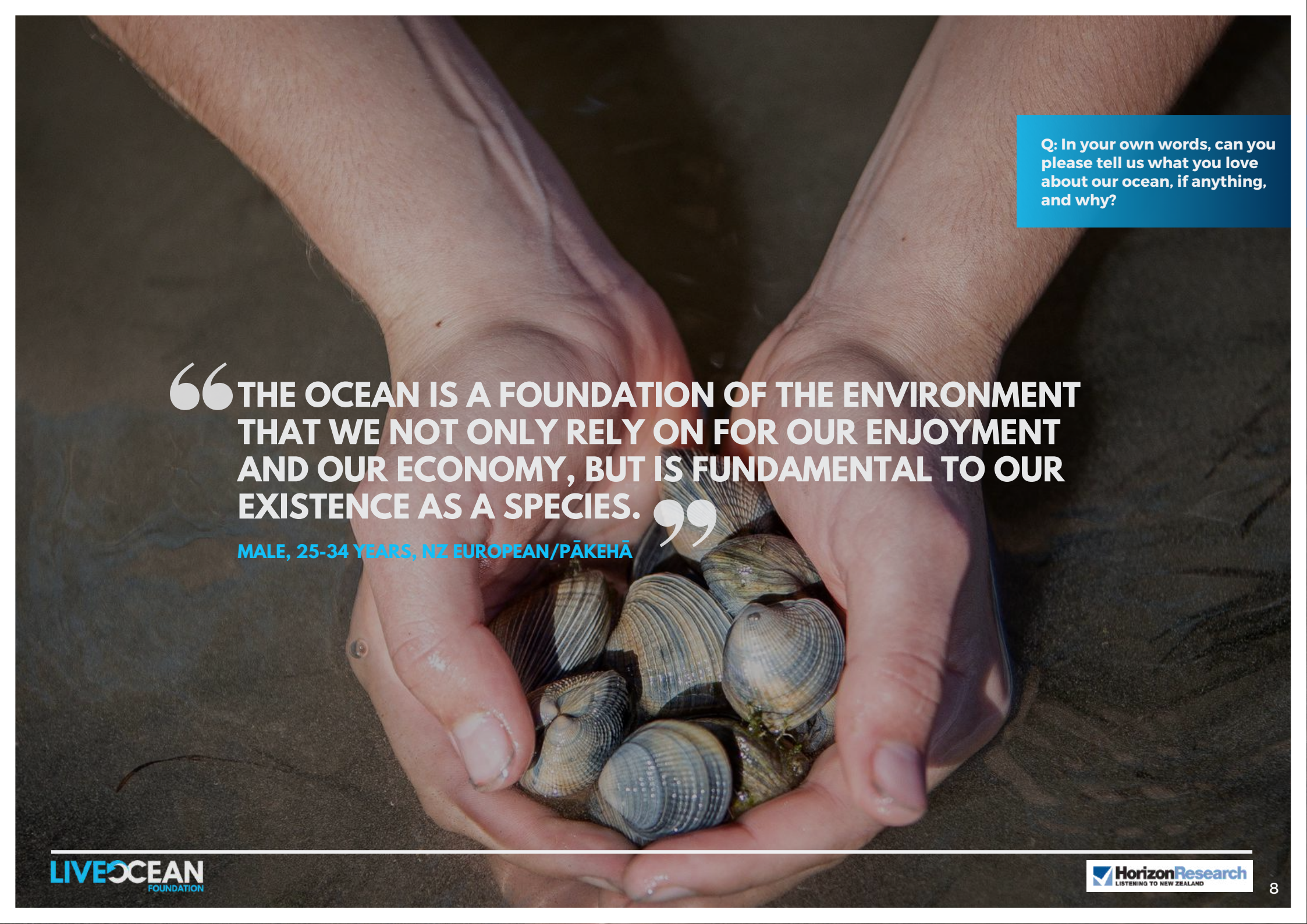
FEMALE, 75 YEARS OR OVER, NZ EUROPEAN/PĀKEHĀ





# VALUE AND CONCERN ABOUT THE OCEAN





Q: In your own words, can you please tell us what you love about our ocean, if anything, and why?

“THE OCEAN IS A FOUNDATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT THAT WE NOT ONLY RELY ON FOR OUR ENJOYMENT AND OUR ECONOMY, BUT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR EXISTENCE AS A SPECIES.”

MALE, 25-34 YEARS, NZ EUROPEAN/PĀKEHĀ



# ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE HEALTH OF NEW ZEALAND'S OCEAN?

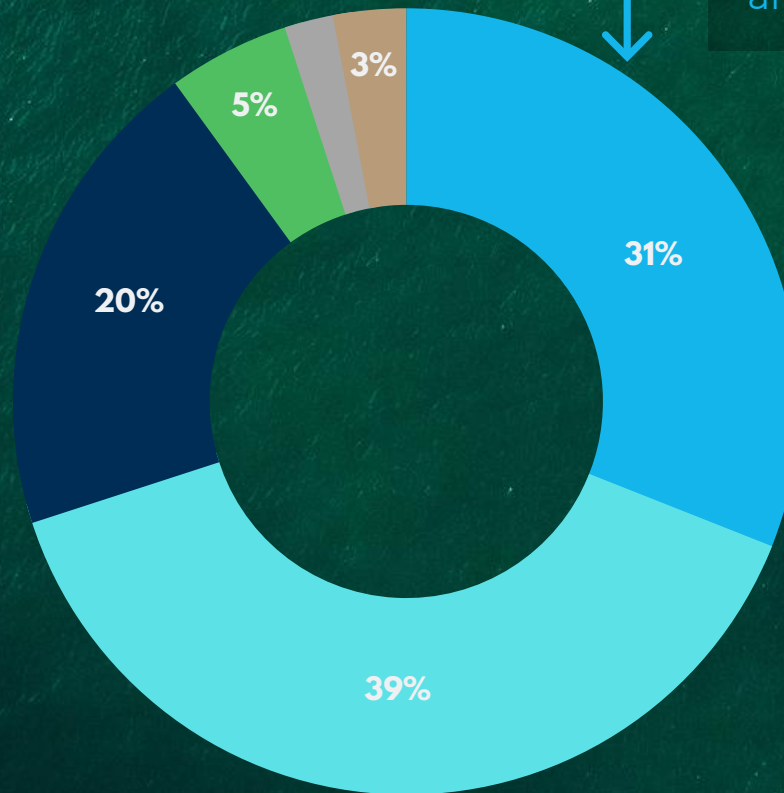
# 70%

of New Zealanders are concerned about the health of the ocean.

That's the equivalent of approximately

# 2.7m

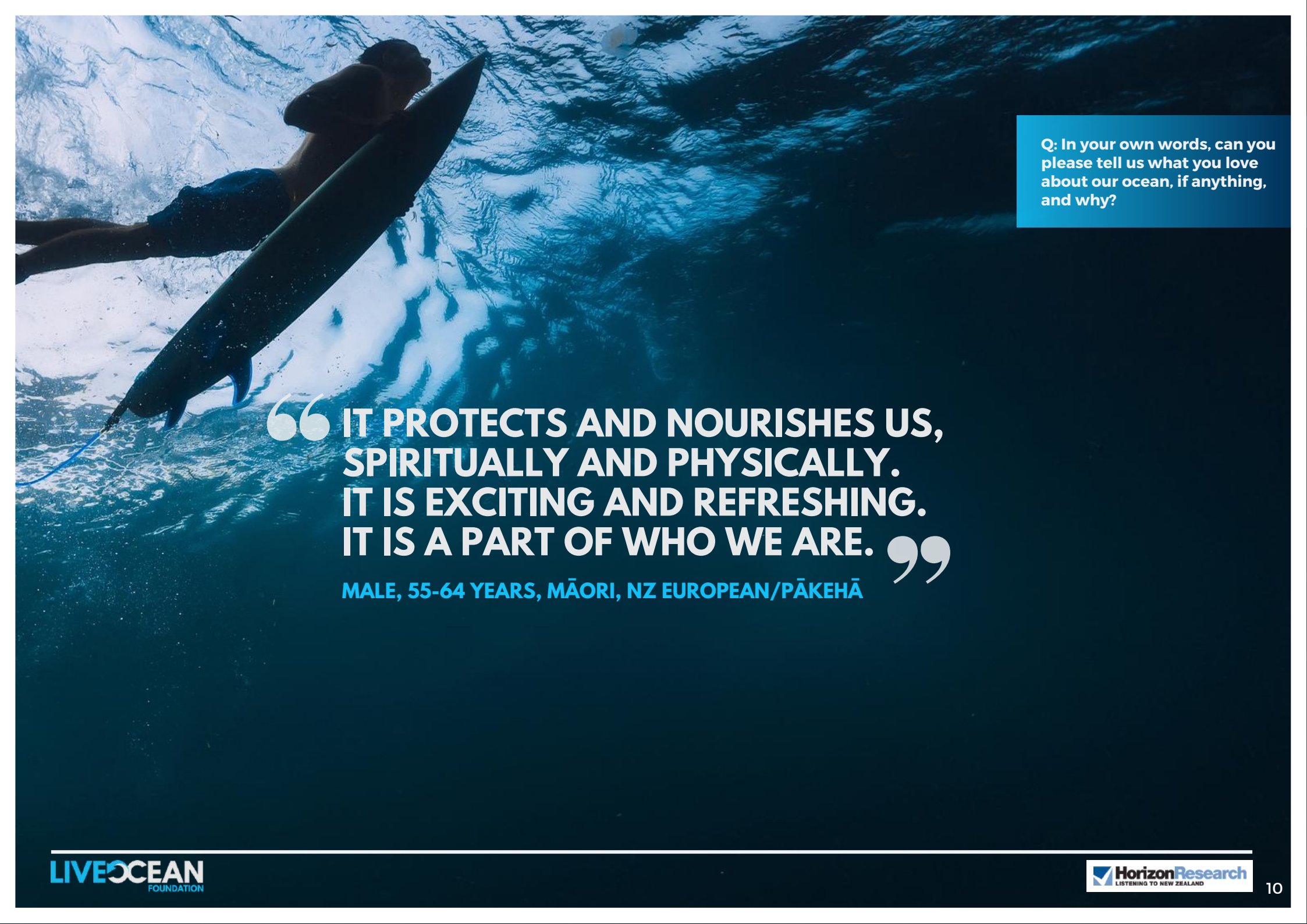
New Zealand adults.



Nearly a third (31%) of respondents said they are "very concerned" about the health of New Zealand's ocean. This is the equivalent of around 1.2 million adults





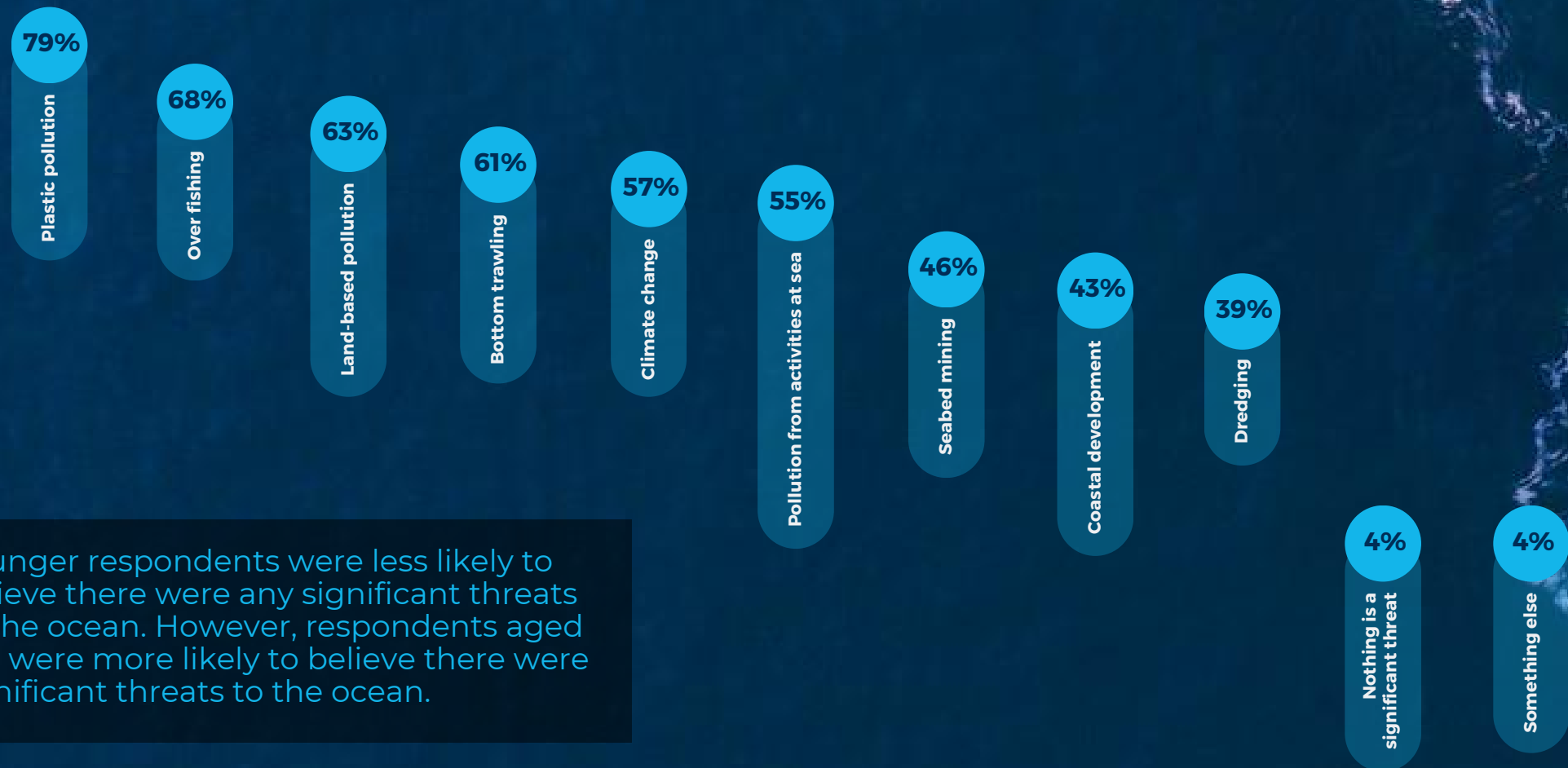
An underwater photograph of a person holding a surfboard. The person is seen from the side, holding the surfboard vertically. The water is clear and blue, with light filtering through from above, creating a shimmering effect on the surface. The person's legs and part of their torso are visible. The surfboard is dark and sleek.

Q: In your own words, can you please tell us what you love about our ocean, if anything, and why?

“IT PROTECTS AND NOURISHES US,  
SPIRITUALLY AND PHYSICALLY.  
IT IS EXCITING AND REFRESHING.  
IT IS A PART OF WHO WE ARE.”

MALE, 55-64 YEARS, MĀORI, NZ EUROPEAN/PĀKEHĀ

# WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THREATS TO OUR OCEAN?



Younger respondents were less likely to believe there were any significant threats to the ocean. However, respondents aged 55+ were more likely to believe there were significant threats to the ocean.



# HOW IMPORTANT TO YOU IS PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF THE OCEAN AND WHAT IT PRODUCES?

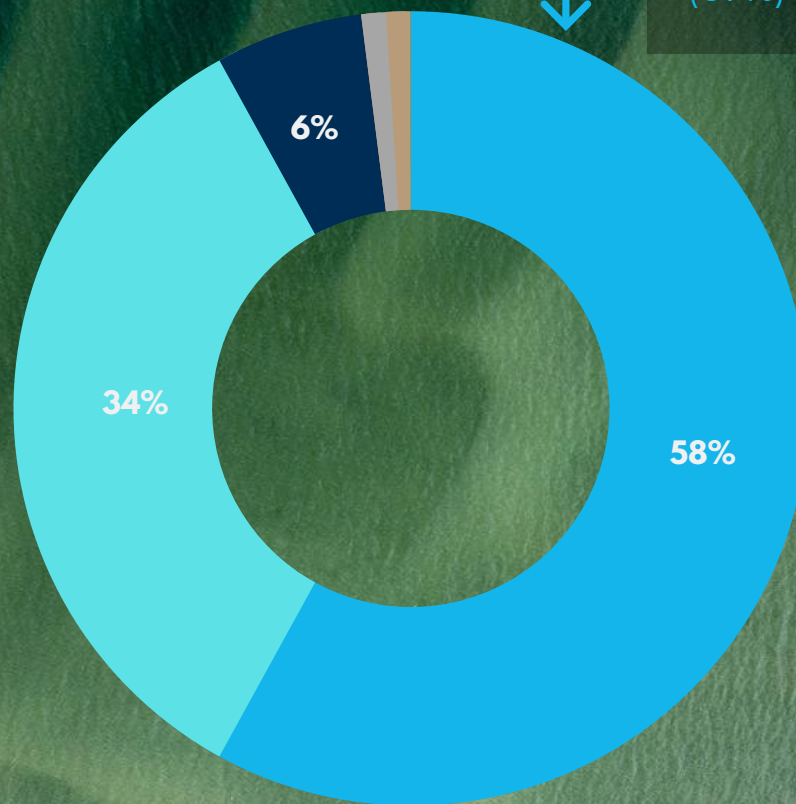
**92%**

of respondents believe it is important to protect the health of the ocean and what it produces.

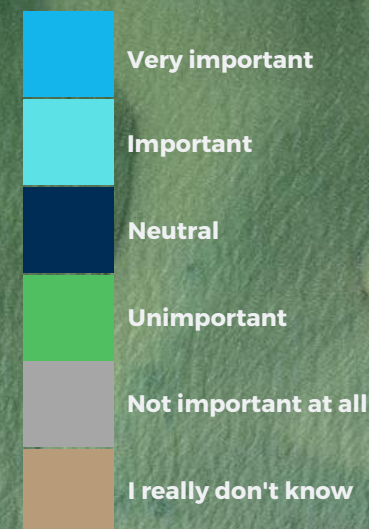
That's around

**3.6m**

New Zealand adults.



Respondents most likely to have said that protecting the health of the ocean and what it produces is very important are aged 55+ years (67%)

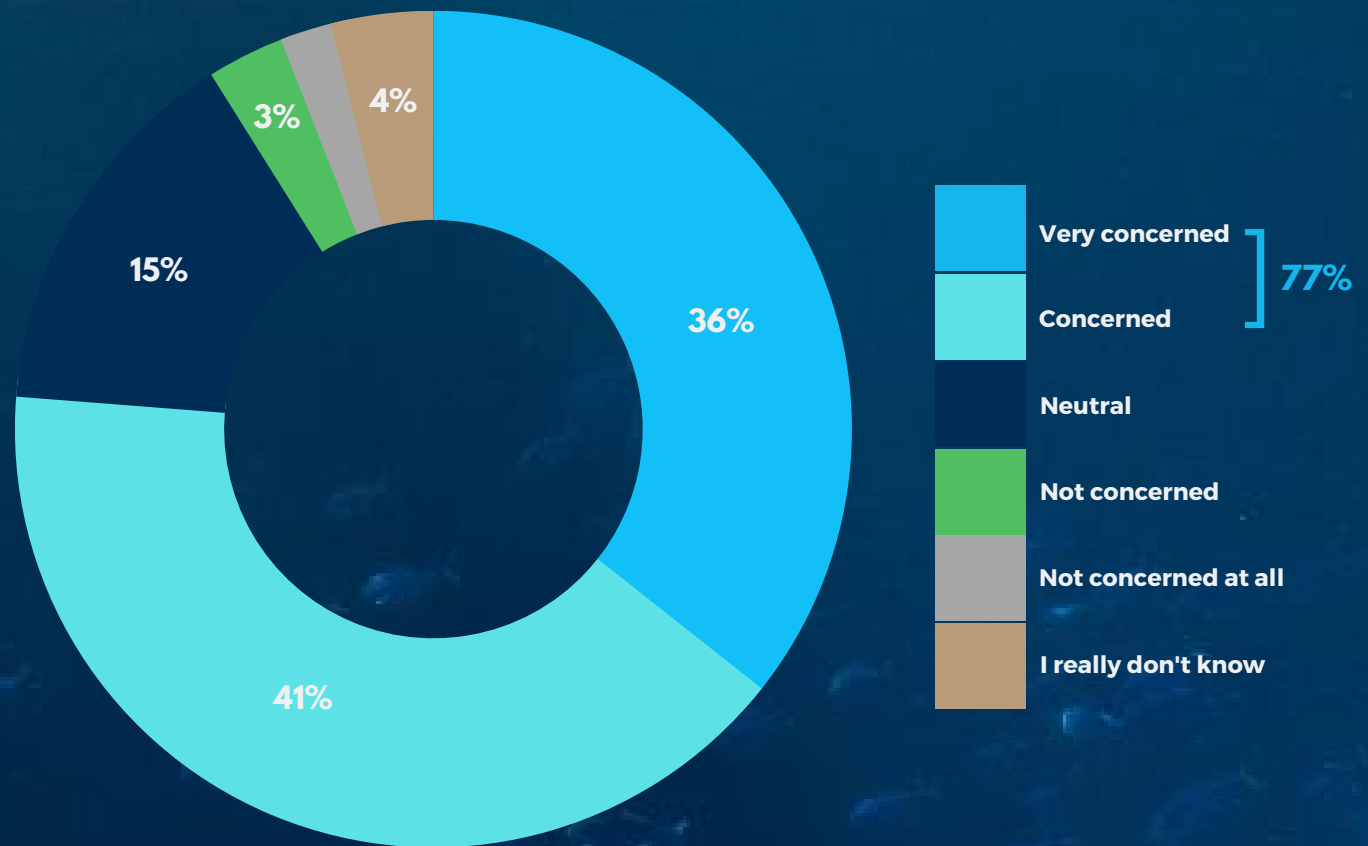


# ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY (THE RANGE OF MARINE LIFE) IN NEW ZEALAND'S OCEAN SPACE?

There is a lot of concern about the loss of biodiversity.

**77%**

saying they are "very concerned/concerned."







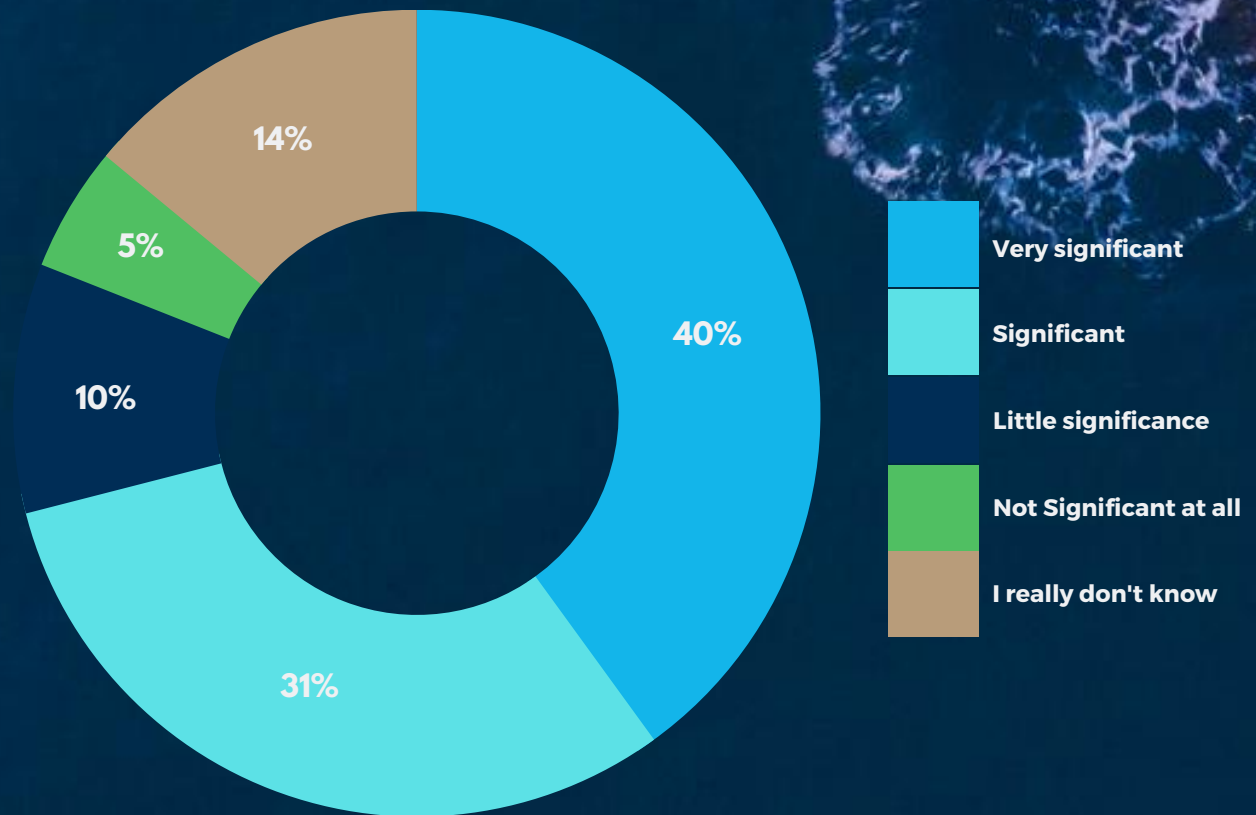
# THE ROLE OF THE OCEAN

# DO YOU THINK THAT THE OCEAN HAS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN MITIGATING THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

New Zealanders understand that the ocean has a role in mitigating the impacts of climate change with

# 71%

saying that it is either very significant or significant. Only 5% say it has no significance at all.





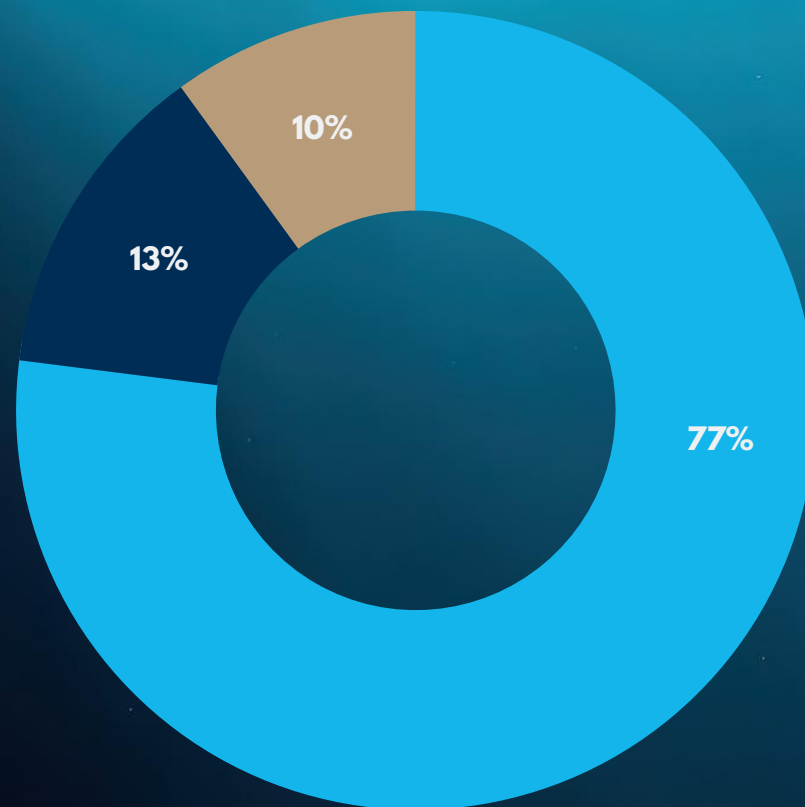


# NEW ZEALAND'S ROLE



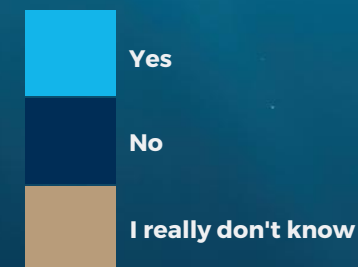
# DO YOU THINK NEW ZEALAND SHOULD INCLUDE MEASURES TO PROTECT AND MANAGE THE OCEAN AS PART OF ITS CLIMATE RESPONSE?

**77%**  
of respondents  
(around 3 million  
adults) believe  
that New Zealand  
should include  
measures to  
protect and  
manage the  
ocean as part  
of its climate  
response.



Groups who are more likely to think that New Zealand should include measures are:

- Aged 25-34 years (82%)
- Females (82%)
- Live in Gisborne / Hawkes Bay (92%)





Q: In your own words, can you please tell us what you love about our ocean, if anything, and why?

“IT’S CALMING. WHEN I’M DOWN I CAN PUT MY FEET IN THE SEA AND FEEL GROUNDED.”

MALE, 18-24 YEARS



# WHO DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE LEADING ACTION TO PROTECT AND MANAGE OUR OCEAN?

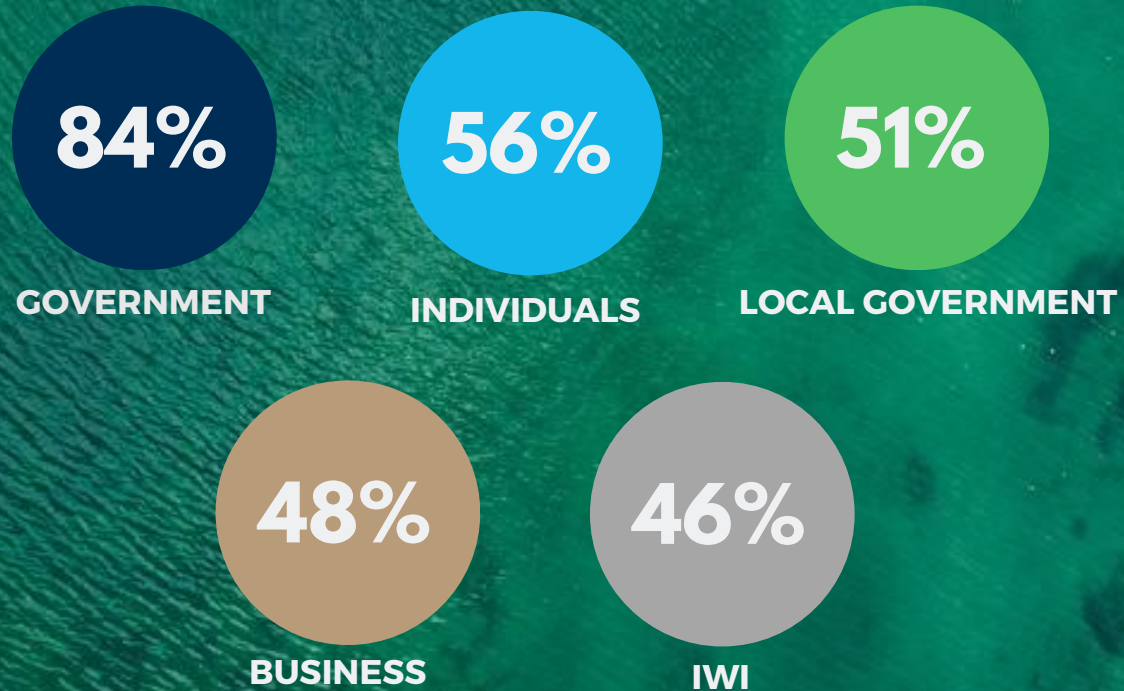
**84%**

believe that the government should be leading action to protect and manage our ocean.

This equates to around

**3.3m**

New Zealand adults.





# SHOULD NEW ZEALAND BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN GLOBAL EFFORTS TO PROTECT AND MANAGE THE OCEAN?

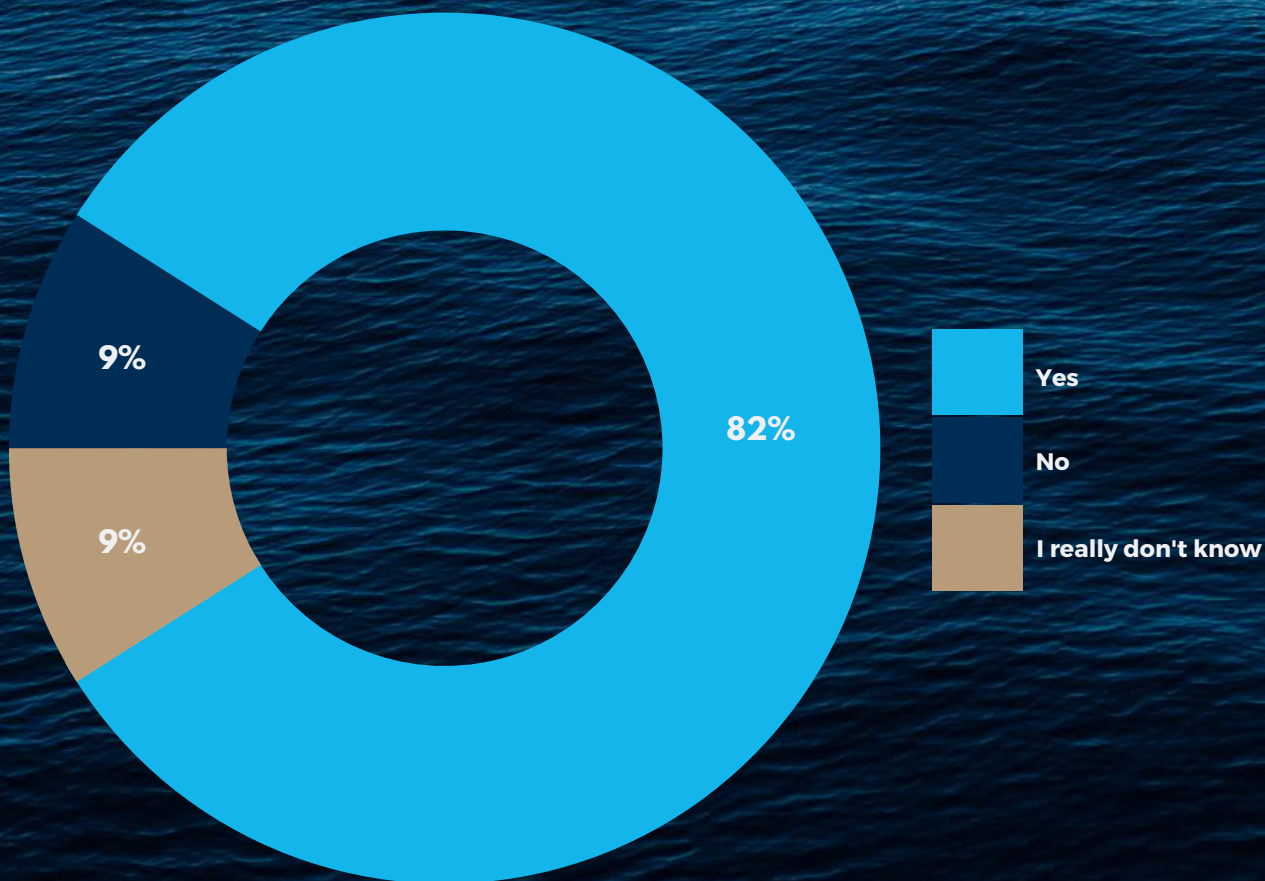
**82%**

believe that New Zealand should be actively involved in global efforts to protect and manage the ocean.

This equates to around

**3.3m**

New Zealand adults.





# OVERALL, DO YOU THINK MARINE PROTECTION (INCLUDING CUSTOMARY MEASURES) SHOULD BE EXPANDED IN NEW ZEALAND?

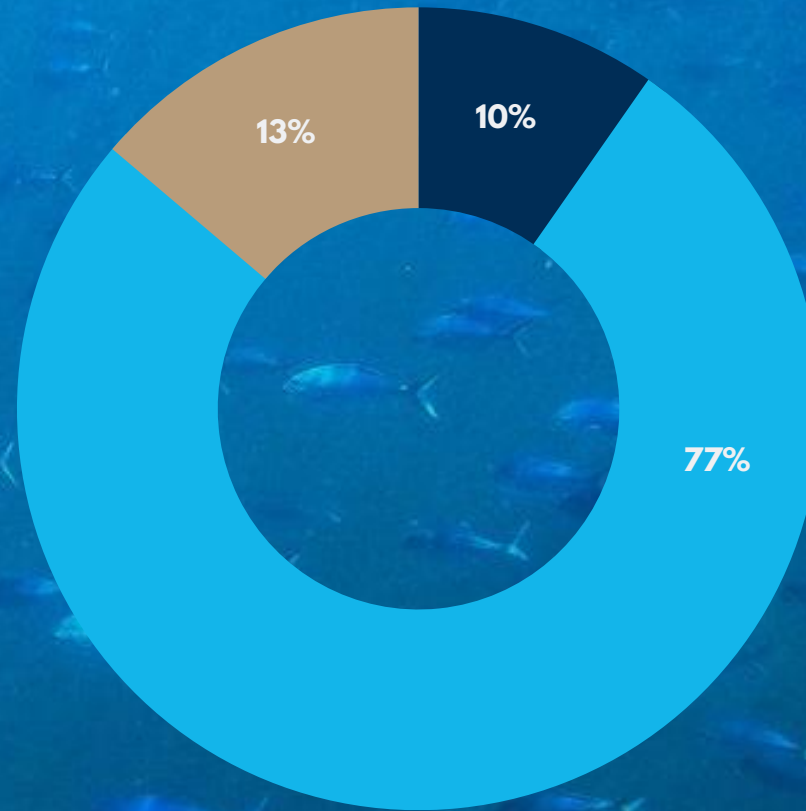
**77%**

believe that marine protection should be expanded in New Zealand.

This equates to around

**3m**


New Zealand adults.



67% of recreational fishers say marine protection should be expanded in New Zealand







Q: In your own words, can you please tell us what you love about our ocean, if anything, and why?

**“THE OCEAN IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE WE LIVE IN A COUNTRY WITH SUCH A LARGE SHORELINE. WE ARE PRIVILEGED IN THIS WAY SO WHATEVER WE TAKE FROM THE OCEAN WE MUST GIVE BACK AND TAKE CARE OF IT.”**

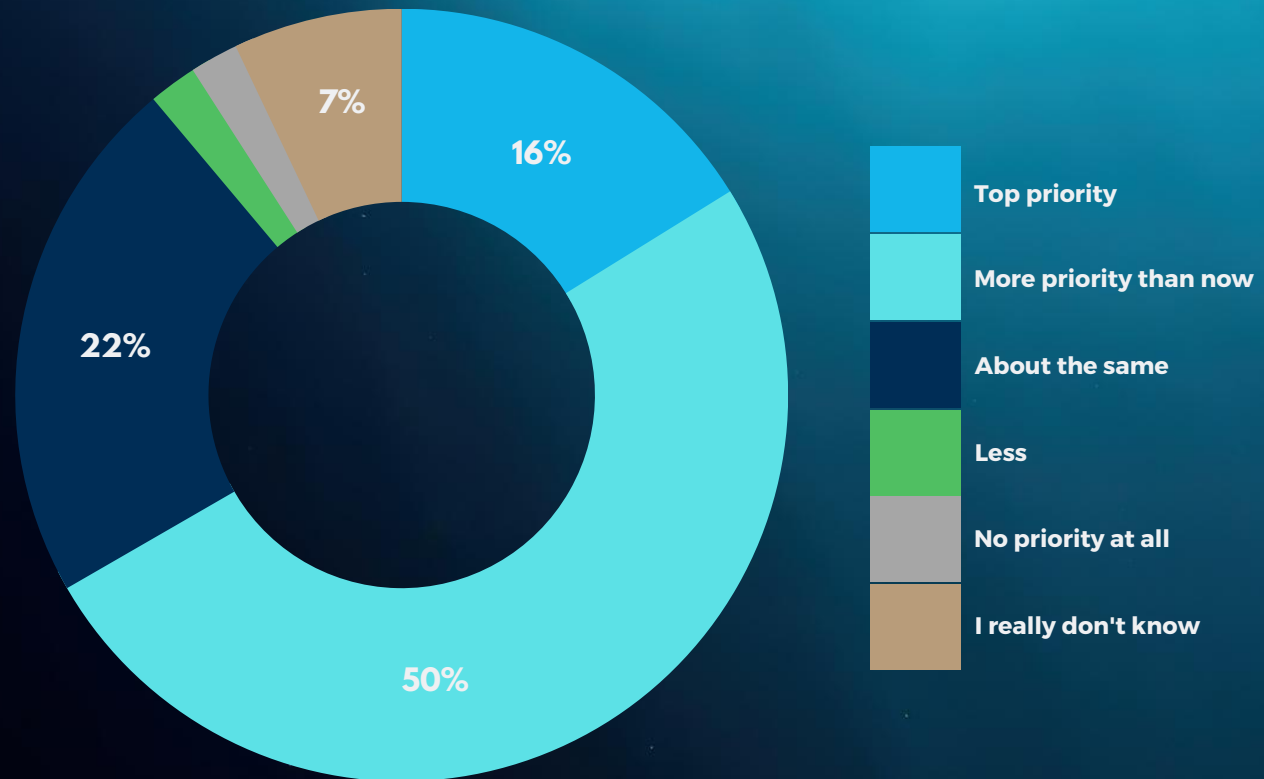
**MALE, 25-34 YEARS, ASIAN**



# WHAT PRIORITY DO YOU THINK POLICIES TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE NEW ZEALAND'S OCEAN SPACE SHOULD BE GIVEN BY POLITICAL PARTIES, IF ANY?

**66%**

say policy to protect and improve NZ's ocean space should be given either 'more priority' or made 'top priority' by political parties.







# STATE OF THE OCEAN FOR THE NEXT GENERATION



“I think my son will grow up seeing coastal homes washed away, and think it is normal. My son will hear about creatures such as Maui dolphins going extinct and wonder why we did not do more.” **Female, 25-34 years, NZ European/Pākehā**

“Our ocean will heat from climate change killing species, and overfishing will do huge damage to others.” **Male, 25-34 years, NZ European/Pākehā**

## WHAT DO YOU THINK NEW ZEALAND'S OCEAN WILL BE LIKE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION IF THE COUNTRY CONTINUES ON ITS CURRENT PATH?

“There will be a lack of freedom where all beaches will be controlled and oceans will have very few fish and seafood available for ordinary people.” **Female, 65-74 years, Māori**


“It won't be in a good state. The marine life will all begin to die. It's not looking hopeful at the moment.”

**Female, 55-64 years, Māori**

“It will be polluted and not swimmable.”

**Female, 55-64 years, NZ European/Pākehā**





“Full of diverse species, where people can sustainably harvest food without pushing the ocean beyond replacement thresholds.”

Male, 25-34 years, NZ European/Pakeha

“Restored to full health A food source and big part of our lives and identity.”

Female, 45-54 years, NZ European/Pākehā, Māori

## WHAT DO YOU HOPE THAT NEW ZEALAND'S OCEAN WILL BE LIKE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION IF WE ACT TO EFFECTIVELY PROTECT AND MANAGE IT?

“Better than it was when I was a boy”

Male, 65-74 years, NZ European/Pākehā

“The hope is that the ocean will be healthy, productive, and resilient for future generations.”

Male, 35-44 years, Asian

“Still safe for us to use for kaimoana and recreation.”

Female, 25-34 years Māori, NZ European/Pākehā



