



OceanCare

Silent Ocean Programme



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[OceanCare](#) is an international marine conservation organisation dedicated to protecting the oceans and marine wildlife from human-induced threats. Since 2002, the organisation has played a leading role in raising awareness of underwater noise pollution within international conservation bodies and advocating for stronger global protections for marine ecosystems. In 2011, OceanCare was granted Special Consultative Status on marine issues by the UN Economic and Social Council, recognising its contribution to international ocean governance and conservation efforts.

Over the past two decades, the environmental impact of global shipping has become an increasingly urgent issue. Tens of thousands of large vessels, including cargo ships, tankers, ferries and bulk carriers, operate continuously across the world's oceans, generating significant ecological pressures. Shipping is now recognised as the primary source of continuous underwater noise pollution, disrupting the behaviour, communication and survival of marine species, particularly whales and other marine megafauna. The sector is also responsible for almost three percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, while ship strikes have emerged as a major threat to some endangered whale populations.

Research and advocacy efforts increasingly highlighted vessel speed reduction as one of the most effective and immediately available solutions to these interconnected challenges. Studies showed that reducing average global vessel speeds by just 10 percent could cut ocean noise emissions by approximately 40 percent, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 13 percent and halve the risk of collisions with whales. Slower speeds would also decrease harmful air pollutants, including sulphur oxides, nitrogen oxides and black carbon.



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Against this backdrop, the Levine Family Foundation provided support for OceanCare's work to advance the global regulation and reduction of underwater noise pollution. The partnership sought to strengthen international advocacy efforts, promote greater accountability within the shipping sector and encourage the acoustic protection of sensitive marine habitats within the framework of the UN 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water.

With the conclusion of this three-year grant in 2025-26, the partnership had helped reinforce international momentum around the issue of ocean noise pollution and the environmental impacts of shipping. Over the course of the funding period, OceanCare continued to build the case for vessel speed reduction as a practical multi-benefit solution capable of reducing underwater noise, greenhouse gas emissions and whale collisions simultaneously. The grant also supported ongoing engagement within international policy forums, helping to maintain pressure for coordinated global action to protect marine ecosystems from one of the ocean's most widespread yet historically overlooked forms of pollution.

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