

The background is a stylized illustration. The top half shows a blue sky with yellow clouds and a dark blue ship with a white stripe on the ocean surface. The bottom half, separated by a wavy line, shows a cross-section of the ocean with various shades of blue, bubbles, and several small fish swimming. The overall style is clean and modern.

Let our Oceans Breathe

How investors can support ocean health

REPORT SUMMARY

Oceans, the Lifeblood of our Planet

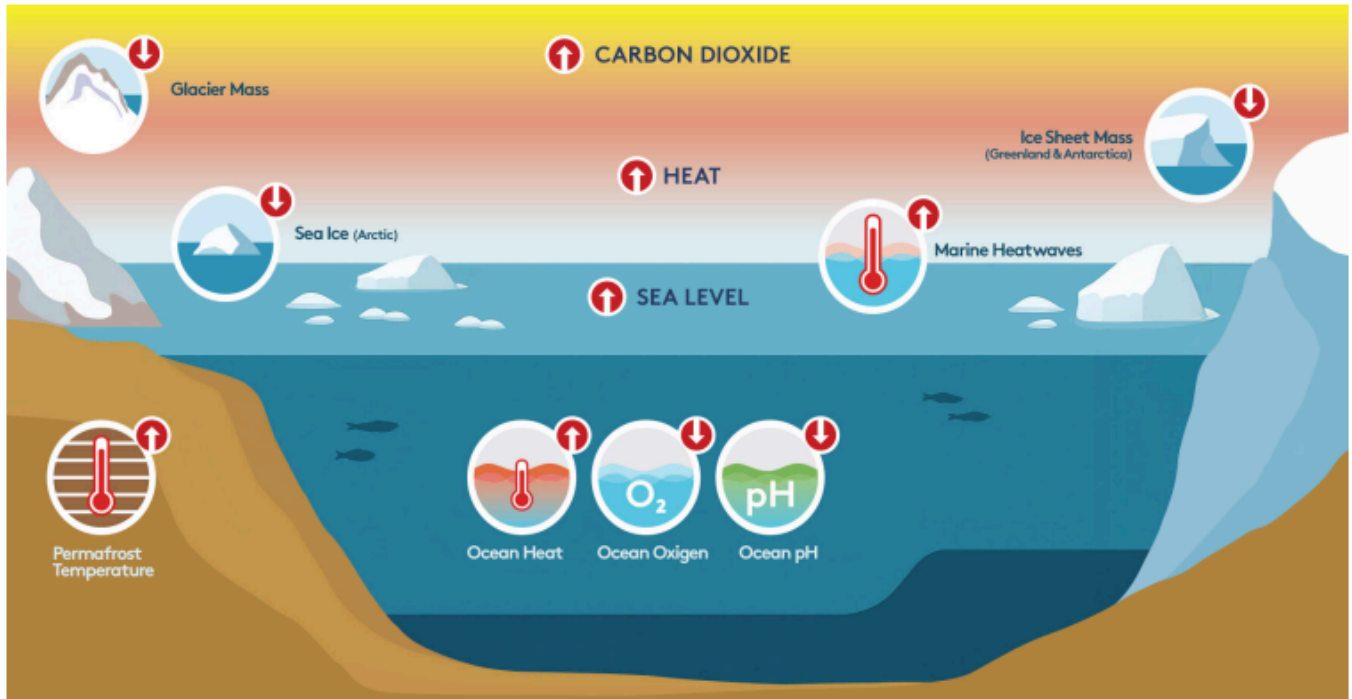


FIGURE 1: DIAGRAM OF THE HYDROSPHERE¹¹

The health of our oceans is crucial to the health of just about everything else – our climate, biodiversity, coastal communities and a large proportion of our economy. Oceans are arguably our most important ecosystem. We should treat them as our most important treasures.

But our oceans are being degraded at an alarming rate. Beneath the surface, our oceans are being filled with plastics, polluted by toxic chemicals, mined, warmed and acidified.

This is not due to natural processes. The damage is caused by the pursuit of profits by corporations, mainly by the world's largest transnational companies. They operate in the vastness of the oceans are few are held to account for the damage they are doing.

International agreements on climate change, plastics and fisheries are important and need to be supported, as well as advocacy and local action. But other mechanisms for strengthening corporate accountability are also needed.

Mindful Money is opening up a new path to support ocean health. Most Kiwis have KiwiSaver funds and/or other investment funds. The managers of those funds decide which companies to invest in, using our money. Over \$3 billion of our KiwiSaver funds are invested in companies causing damage to our oceans.

Fund managers play a powerful role. They use our KiwiSaver and investment funds to invest and hold shares – they have a powerful role in governing the companies. They need to take their share of the responsibility. They should not invest in companies that damage our oceans. It is our savings being invested and we can make choices about where our money goes. We can be mindful investors.



The Role of Financial Investment in Ocean Health

Companies that use ocean resources as a source of food, for services like tourism or as a dump for their waste typically do not bear the costs of their impacts on the oceans. Governments and international bodies are failing to protect the oceans from damage, and companies make profits at the expense of the ocean's health.

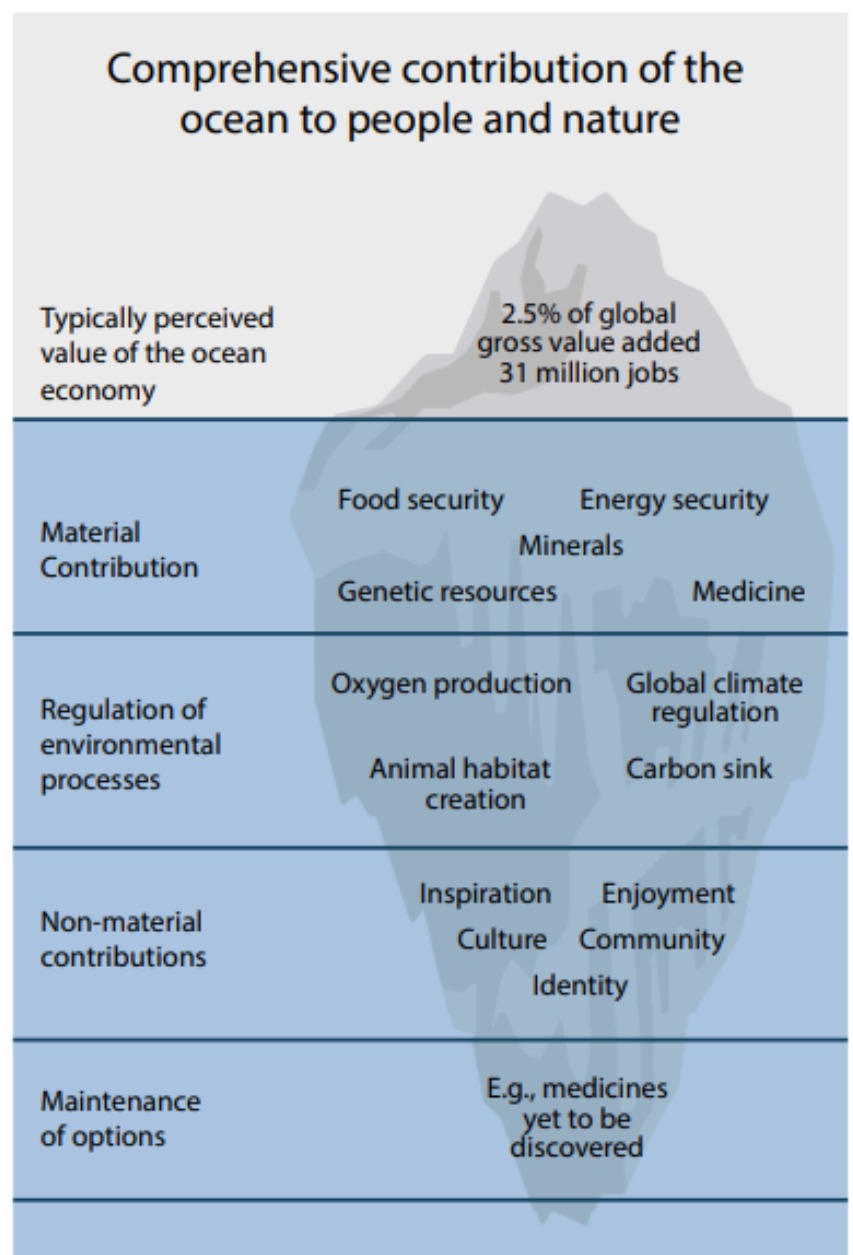
Similarly, the decisions of fund managers that invest in those companies are dominated by the pursuit of high financial returns. Even if they claim to take nature into account, this is typically confined to the financial risks of their investment, rather than the full range of their impacts on ocean health.

Healthy, living oceans are a foundation of long term economic value, especially for communities that depend on fish and marine resources for their livelihoods.

Oceans are vital for our planetary systems. They produce half of the world's oxygen, regulate our climate and sequester most of the greenhouse gases we emit. Our oceans sustain life on our planet.

Oceans support a vast range of habitats, from mangroves to coral reefs and the deep oceans. They are home to diverse species from tiny shells to the great blue whale. They are cultural treasures (taonga) and a source of wonder and enjoyment for all.

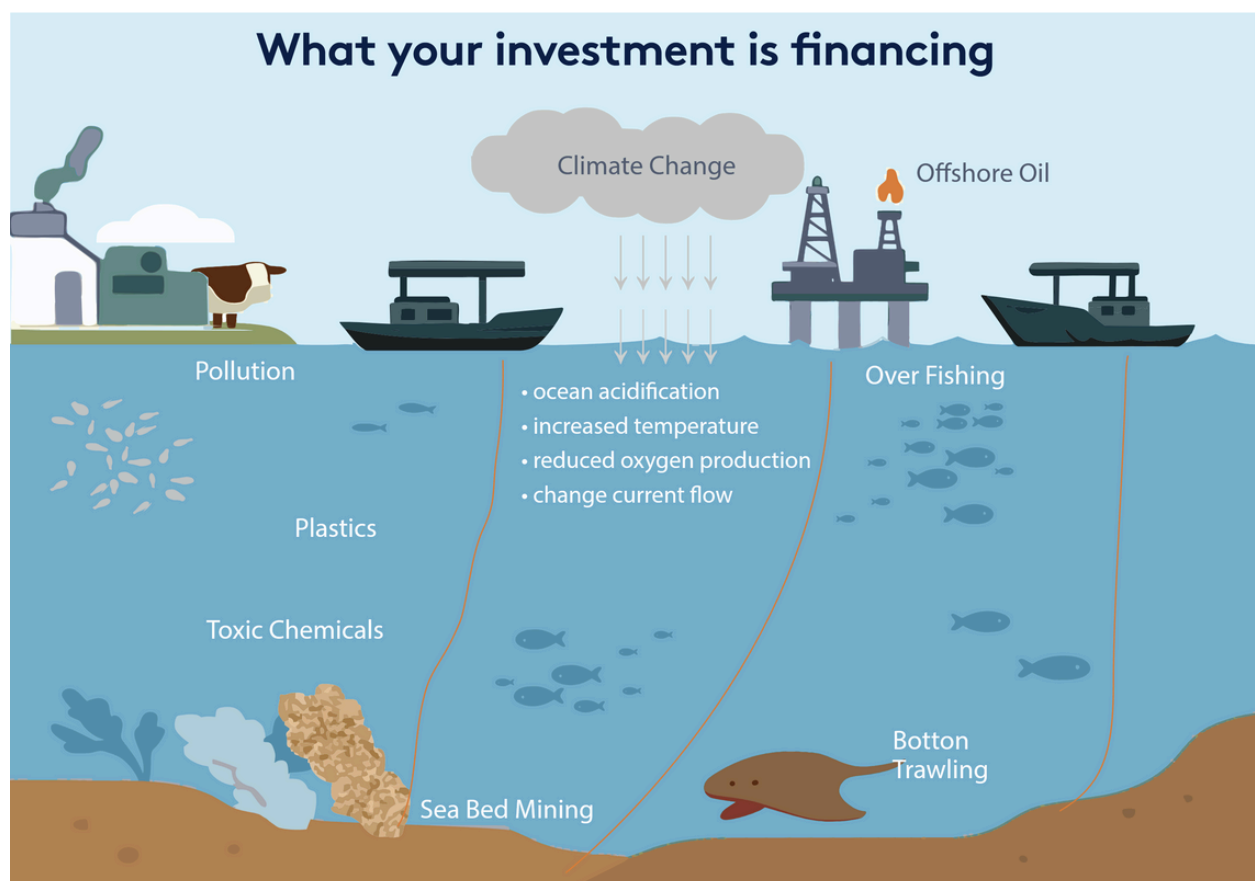
The commercial use and exploitation of our oceans should not be allowed to damage the ability of our oceans to support these vitally important functions.



Drivers of Ocean Degradation

Ocean health is affected by a range of economic activities, both those directly causing harmful impact, and others indirectly impacting the oceans. Mindful Money has undertaken new independent research to trace ocean damage back to the companies that are most responsible. The research starts by identifying the main causal drivers of harm.

- **Plastics pollution** - the visible plastics on our beaches are only a small fraction of marine plastic, which is now pervasive throughout the water column and within the bodies of most marine creatures.
- **Waste dumping and pollution** - waste and sediment from industry, urban areas, farming and shipping, coupled with the accumulation of toxic chemicals is harming marine life and human health.
- **Overfishing** - fish and other marine life are being harvested faster than they can reproduce, causing species decline, impacts on other species, including through by-catch, and food shortages for coastal communities.
- **Physical destruction of marine habitats** - causes include seabed mining, bottom trawling and tourism developments.
- **Climate emissions** - greenhouse gases are the main cause of ocean heating and acidification.



Identifying the Companies Damaging our Oceans

The focus of Mindful Money's report is on the world's oceans, and on the international companies that impact on ocean health. This reflects the global coverage of most investment in KiwiSaver and investment funds. The list of companies does not include all of those that have an impact on oceans at a national or local level.

Research shows that companies operating in the oceans economy are highly concentrated - the 100 largest companies account for 60% of the revenues in the ocean economy, and are likely to cause most of the impacts.

Companies that contribute to the drivers were assessed according to the extent of their impact on the oceans (i.e. how much degradation they directly cause through their practice); and the gravity of their impact on oceans (i.e. the seriousness of the degradation on the long term ocean health). The 36 companies that rate highest on those criteria are listed below.

The aim of this research is to identify the companies that can be held to account and influenced through their investors. Therefore the focus is on publicly listed companies rather than state-owned companies and private companies.

Members of the public can go to the Mindful Money website and find out which of these companies their KiwiSaver or investment fund invests in. This free resource is crucial information for investors.

There is a huge range in the investment holdings. Some funds have significant investments in companies with harmful activities, while others have none. Overall, there is more than \$3 billion of KiwiSaver funds invested in the companies in the report and in other fossil fuel producers.

Summary of Companies Contributing to Ocean Damage				
Plastic Pollution	Waste Dumping & Pollution	Overfishing	Physical Destruction of Marine Habitats	Ocean Acidification & Warming
The Coca-Cola Company	Bayer	Mowi	The Metals Company (TMC)	Chevron
Nestlé	Syngenta	Pescanova	Deep Sea Mining Finance	Saudi Aramco
PepsiCo	ADAMA	Mitsubishi Corporation	Trans Tasman Resources	Gazprom
Mondelēz International	BASF	Thai Union Group	TechnipFMC	National Iranian Oil Co
Danone	Corteva	Dongwon Industries		ExxonMobil
Unilever	Honeywell International			Coal India
	AGC Inc			JBS
	3M			Tyson Foods
				Cargill
				Dairy Farmers of America
				Fonterra
				Marfrig



Investing in Regeneration of Oceans

There are growing opportunities to invest in the health of our oceans. New ventures are emerging to restore our oceans, supporting natural processes that have shown rapid regeneration when adverse impacts are reduced.

So far, most investment in ocean regeneration has come from governments or philanthropy, sometimes in conjunction with catalytic private sector investment. Blended finance, bringing together public funding and philanthropy to help develop and scale up private projects is crucial as a way to validate small scale models and enable scale up.

Most of these companies are still at an early stage and financial regulations make it difficult for private individuals to invest in them. However, there is increasing 'impact investment' being contributed by leading trusts and foundations, as well as asset owners with a positive investment mandate.

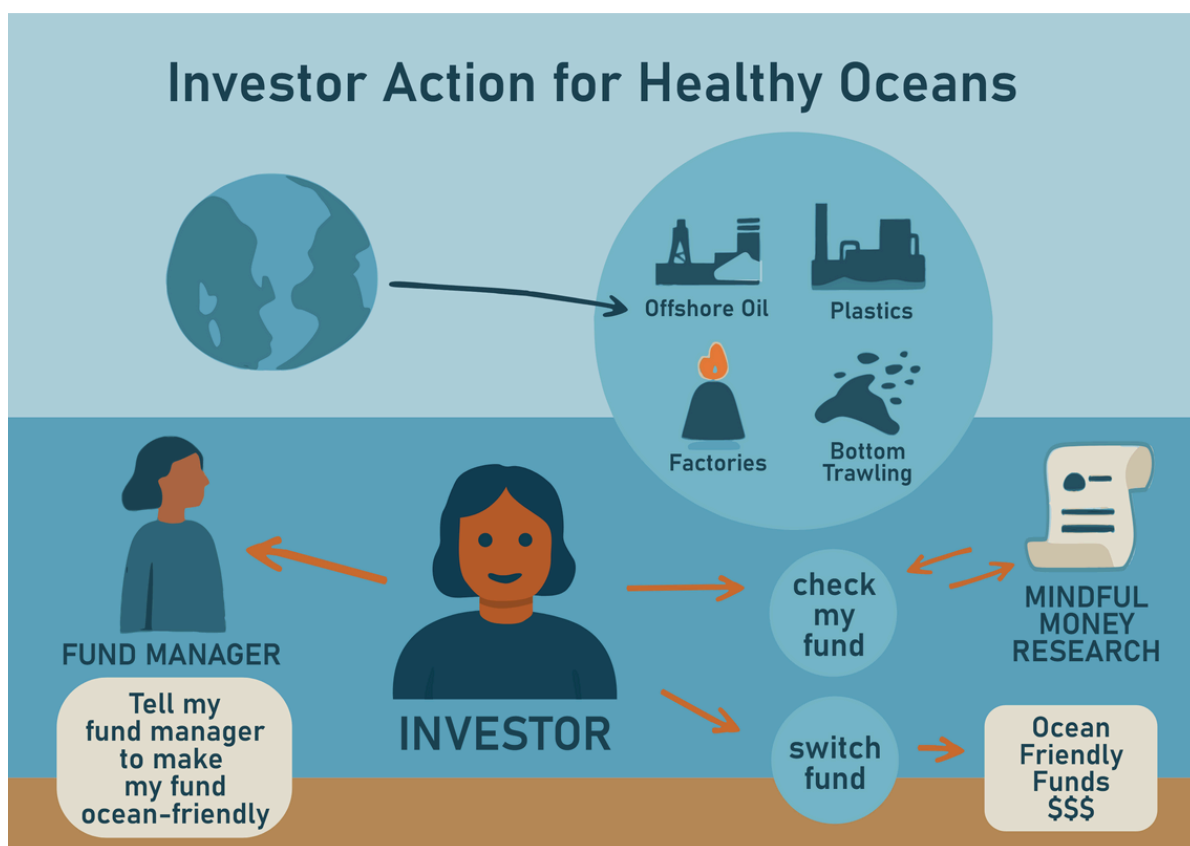
The funds that individuals invest in, such as KiwiSaver or investment funds, can invest in these early stage unlisted companies as part of their overall investment portfolios. Individual investors can encourage their fund manager to invest in ocean regeneration or they can switch to funds that are doing so.

This is an important way to influence the flow of investment. Many investment providers recognise the importance of nature but their approach is typically framed narrowly as a way to reduce investment risk. Even so, this is a starting point for institutions to recognise the impacts of their investments, stop investing in harm and start to allocate investment to regeneration.



Investor Action for Ocean Health

We need to take action to prevent further damage and to restore our oceans. This should include advocacy for strong international agreements, such as on plastics and climate change, for governments to expand Marine Protected Areas and for proper regulation to reduce climate emissions and prevent activities such as pollution, bottom trawling and seabed mining.



We should also use our power as investors. As a priority we should stop our funds being used to invest in companies that are causing damage. Investing ethically is a way to align our investments with our values.

Mindful Money has a free Fund Checker where you can easily see whether your funds are causing harm to our oceans.

Investment providers should sell their investments in companies that are unwilling to stop harm. Otherwise, you can look for ocean friendly funds on the Mindful Money website using the Fund Finder. It is easy and entirely free to switch to a fund that is more ethical and ocean friendly.

Evidence shows that investing ethically provides financial returns that are at least as high as conventional investing, with lower risks.



Acknowledgements

Major Research Sponsor:



Whakatupu Aotearoa Foundation is a philanthropic trust focused on driving system change for a restored and thriving Aotearoa. As a country, we are stewards of one of the world's largest ocean spaces, and it is this that brings increasing focus to our donations and investments. The Foundation supports initiatives that challenge harmful practices and promote ocean health through research, innovation, and advocacy. This includes Mindful Money's work to show how investment funds are impacting our oceans.

Contributing Sponsor:



Contributors to the report:

We are grateful to the following contributors for the information and review of the draft report.



About Mindful Money

Mindful Money is an independent charity that aims to switch investment flows from companies causing harm to investments that generate positive outcomes. Mindful Money provides transparency for New Zealanders' holdings in Kiwisaver funds (superannuation schemes) and managed funds.

This oceans research is the first stage of an ecosystem approach that analyses the impacts of financial investment on natural systems. Mindful Money's approach is 'education for action', engaging and empowering the public to become mindful investors. Members of the public are provided with information on the types of companies in their funds, and from 2026 will also be shown the investments that have positive outcomes for the climate, people and the planet.

Mindful Money's work to influence investments flows is supported through our annual conference and ethical and impact investment awards, surveys of the New Zealand public, reports and surveys on climate change, and ethical reviews for trusts and foundations, charities, educational institutions and other asset owners.

As a registered charity, we are supported by aligned investors, generous trusts and foundations and members of the public.

