



## Tips for communicating about ocean acidification

Ocean acidification (OA) is a tricky concept to convey due to its complexity and the amount of information we are still seeking to understand. The bullets below include suggestions that were gathered during group discussions and feedback from stakeholders across Alaska.

- **Present local data in understandable, relevant terms.** Before communicating, think through what background information is necessary, and what can be left out to focus on what is most important for the particular audience. This varies by community and stakeholder group.
- **Explain the difference between natural variability and OA.** Most of the patterns we see are natural cycles in marine CO<sub>2</sub> chemistry. OA only accounts for 2% of the trend we see in the data. This is important in contextualizing the information we share.
- **Use ‘ecosystem change’ messaging instead of just focusing on OA:** Fishermen noted that they aren’t teasing apart temperature from OA; they look at these phenomena as ecosystem change. (The scientists said “Us too!”)
- **Shift conversations from harbingers to being part of the solution.** Make sure bad news includes action steps. Make sure bad news also comes with good news. There are many partnerships in Alaska that have built momentum to address ocean change, and highlighting positive momentum is a more effective initiator than promoting despair.
- **Prioritize actionable information.** This is easier said than done at this stage of OA research/understanding in Alaska, as many of the questions Alaskans are answering don’t have concrete answers yet. Build towards identifying actionable information through conversations with stakeholder groups, identifying chief concerns and decision making points where OA data could be most relevant.
- **Identify ways to overcome misinformation.** OA is complicated and details are easy to misconstrue. Ideas for combating misinformation include one-on-one conversations, Q&A sessions for specific audiences, Q&A’s that are posted and accessible, etc.
- **Repeat messaging.** Marketing research shows an item needs to be presented to someone 7 times on average before they digest it. Repetition is welcome and needed.
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### **Helpful Links:**

[Alaska Ocean Acidification Network](#)

[NOAA’s Ocean Acidification Program](#)

[Ocean Acidification Communications Platform](#) - The Ocean Conservancy