

2026 WORLD OCEANS WEEK REPORT

**WORLD
OCEANS
DAY 2026**
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**PEACE
BOATUS**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

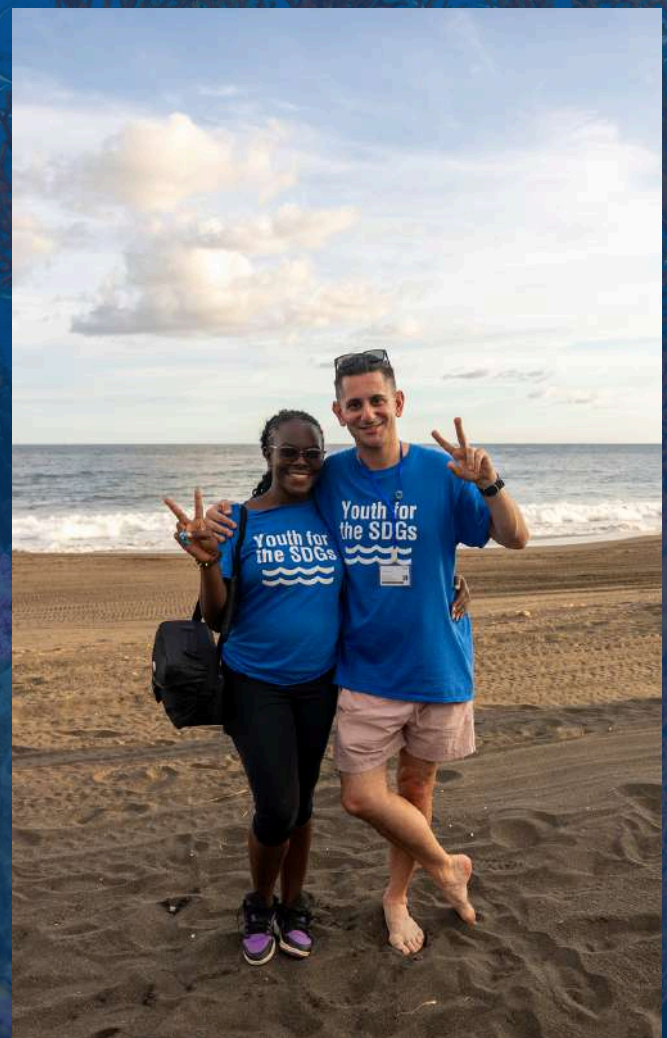
Introduction: Peace Boat US at UN World Oceans Week	03
New Depths: Oceanic Global's Short Film Festival	04
Community Engagement: 2026 Coney Island Beach Cleanup with Peace Boat US	05
UN World Oceans Day Reception: Peace Boat US at the United Nations	06
Peace Boat's Inaugural Ocean Gala: In Celebration of UN World Oceans Day	07-10
Blue Innovation Reception: In Panama with Blue Planet Alliance	11-12
Youth for the SDGs: 2026 Program for the UN Ocean Decade	12-13
Local Ocean Action: Tall Ships Sail into Manhattan	14
Exploring Governors Island: With the Billion Oyster Project for Restoration	14
Acknowledging Our Partners	15



INTRODUCTION

Peace Boat US UN World Oceans Day Events

As an NGO accredited to the United Nations (UN) with Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and a committed campaigner for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) sailing for the UN Ocean Decade, Peace Boat organized and participated in a diverse variety of events for World Oceans Week. Featuring activities from film festival premieres to a star-studded Ocean Gala to a Latin American SDG experiential learning and capacity-building voyage, Peace Boat US embraced this year's UN World Oceans Day theme of "Reimagining" to its fullest extent. Read more about all of these exciting initiatives in the Peace Boat US 2026 World Oceans Week Report.



NEW DEPTHS

Oceanic Global's Short Film Festival

On Thursday, June 4, the Peace Boat team joined the Oceanic Global Short Film Festival, which highlighted the 2026 award winners for films that “Awaken New Depths.” Oceanic Global is a non-profit organization that supports ocean conservation through education, community building, and private sector coordination. The film festival sought to foster the creative spirit of ocean conservationists and advocates worldwide. Filmmakers and artists interpreted human connection, discovery, and living systems through the lens of our oceans.

At the event, Peace Boat US interns had the opportunity to watch four films showcasing unique perspectives on our ocean, including stories about the life cycle of salmon and whales, Arctic diving, and African surfing culture. The winning film selected was Peixinho by Kaushiik Subramaniam, which encapsulated the ocean as a sacred space. Peace Boat US was honored to contribute to this screening and promote Oceanic Global's mission.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2026 Coney Island Beach Cleanup with Peace Boat US



The 2026 Annual Coney Island Beach Cleanup, held on June 6, brought together volunteers from many different organizations and backgrounds. With a large group of volunteers from the NY Aquarium, including The Supermodel Project and other sustainability groups, the event offered a hands-on approach to community and environmental conservation. The Peace Boat US team participated in the event and conducted water testing along the shores of Coney Island. The water testing sample kit provided information on the water's temperature, pH, turbidity (cloudiness or haziness), and oxygen levels. As Peace Boat US supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations, such experiments demonstrate the importance of citizen science and experiential learning.



UN WORLD OCEANS DAY RECEPTION

Peace Boat US at the United Nations

Peace Boat US was pleased to participate in a UN World Oceans Day Reception hosted by the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) in New York in celebration of UN World Oceans Day (WOD) on June 8, in coordination with Oceanic Global and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Accompanying this event was the release of the Third World Ocean Assessment, the UN's comprehensive report on the state of our oceans. At the event, the Peace Boat US team heard from distinguished voices within the fields of oceanography, ocean conservation, sustainability, and law. The reception convened a vast array of affiliated partners and organizations, including NGOs, Permanent Mission representatives, UN agencies, and working groups.

The final presentation of the night was dedicated to the Third World Ocean Assessment. Rafael González-Quirós, Director of the Oceanographic Center of Gijón, spoke to the urgency of his research team's findings, including the worrying acceleration of sea level rise and species endangerment. Peace Boat US Summer Interns attended the event and had the opportunity to speak with Permanent Representatives, members of DOALOS, private-sector financial experts, and more. Through such events, Peace Boat US provides a learning opportunity to deepen youth engagement in the United Nations Community in New York.





PEACE BOAT'S INAUGURAL OCEAN GALA

In Celebration of UN World Oceans Day

On June 10, Peace Boat US held its first-ever Ocean Gala, taking place on the Peace Boat at the Manhattan Cruise Terminal in New York City. This special occasion convened global activists, youth advocates, UN officials, artists, and blue innovators to celebrate UN World Oceans Day. Through this event, accomplished guests expanded their blue network and engaged in important dialogues around the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and this year's World Oceans Day theme, “Reimagining our Shared Ocean.”

Opening Remarks and Governing Our Oceans

The evening began with soulful live performances from the Ava McCune Quintet and Nākaloka. Following the opening performances, Emilie McGlone, Director of Peace Boat US, welcomed guests and introduced a distinguished lineup of speakers involved in global and ocean policy, starting with Dmitry Gonchar, Principal Legal Officer at the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS).





Gonchar emphasized the significance of partnerships for the UN World Oceans initiative and the Third World Ocean Assessment (WOA III). This comprehensive report, which draws insights from more than 650 experts, evaluates the current state of the world's oceans, encompassing both environmental and socioeconomic perspectives. He also highlighted the need for innovative actions to support sustainable development pathways for ocean resources. This discussion was then followed by Francois Bilet, from UN DOALOS, who highlighted ocean governance and marine science. Joining Bilet was explorer Gaelin Rosenwaks with remarks on the difficulties in marine resource management due to the effects of a changing climate.

Featuring Youth Voices in Ocean Conservation

Mark Haver, a Youth for the SDGs alumnus, moderated the subsequent segment on rising young ocean professionals and youth's role in the UN Ocean Decade. He was joined by Matthew Hunter from the United Nations Youth Office, Ximena Corrales, a Youth for the SDGs scholar and Peace Boat US intern from Mexico, and Lexi Addison from Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs). The gala then transitioned to a panel involving the Peace Boat's "Set Sail for Dialogue" program participants and their experiences onboard as European youth leaders.



Following this panel discussion on Youth Voices, the participants heard from Anna Dukor from Oceanic Global and Michelle Li from Clever Carbon, who explored the blue standard in building business leadership for a thriving ocean. Subsequently was a women-led ocean and climate action deep dive panel with Hannah Jurist-Schoen from Project Drawdown and Zandile Ndhlovu from the Black Mermaid Foundation, moderated by Helena Wasserman from Investors for Climate.

Recognition of Honorable Leaders for the Ocean

This year, Peace Boat US held its Inaugural Ocean Stewardship Awards for SDG 14: Life Below Water, recognizing and honoring individuals for leading extraordinary initiatives for a sustainable ocean. Recipients included Jenavive Mays for Youth Initiatives, Keshia Lawrence for Local & Community Impact, Sam Teicher for Blue Innovation, and Dr. Erika Woolsey for Ocean Literacy, who were chosen by a prestigious panel of Judges, including Fabien Cousteau, Founder of Proteus.



Ocean Stewardship Awards for SDG 14 onboard Peace Boat



Blue Takeaways

A major highlight of the night was the panel, “Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Partnerships for a Sustainable Blue Economy,” featuring guest speakers Oshin Whyte, Youth for SDGs alumnus, and Adame de Picort from MESA Institute for Global Impact.



Afterward, the Gala moved to the pool deck, with live music from Catori, Eli Goldstein from Soul Clap, and Holmar, creating an energetic ambiance for the Ocean Fashion Show, showcasing carefully selected pieces from sustainable fashion designers, including winners of Junk Kouture, a sustainable youth fashion competition. Many artists also exhibited their artwork at the Ocean Gala, including the Tidal Shifts art installation, which connects environmental advocacy with creative expression, making for an unforgettable night aboard the Peace Boat.

BLUE INNOVATION RECEPTION IN PANAMA: WITH BLUE PLANET ALLIANCE



On June 18, Peace Boat hosted the Blue Innovation Reception with its partner, Blue Planet Alliance (BPA), in Panama City. The event brought together the Panamanian, Latin American, and Caribbean climate communities to discuss progress, challenges, and recent successes relating to the SDGs within local communities. The program concentrated on a series of panels and expert presentations designed to provide greater context on environmental challenges and sustainability strategies across Latin America. Youth for the SDGs alumnus Molly Rosaaen, Rigoberto Amaya, and Khadija Stewart joined Pamela Abreu, who leads climate mitigation strategies for the government of the Dominican Republic, and Karin Sempf, CEO and Founder of InnovaNation, for a Blue Planet Alliance panel focused on youth leadership.

Additional speakers included Janeth Jaen of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute; Javier Neme, a Programme Officer with the UN Environmental Programme; Kattia Cambronero Aguiluz, former Deputy of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica; and Yoshioka Tatsuya, Founder and Director of Peace Boat, among others. The evening concluded with a networking session that connected climate and ocean advocates from across the region with Youth for the SDGs scholars.



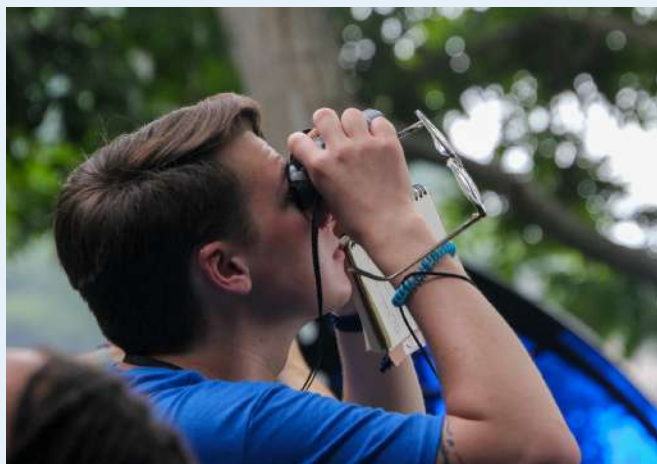
The event featured keynote speeches, panel discussions, and performances. The event brought together representatives from the diplomatic community, the United Nations, foundations, and the private sector, and exhibited best practices for responsible ocean stewardship with a focus on learning from the Nature Pledge of Panama. This forum, designed to foster education and dialogue, culminated in a significant milestone as a representative from Panama's Ministry of Environment (MiAMBIENTE) signed the BPA commitment to achieving 100% renewable energy by 2045.



YOUTH FOR THE SDGs: 2026 PROGRAM FOR THE UN

Ocean Decade Overview





Peace Boat US Youth for the SDGs scholars sailed to vibrant communities in Latin America from June 14 to June 29, 2026, aboard the Peace Boat. Through visiting sites in Panama, Guatemala, and Mexico, youth participants learned the practices of tribal communities, immersing themselves in their culture, wildlife reserves, and surrounding waters. As passengers aboard the Peace Boat, the 13 Youth for the SDGs engaged in leadership development, experiential learning, team-building, and ocean stewardship. As participants in Peace Boat's Blue Innovation Reception, the youth scholars had the opportunity to learn from guest speakers, artists, diplomatic representatives, and United Nations delegates, in promotion of sustainable development. Beyond the reception, the Youth for the SDGs had the chance to build cultural bridges between different tribal communities, as well as to present their personal connection to the SDGs. Sailing on the Peace Boat engaged youth leaders as activists for peace and environmental conservation.

LOCAL ACTION

Tall Ships Collection in Manhattan



On July 7, Peace Boat US visited a collection of Tall Ships docked in Manhattan as part of the United States' 250th anniversary. Throughout July, dozens of ships brought over 20,000 sailors from 20 countries to New York in the largest maritime event in US history, with many Peace Boat US interns volunteering to support this effort. Interns were given the opportunity to tour Tall Ships from Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Poland, and Maryland and to hear from their crews. Interns also had the chance to speak with scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) about their work mapping and protecting the New York Harbor.

EXPLORING GOVERNORS ISLAND: with Billion Oyster Project

On July 9, Peace Boat Youth Leaders spent the day on Governors Island learning about the island's history and volunteering with the Billion Oyster Project. The Billion Oyster Project is attempting to restore 1 billion oysters to New York Harbor by 2035. Oysters filter water, reduce shoreline erosion, and build healthy habitats for other animals, making them a key part of New York's ocean ecosystem. This opportunity provided a great hands-on experience that strengthened the group's understanding of the aquatic ecosystems in and around New York City.



ACKNOWLEDGING OUR PARTNERS

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IN COLLABORATION WITH:



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**2021
2030** United Nations Decade
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