



# Inspiring Action to Explore and Protect the Ocean



2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT

MISSION BLUE

# Reasons for Hope

SALLY LIGHTFOOT CRAB, GALÁPAGOS © DR. SYLVIA EARLE



## Message from Dr. Sylvia Earle Great News!

January 2022 began with an invitation to join Ecuador's President to celebrate new protection for the ocean surrounding the Galápagos Islands and concluded in December with more than 190 countries at COP 15 in Montreal signing up to protect at least 30 percent of the land and sea globally by 2030. Committing nearly one-third of the planet to safeguarding nature is a giant step in the right direction, but it is ambitious since, as of December 2022, only 3% of the ocean & about 15% of the land were officially highly protected. Mission Blue is dedicated to building the momentum needed for rapid expansion of both in order to stabilize the climate, restore damaged ecosystems, protect biodiversity, and maintain the habitability of the planet.

Nothing else matters if we fail to behave in ways that safeguard the only place in the universe suitable for life as we know it.

I'm cautiously optimistic that the 21<sup>st</sup> century's "environmental tipping points" may be starting to tip in the right direction. Never before has the need to take action been so obvious; never again will there be a better time to act than right now.

On his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2009, Edward Osborne Wilson expressed optimism about our capacity to change in ways that reflect respect and care for the natural living systems that underpin our existence, but he warned: "We are letting Nature slip through our fingers."



Without us, life on Earth will likely continue, but we currently have the best chance we will ever have to do what it takes to keep from "slipping through Nature's fingers." I am pleased to be part of the Mission Blue team, year after year, steadily advancing toward a harmonious relationship between humans and the mostly blue planet that makes possible our existence.

*Sylvia A Earle*

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## Our Mission To Save and Restore the Ocean

“I hope for your help to explore and protect the wild ocean in ways that will restore its health and, in so doing, secure hope for humankind.” DR. SYLVIA EARLE

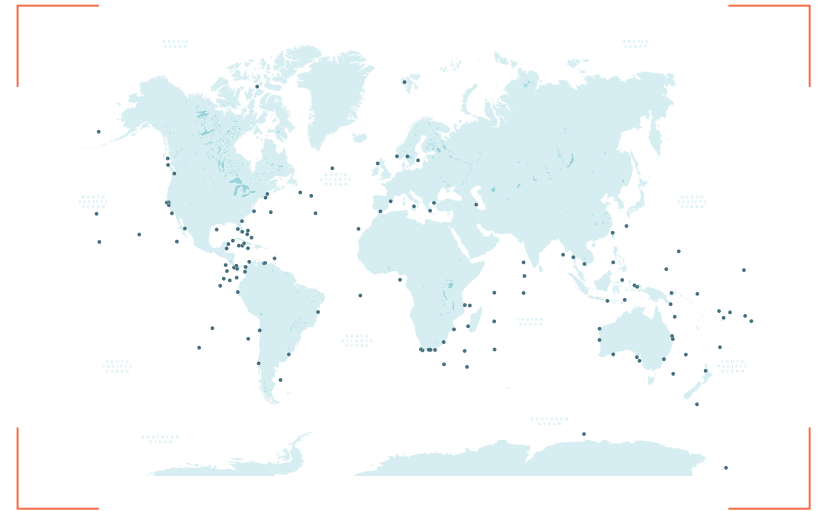
Mission Blue, founded in 2009, has created a global network of 151 Hope Spots, covering a total of 58 million square kilometers of the ocean. We’ve invested in expeditions and infrastructure to designate and support these areas. Additionally, we’ve leveraged digital and social media tools to realize Dr. Sylvia Earle’s vision and motivate greater action in support of the ocean, and we empower communities worldwide with a global platform to share.

Our work with Hope Spots puts the goal of highly and fully protecting at least 30% of the ocean by 2030 at the forefront, with the ultimate goal of safeguarding the high seas, a global commons, as the core of Earth’s life support system, the blue heart of the planet.

Dr. Sylvia Earle and her policy team continue to meet with world leaders and heads of state to discuss ocean protection and enlist their support for ocean-positive actions. She is a renowned ocean ambassador and has emphasized the need for ocean protection in interviews with major media outlets and at influential conferences in more than 100 countries.

We’re making progress toward a healthier ocean and a more secure future for all. With the continued support of individuals, organizations, and governments, we’re optimistic about achieving our shared goal of shifting the current trajectory of decline to recovery and finding a sustained place for ourselves within the natural — mostly blue — systems that underpin our existence.

MISSION BLUE HOPE SPOTS [2022] ABROLHOS BANK • AEOLIAN ISLANDS • AGULHAS FRONT • ALBORAN SEA • ALGOA BAY • ALIWAL SHOAL • ANDAMAN ISLANDS • ARGYLL COAST AND ISLANDS  
ASCENSION ISLAND • ATLANTIS BANK • AZORES ARCHIPELAGO • BAHAMIAN REEFS • BALEARIC ISLANDS • BERING SEA DEEP CANYONS • BIOLOGICAL MARINE CORRIDOR OF OSA • BLUE SHARK CENTRAL  
BOCAS DEL TORO ARCHIPELAGO • BUNAKEN MARINE PARK • CAGARRAS ISLANDS & SURROUNDING WATERS • CALIFORNIA SEAMOUNTS • CAPE WHALE COAST • CAPURGANA & CABO TIBURON  
CASHES LEDGE • CENTRAL ARCTIC OCEAN • CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO • CHARLIE-GIBBS FRACTURE ZONE • CHICHIRI YICHE DE LA COSTA • CHILEAN FJORDS AND ISLANDS • CHORONI & CHUAO  
COASTAL SOUTHEAST FLORIDA • COASTAL WATERS OF THE BLACK RIVER DISTRICT • COCOS ISLAND • COCOS-GALÁPAGOS SWIMWAY • COIBA AND CORDILLERA DE COIBA • CONFLICT ISLANDS  
CORAL SEA • CORAL SEAMOUNT • CORAL TRIANGLE • COSTA RICA THERMAL DOME • DATAN ALGAL REEF • EAST ANTARCTIC • EAST PORTLAND FISH SANCTUARY • EASTERN TROPICAL PACIFIC  
SEASCAPE • EGG ISLAND, BAHAMAS • EMPEROR SEAMOUNT CHAIN • EXMOUTH GULF AND NINGALOO COAST WORLD HERITAGE AREA • FALSE BAY • FARM POND • FISH ROCK • FLORIDA GULF  
COAST • FRENCH OVERSEAS TERRITORIES (WALLIS AND FUTUNA) • GAKKEL RIDGE • GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS • GEORGETOWN • GEORGIA CONTINENTAL SHELF AND BLAKE PLATEAU • GHIZILAGAJ  
RESERVE NATIONAL PARK AND MARINE PROTECTED AREA • GOLD COAST BAY HOPE SPOT • GOLFO DULCE • GOTLAND HOPE SPOT • GRAND RECIF DE TOLIARA • GREAT BARRIER REEF  
GREATER FARALLONES • GREATER SKELLIG COAST • GUANAHACABIBES NATIONAL PARK • GULF OF CALIFORNIA • GULF OF GUINEA • GULF OF MEXICO DEEP REEFS • HATTERAS • HECATE STRAIT  
AND QUEEN CHARLOTTE SOUND GLASS SPONGE REEFS • HENOKO-ŌURA COASTAL WATERS • HONG KONG SOUTH • HOUTMAN ABROLHOS • HUMBOLDT ARCHIPELAGO • INHAMBANE SEASCAPE  
JAEREN COAST • JANGAMO BAY • JARDINES DE LA REINA • KAHALU'U BAY • KANGAROO ISLAND NORTH COAST • KEP ARCHIPELAGO • KERMADEC TRENCH • KIMBE BAY • KNYSNA BAY  
KOSTERFJORDEN YTTREHVALER • LAAMU ATOLL • LAKSHADWEEP ISLANDS • LESVOS • LITTLE CAYMAN • LONG ISLAND MARINE MANAGEMENT AREA • LORD HOWE ISLAND • MAKO SHARK METROPOLIS  
MALDIVE ATOLLS • MALPELO ISLAND • MAYAN RIVIERA • MISOOL MARINE RESERVE • MOHÉLI HOPE SPOT • MONTEREY BAY • MORETON BAY • MYEIK ARCHIPELAGO • NEW ZEALAND COASTAL  
WATERS • NORTHWEST PASSAGE • NUSA PENIDA MARINE PROTECTED AREA • OLOWALU REEF • OMBAI-WETAR STRAIT • OUTER ISLANDS OF SEYCHELLES • PACIFIC SUBTROPICAL  
CONVERGENCE ZONE • PALAU • PALMAHIM SLIDE • PALMYRA ATOLL • PANGATALAN ISLAND • PATAGONIAN SHELF • • PLETTENBERG BAY • QUIRIMBAS ARCHIPELAGO • REVILLAGIGEDO  
ARCHIPELAGO • ROSS SEA • SAINT BARTHÉLEMY • SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES • SALAS Y GOMEZ AND NAZCA RIDGES • SALISBURY ISLAND • SALISH SEA • SAN FRANCISCO BAY  
SARGASSO SEA • SCOTT ISLANDS • SHINNECOCK BAY • SOUTH SAN JORGE GULF HOPE SPOT • SOUTHEAST SHOAL OF THE GRAND BANKS • SUBANTARCTIC ISLANDS & SURROUNDING SEAS  
SVALBARD ARCHIPELAGO • SYDNEY COAST • TASMAN SEA • TAVARUA ISLAND • TENERIFE-LA GOMERA • TETIAROA ATOLL • GREAT FRINGING REEF OF THE RED SEA • GREAT SOUTHERN REEF  
TRIBUGA GULF • TROPICAL PACIFIC SEA OF PERU • TUBBATAHA REEFS NATURAL PARK • VARADERO'S CORAL REEF • WALTER'S SHOAL • WESTERN PACIFIC DONUT HOLE 1 • WESTERN PACIFIC  
DONUT HOLE 2 • WESTERN PACIFIC DONUT HOLE 3 • WESTERN PACIFIC DONUT HOLE 4 • WHALE AND DOLPHIN SANCTUARY OF URUGUAY • WHITE SHARK CAFE • WIDER VATIKA BAY • WOTHO ATOLL



## Mission Blue Hope Spots Protecting the Ocean with Passion and Action

Mission Blue's guiding principle, "Wish, Act, Protect," spurred the expansion of Hope Spots across grassroots, governmental, and scientific sectors. The public's enthusiastic support and participation are turning the vision of positive change into reality.

Mission Blue launched a series of new Hope Spots throughout 2022. The enduring dedication of our Champions and partners globally demonstrates the effectiveness of the concept, as they collaborate on a range of projects aimed at enhancing ocean care and conservation. In marine protection, Hope Spots serve a vital function, typically acting as a catalyst for further action. This may involve assisting champions with a management plan for an MPA or advocating for existing protected areas. Hope Spots appeal to

local organizations and NGOs while also drawing the interest of global marine experts. At Mission Blue, we recognize the unprecedented challenges that the ocean faces today. However, the impact of Hope Spots worldwide encourages community involvement and fosters optimism. We continuously provide our online community with updates and accomplishments from our Hope Spots, including our "Hope Spots in Action" newsletters.

Hope Spot Champions have made significant strides in ocean conservation in 2022, and we anticipate even greater progress in the years to come, bolstered by the commitment of our Champions, partners, and the wider public.

**14** new Hope Spots were launched in 2022:

- + **Inhambane Seascape**, Mozambique
- + **Sargasso Sea**, Atlantic Ocean
- + **Saint Barthélemy**, Caribbean
- + **Kahalu'u Bay**, Hawaii
- + **Shinnecock Bay**, New York
- + **Costa Rica Thermal Dome**, Eastern Tropical Pacific
- + **Charlie-Gibbs Fracture Zone**, Atlantic Ocean
- + **Palmahim Slide**, Israel
- + **Southern Hong Kong**, Hong Kong
- + **George Town**, Cayman Islands
- + **Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park**, Philippines
- + **South San Jorge Gulf**, Argentina
- + **Great Fringing Reef of the Red Sea**, Egypt
- + **Revillagigedo Archipelago**, Mexico

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# Inhambane Seascape



## Highlighted Hope Spot

### Inhambane Seascape, Mozambique

**T**he **Inhambane Seascape**, located along the Inhambane coastline in Mozambique, was designated a Hope Spot due to its exceptional marine biodiversity and outstanding natural heritage. The region has been recognized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as a globally outstanding marine conservation area, and it has also been acknowledged as a potential world heritage site by UNESCO. Dr. Andrea Marshall, the co-founder of the Marine Megafauna Foundation (MMF), has dedicated her life to supporting the conservation of endangered marine species in the area.

Despite being an important region for numerous species, including manta rays, dugongs, critically endangered wedgefish, and sea turtles, substantial

areas in both the northern and southern ends of the province remain unprotected and unmonitored. This lack of protection has led to the decline of these threatened species due to fishing pressure and destructive fishing practices. To help address this issue, MMF and its partners are working with the government of Mozambique to meet the UN Convention on Biological Diversity's goal of formally protecting 10% of its territorial waters by 2024 and ultimately protecting 30% by 2030.

The tourism industry in the Vilankulo coastal town, which serves as the gateway to the Bazaruto Archipelago and surrounding area, is vital for the region's economic sustainability. The tourism association and the mayor of Vilankulo have emphasized the importance of protecting the ocean surrounding the area.

Conservation biologist and nature photographer Dr. Jen Guyton have described the ecosystem as beautiful and inspiring, underscoring the need to protect it for future generations to experience. Dr. Andrea Marshall and her team will continue to pioneer the exploration of this remote coastline and lobby for its formal protection.

They believe that the Hope Spot designation can help raise awareness of the Inhambane Seascape's unique value and ensure that it receives the protection and management it deserves.



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# Sargasso Sea





## Highlighted Hope Spot

### Sargasso Sea, Atlantic Ocean

**Sargasso Sea Hope Spot** — a vast high seas ecosystem in the Atlantic Ocean with no land boundaries. Defined by the major currents within the North Atlantic Gyre, it covers a vast expanse of over five million square kilometers of water. Sun-soaked, free-floating yellow Sargassum seaweed forms extensive mats that bob at the surface, giving the area its distinctive “floating golden rainforest of the Atlantic Ocean” nickname. This area is home to a wide range of marine species, including the sargassum fish, and provides a nursery habitat for numerous kinds of eels, marlin, dolphinfish, and more. Migratory species such as humpback whales, birds, turtles, and tuna also rely on the Sargasso Sea.

The Sargasso Sea is poised for its first-ever Ecosystem Diagnostic Analysis (EDA). This analysis, granted

to the *Sargasso Sea Commission* from the *Global Environment Facility* and the *Fonds français pour l'environnement mondial*, will be conducted for the first time on a well-defined high seas ecosystem. The EDA aims to inform the development of a stakeholder-endorsed Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for future stewardship of the Sargasso Sea. The SAP will offer more robust stewardship approaches than ever before and will help protect this unique and fragile part of the planet’s ocean system.

The Sargasso Sea Commission, which was formed in 2009 to protect the North Atlantic ecosystem, is responsible for safeguarding the health, productivity, and resilience of the Sargasso Sea. The commission works to promote international recognition of the area’s importance, encourage scientific research, and

develop proposals for submission to existing organizations to promote the objectives of the Hamilton Declaration. The commission is championing the Sargasso Sea as a Hope Spot and expects that the upcoming Ecosystem Diagnostic Analysis will allow for the development of the SAP, providing comprehensive protection of this high seas ecosystem.

The EDA will provide an ongoing basis for monitoring and subsequent stewardship and management responses. The commission believes that the comprehensive protection of the Sargasso Sea will offer hope for the future of high seas conservation and that similar mechanisms could be developed across other ecosystems around the world.

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# Tubbataha Reefs

BRANCHING CORAL BEDS, TUBBATAHA © ERIC MADEJA



## Highlighted Hope Spot

### Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, Philippines

**D**esignated as a Hope Spot in August 2022, **Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park** is the only exclusively marine World Heritage site in Southeast Asia. The Tubbataha Management Office, together with Katherine “Trin” Custodio, Executive Director of WWF-Philippines, and Angelique Songco, Protected Area Superintendent, are the Hope Spot Champions. Despite destructive fishing practices and coral bleaching events, Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park has shown great resilience over the last two decades.

Waters outside the marine protected area benefit from the spillover effect from the healthy populations within the reserve. However, the park’s few rangers lack resources and live in poor conditions. Although the foundation of the new ranger and research station has been laid, insufficient funds exist

to complete the station. Completion of the station will require additional aid.

The Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, the largest marine protected area in the Philippines, operates under a strict no-take policy, providing a relatively controlled environment for research on the marine ecosystem’s biophysical elements. Comprising two uninhabited atolls and a reef with reef platforms that are mostly submerged, Tubbataha Reefs was once a traditional fishing ground of the Kagayanen people. Climate change-related challenges, including coral bleaching and increased storm frequency and intensity, are among the most pressing issues that the park faces. The duo stresses that the park needs help to continue conservation activities and research, which will inform conservation policy.



BROWN BOOBY © TET LARA

The Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, located in the heart of the Coral Triangle, the global center of marine biodiversity, is home to over 360 identified species of coral and charismatic creatures including whales, dolphins, and sea turtles. The park is even depicted on the Philippine one thousand-peso note. Increased research and studies will aid in a better understanding of the reefs, the ecosystem, and the organisms’ responses to climate change.

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“The biggest challenge is how to affect public attitudes and inspire people to care.”

DR. SYLVIA EARLE



## Hope Spots On the Global Stage Protection for these Indispensable Ecosystems

Protecting the ocean is not just about preserving something beautiful. It's about conserving the very foundations of the planet's biodiversity, climate stability, and global security. By focusing on Hope Spots and participating in important climate and biodiversity policy events, Mission Blue is working to ensure that the ocean remains a thriving and healthy life support system for many generations to come.

One of the ways we do this is by identifying and protecting Hope Spots. These are special places that are critical to the health of the ocean and the planet as a whole. Some Hope Spots are already formally protected, while others still need our help. By identifying and protecting these areas, we can ensure that the ocean remains a vibrant and thriving ecosystem for generations to come. Hope Spots are a powerful tool

for conservation because they can help identify areas that need protection and inspire people to take action. When people learn about these special places, they become passionate about protecting them. They realize that the ocean is not just a vast, empty space, but a complex and vital network of highly connected ecosystems that need our help, as never before.

2022 found Mission Blue involved in many important climate and biodiversity policy events around the world. For example, we participated in the Blue Climate Summit in Tetiaroa and the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon, which brought together leaders from around the world to discuss how we can protect the ocean from climate change and biodiversity loss. We were honored to take part in the vital international climate conferences, COP 15 in Canada and COP 27 in Egypt. These are significant

events where countries come together to discuss how we can best tackle the urgent issue of climate change and how it is tied to the health of the ocean. By championing the importance of Hope Spots, Mission Blue has become an influential participant in the global conversation about ocean conservation. We are committed to sharing our knowledge and experience with others to help achieve a healthy and thriving planet.

In addition to these events, Mission Blue is also involved in planning for the 2023 Antarctic Climate Conference at Sea. This conference will bring together scientists and policymakers from around the world to discuss how we can protect Antarctica from the continued ravages of climate change. As one of the most vulnerable areas on our planet, it's indispensable that we protect this essential ecosystem.

## 2022 Highlights

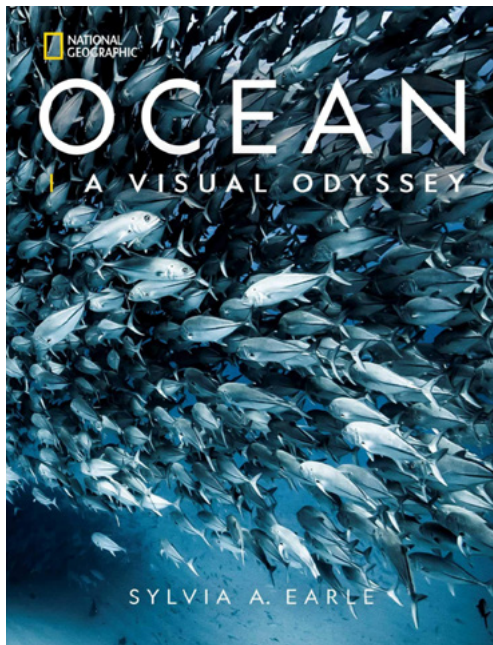


EGYPTIAN RED SEA © RENATA ROMEO

As pandemic restrictions relaxed in many parts of the world, Mission Blue continued to support the global goal to protect at least 30% of the world's ocean by 2030.

- On January 14<sup>th</sup>, an official decree was signed by President Guillermo Lasso of Ecuador, enhancing the marine protected area around the Galápagos Archipelago. Dr. Sylvia Earle spoke at the event and joined President Ivan Duque of Columbia, former U.S. President William Clinton, and other dignitaries in celebrating the expansion of protection by 60,000 square kilometers, half of which will be fully protected where no extractive activities are allowed. This new protected area will extend to the maritime border of Costa Rica, opening up opportunities for international cooperation to protect marine life such as sharks, sea turtles, and whales.
- At the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Dr. Sylvia Earle spoke at many events and took part in the announcement of the significant expansion of marine protected areas (MPAs) in Colombia.
- The Mission Blue team celebrated Prince Hussain Aga Khan's exhibit at the Ismaili Centre and participated in numerous side meetings with partners and attendees.
- Portugal expanded its MPAs in the Azores Archipelago and Madeira to meet its 30x30 commitment to protect 30% of its ocean by 2030.
- Uruguay announced a new marine protected area in the **Whale and Dolphin Sanctuary of Uruguay Hope Spot**. [\[+ READ MORE \]](#)
- The Dominican Republic made a commitment to protect 30% of its territorial waters by 2030.
- The government of Palau, with Fiji and Samoa, launched a new alliance of countries calling for a moratorium on deep sea mining.
- At COP27, the United Nations Climate Conference in Sharm el Sheik, Egypt, the Mission Blue team launched the **Great Fringing Reef Hope Spot** and a commitment was made by Egypt to protect all of their coral reefs. [\[+ READ MORE \]](#)
- In a 10-part video series called Aloha 'ina Kahalu'u, locals & visitors are given an overview of **Kahalu'u Bay Hope Spot** and instructions on how to interact respectfully.





## 2022 Media Highlights



- The **Salish Sea Hope Spot**: Washington State bans commercial net-pen fish farming.
- The **Cagarras Islands Hope Spot** had a successful monitoring season for humpback whales.
- Mission Blue engaged in a **Galápagos Islands Hope Spot** Expedition with a team of scientists & policy-makers.
- Dr. Sylvia Earle's book '**Ocean: A Global Odyssey**' continues to be a great success, and was featured at a number of events, particularly at aquariums across the US.
- **Mission Blue's 2022 webinar series** — receiving over 4,000 registrations, including a webinar about Hope Spots in Australia, as well as one about storytelling through photography.
- **Without Dr. Sylvia Earle, We'd Be Living on Google Dirt** | *The New Yorker* | [\[+ STORY\]](#)
- **Dr. Sylvia Earle: 'Every time I go into the water, I see things I've never seen before'** | *CNN* | [\[+ STORY\]](#)
- **Blue Crush: The Sea Could Save Us** | *CNN* | [\[+ STORY\]](#)
- **Dr. Sylvia Earle on the Need to Protect Our Planet** | *CNBC* | [\[+ VIDEO\]](#)
- **Climate Solutions: A Conversation with Dr. Sylvia Earle** | *The Washington Post* | [\[+ VIDEO\]](#)
- **Top 6 MPA Wins in Hope Spots – 2022** | *YouTube* | [\[+ VIDEO\]](#)

## 2022 Expeditions



MV ARGO, GALÁPAGOS EXPEDITION © KIP EVANS

Exploration is at the heart of all Mission Blue expeditions. By supporting researchers and filmmakers to explore Hope Spots, we shine a global spotlight on conservation science, policy, and passionate communities that are making a difference in saving the ocean. The content created increases engagement and inspires action.

On our expeditions, we have explored over 30 Hope Spots to date, with upcoming expeditions to Antarctica, the Dominican Republic, and the Cayman Islands.

The July 2022 [Galápagos Islands Hope Spot](#) Expedition was a major undertaking for Mission Blue and a great success. Supported by a generous grant from National Geographic Society, over a dozen

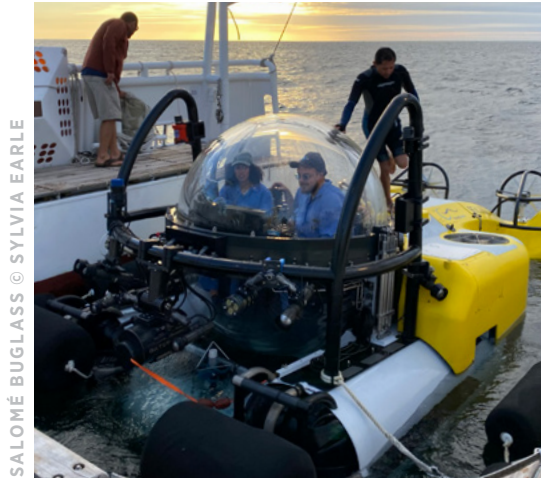
researchers led by Dr. Sylvia Earle and the local Hope Spot Champion, Professor Alex Hearn, teamed up onboard the vessel MV Argo to take stock of the past successes of the Galápagos Marine Reserve and identify challenges on the horizon as the Reserve's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaches.

As National Geographic Explorer At Large, Dr. Earle received funds in support of the 2022 Galápagos Expedition and provided opportunities for researcher Salome Buglass to document deep water kelp forests, the topic of her PhD dissertation at the University of British Columbia.

A press event at the midpoint of the expedition allowed Dr. Earle to dive in the DeepSee submersible with Gustavo Manrique, Ecuador's Minister of Environ-

ment, and CNN anchor Amaro Gomez Pablo. The team used a wide variety of tools and techniques to collect data in addition to the DeepSee, including baited remote underwater video systems (BRUVS) to record fish population metrics, biologists to measure flightless seabird foraging behavior, and underwater transects performed via SCUBA to collect population data for cryptic and "forgotten" species such as the slipper lobster (*Scyllarides astori*) and bullhead horn shark (*Heterodontus quoyi*).

The expedition was also enhanced by the generous in-kind donation of dive gear for the research team by SCUBAPRO.



SALOMÉ BUGLASS © SYLVIA EARLE



2022 GALÁPAGOS EXPEDITION © ALEX HEARN

The Mission Blue communications team released an immersive series of content from the expedition, including multiple blog articles, short films from DSP, and social media storytelling in collaboration with Rolex and their own expedition filmmaking team from Proudfoot.

- **A Witness to Hope: Celebrating 25 years of the Galápagos Marine Reserve**
- **The Quest for Kelp and Diving with Dr. Earle**

For a complete list of our Expedition Partners visit [the website](#).

October and November 2022, Mission Blue participated in the Monaco Explorations Indian Ocean Expedition to the **Outer Seychelles Hope Spot**, the high seas, and Mauritius.

Carl Gustaf Lundin, chair of the International Advisory Committee, and Dr. Earle took part in planning meetings for this partner expedition, which hosted 130 researchers, divers, communicators, civil society actors, content creators, and artists. The expedition focused on Aldabra and the **Saya de Malha Bank**, the largest submerged high seas bank in the world.

Earlier in 2022, Max Bello, Mission Blue's Advisor of Global Ocean Policy, led policy efforts during partner expeditions to Panama and Uruguay.



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# ROLEX Perpetual Planet Initiative





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## ROLEX and Mission Blue Driving Ocean Conservation through Collaboration



With support from Rolex, Dr. Sylvia Earle’s visionary idea has been brought to life. From its inception in 2009, Hope Spots now encompass 160 global sites. Each Hope Spot is driven by a Champion. Each Champion moves us closer to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of 30% of ocean protection by 2030.

Since 2014, Rolex has helped Mission Blue steadily expand its programmatic work in outreach, expeditions, global engagement, policy and science. The momentum for Hope Spots continues to grow at the grassroots level, as well as within government and scientific communities.

In 2022, Rolex bolstered Mission Blue’s capacity to support the Hope Spot network of over 160 sites through the following:

- Support for analysis to identify Hope Spots with policy opportunities
- Direct resources for Champions to activate new projects locally
- Integration of latest ESRI technologies to enable stronger reporting for on the ground impact
- Implementation of scientific methodologies for shared best practice within the network
- Support for expeditions and ground-breaking research

Together, we will continue to empower Hope Spot champions — change agents — and communities to explore, protect and care for the living ocean.

## Featured ROLEX Videos



## 2022 ROLEX Grants for Hope Spot Champions

### Gulf of California



**Champion: Dr. James Ketchum**  
**Pelagios Kakunja Marine Conservation**  
[pelagioskakunja.org](http://pelagioskakunja.org)

### Nusa Penida MPA



**Champion: Rili Djohani**  
**Coral Triangle Center**  
[coraltrianglecenter.org](http://coraltrianglecenter.org)

### Golfo Dulce



**Champion: Ilena Garcia**  
**Misión Tiburón**  
[misiontiburon.org](http://misiontiburon.org)

### Bocas del Toro Archipelago

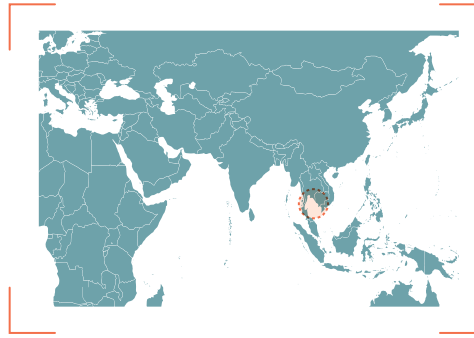


**Champion: Krista Shoe**  
**Mother of Corals**  
[motherofcorals.org](http://motherofcorals.org)

### Kep Archipelago



**Champion: Rachana Thap**  
**Marine Conservation Cambodia**  
[marineconservationcambodia.org](http://marineconservationcambodia.org)



## Featured Grantees for 2022 **Kep Archipelago Hope Spot** **Gulf of California Hope Spot**

**Champion: Rachana Thap**

The **Kep Archipelago Hope Spot** is located in southern coastal Cambodia. It is about 113 square kilometers in size, encompassing a dozen islands covered with tropical forests. These islands are known for their tranquil waters and, at one time, some of the most exquisite seagrass meadows in Southeast Asia. Irrawaddy dolphins, dugongs, giant clams, and Cambodia's largest concentration of seahorses can be found here. The area has unfortunately incurred considerable damage from illegal fishing and destructive bottom trawling practices that have severely damaged parts of the seafloor, creating an underwater desert.

The work of **Marine Conservation Cambodia (MCC)**, through research, direct conservation practices, and local activism, has helped to transform the Kep Archipelago's precious ecosystems and species, including the endangered and iconic Irrawaddy dolphin. Rolex's funding lends substantial support to the ongoing mission of MCC, working towards a brighter future for the archipelago and its inhabitants.

**Champion: Dr. James Ketchum**

The **Gulf of California**, known as the Sea of Cortez, is an important area for marine conservation and is one of Mission Blue's original Hope Spots. This region is home to an incredibly diverse and unique ecosystem, including over 900 species of fish and 32 species of marine mammals. Dr. James Ketchum, the Mission Blue Hope Spot Champion for the Gulf of California, has been studying the ecology and behavior of sharks in the region since 1998.

Once described by Jacques Cousteau as the 'world's aquarium,' the Gulf of California Hope Spot faces multiple threats, including overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change, which can imperil endangered species such as the vaquita porpoise and the leatherback sea turtle. Rolex's sponsorship of this Hope Spot highlights the importance of such conservation efforts and will support the work of Pelagios Kakunjá, which was co-founded by Dr. Ketchum and is committed to preserving the Gulf of California's ecosystem.

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# Three Visionary Donor Supported Initiatives





This tidal wave of progress is made possible, and inspired by the unwavering support of one of our key foundation partners, bringing us ever closer to safeguarding the ocean for future generations.

## Global Kelp Forests

- Raise public awareness and support for the protection of kelp forests worldwide.
- Organize a hybrid workshop, blending in-person and virtual participation, to unite leading kelp researchers globally.
- Champion existing research and restoration projects in Hope Spots to ensure the continued growth and preservation of kelp forests.
- Develop a compelling kelp forest campaign, drawing on insights from Hope Spot Champions and kelp researchers.

## Chile/Patagonia

- Strengthen public advocacy for the safeguarding of Patagonia's marine treasures.
- Foster collaborative government consultations with local NGOs and communities to ensure well-rounded conservation efforts.
- Support scientific research that underlines the necessity of crucial marine conservation measures.

## Indonesia

- Collaborate with the Coral Triangle Center in Bali to enhance the effectiveness of marine protected area management in the **Nusa Penida Marine Protected Area Hope Spot** and the Banda Islands.
- Assist the **Coral Triangle Center** in restoring vital coral reef habitats across Indonesia.
- Support ReShark's endeavors to ship, release, and monitor zebra shark pups at Wayag Lagoon, Raja Ampat, and organize the **ReShark Retreat at the Seattle Aquarium** for Indonesian partners.

# By the Numbers

Reaching  
**6.2 Million People**  
Per Month  
On Our Media Platforms

The Hope Spot Network  
covers over  
**58 Million km<sup>2</sup>**  
of the Planet's Ocean

**12 New**  
**Hope Spots**  
Designated

Per Year  
**1,028,626**  
Engagements

**151**  
**Hope Spots**  
Launched Since 2010

**707 Posts**  
about Hope Spots on  
Mission Blue's Channels

**14 New**  
**Hope Spots**  
Launched

Dr. Earle had well over  
**100**  
Public Appearances

MISSION BLUE HOPE SPOTS  
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

More than  
**1,365**  
Social Media Posts  
on 5 Online Channels

Mission Blue's  
Online Community has  
**1.2 Million Followers**

## Communications and Outreach Putting Hope Spots on the Global Stage

**M**ission Blue has continued to grow and engage across all of its communication channels. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our team, we launched an impressive 14 new Hope Spots this year, expanding our network of Hope Spots and raising awareness about their critical importance.

We also released thousands of pieces of content across various platforms, including our website and social media channels, reaching a wider audience than ever before.

Our newsletters and webinars proved to be successful avenues for sharing our message, and we are proud to have kept our Hope Spot Information Platform accurate and up to date.

We also executed content campaigns that both inspired and educated our followers and produced fundraising campaigns that have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support our mission.

Our thanks go out to the generous support of the Gallifrey Foundation, which produced a unique and insightful series of voices from the ocean, featuring the likes of the magnificent Goliath Grouper. These initiatives helped to provide a different perspective on ocean life, highlighting the beauty and importance of the ocean ecosystem.

We are thrilled with the progress we have made this year, and we are excited to continue building momentum in the years to come.

“Far and away, the greatest threat to the ocean, and thus to ourselves, is ignorance. But we can do something about that.” DR. SYLVIA EARLE

## Digital Content Library

All of Mission Blue’s digital data is now housed on four redundant servers and optimized for data security as well as utilization by the communications team to create content and respond to media requests.

## By the Numbers

- Mission Blue’s online community has 1,217,928 followers across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Mission Blue’s social media content received 1,028,626 engagements in 2022, and reached more than 6.2 million people per month
- Mission Blue shared over 1,365 pieces of content across its social channels

MISSION BLUE

# 30X30 Ocean Protection



30%

of the Ocean  
by 2030

OCEAN CONSERVATION TARGET





## Realizing Protection for Hope Spots Global Ocean Policy Agenda

Scientists, the conservation community, and many countries around the world will advance actions to deliver on key internationally agreed ocean conservation targets, including the effort to protect at least 30% of the ocean by 2030 (30x30).

This target has been a key enabler for the work we do around the world, working country by country to accelerate the protection of the ocean.

In 2023, Mission Blue will work closely with its key partners, including **The Pew Charitable Trusts, Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy, The Wyss Foundation, Blue Marine Foundation**, and Minderoo Foundation, to advance protection in key countries.

Additionally, Mission Blue will participate in strategic meetings and impactful initiatives to ensure marine protected areas are prioritized as a key action to address the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

## Meeting World Leaders

- **Ecuador:** President Guillermo Lasso
- **Colombia:** President Ivan Duque Marquez
- **Monaco:** HSH Prince Albert II
- **United States:** Former President William Clinton
- **France:** President Emmanuel Macron
- **Seychelles:** Former President James Michel
- **Seychelles:** Former President Danny Faure
- **Palau:** President Surangel Whipps, Jr.
- **Palau:** Former President Tommy Remengesau
- **French Polynesia:** President Edouard Fritch
- **Portugal:** President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa

## Partnerships

### Building Successful Relationships

More influential partners have stepped up to work with Mission Blue as we continue to gain traction across the globe, from grassroots Hope Spot efforts to working with individual governments and participation at United Nations and other international events. The partners include:

- IUCN
- United Nations, Ocean Conferences
- The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition
- Deep Sea Mining Campaign
- The Ocean Race
- The Sustainable Ocean Alliance
- Marine Conservation Institute
- Camper & Nicholsons
- Parley for the Ocean / Forests of the Sea
- Ocean Geographic

Mission Blue is working with corporations, foundations, the scientific community, and NGOs to increase our combined reach and impact. One of Mission Blue's most notable collaborations is with ROLEX, a long-term partnership that enables us to maximize the visibility of Hope Spots through their channels and sponsored media. Throughout this partnership, ocean conservation and Hope Spots' role in protecting marine ecosystems have been brought to the forefront.

We have established partnerships with over 250 NGOs. By leveraging each other's unique skills and strengths, the partnerships allow these organizations to implement both grassroots and policy-level initiatives to achieve our mutual conservation goals.

The progress these partnerships are making toward preserving Hope Spots and raising awareness about ocean conservation continues to inspire us.

Mission Blue's efforts encourage a diverse range of partnerships, all working together towards the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems and are crucial to the preservation of our ocean.

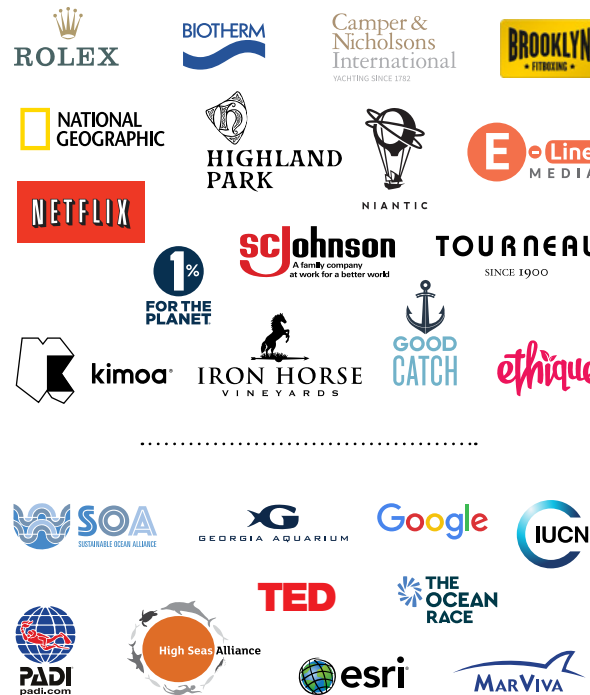
For a complete list of our Partners visit [the website](#).



## Corporate and Strategic Partnerships

## Supporting Foundation and NGO Partners

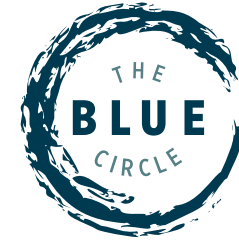
We are proud to have formalized our membership with the **Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition** (ASOC). Since 1978, ASOC has been the leading voice for Antarctic conservation, working solely for the protection of Antarctica and the surrounding Southern Ocean. As the only environmental NGO invited to observe Antarctic Treaty meetings, ASOC works at the highest levels of Antarctic governance to effect change from within. They represent the Antarctic conservation community in the halls of power, where globally significant decisions about the future of Antarctica are made. Working alongside coalition members, partners, campaigners, and supporters, ASOC informs and motivates global leaders to protect Antarctica for all of humanity.



- ACTAI Global
- Paul M. Angell Family Foundation
- Arthur Vining Davis Foundations
- Avatar Alliance Foundation
- Baum Foundation
- Bettner Family Fund
- Big G Charitable Foundation
- Bunting Family Foundation
- Campbell Foundation
- CodeBlue Foundation
- Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation
- Dalio Philanthropies
- Dorothy Jordan Chadwick Fund
- Earth Sense Foundation
- EarthX
- Fremarch Foundation
- Fuller Foundation, Inc.
- Galesi Family Foundation
- Gallifrey Foundation
- Giving Foundation
- Glazer Foundation
- Gulf Coast Community Foundation
- Hayes Foundation
- Jessee Gift Fund
- Jewish Community Foundation
- Joy Family Foundation
- Lester E. Kabakoff Family Foundation
- Livingston's Way
- Marisla Foundation
- McNabb Foundation
- Minneapolis Foundation
- Oak Foundation
- Patagonia
- PEW
- Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy
- Phaneros Foundation
- Philip Stephenson Foundation
- Pledgeling Foundation
- Plum Foundation
- Fondation Prince Albert II de Monaco
- Princess Grace Foundation, USA
- RE:ACTION Foundation
- Renaissance Charitable Foundation
- Rim of Heaven Foundation
- Seattle Foundation
- Shoe Foundation
- SunLight Time Foundation
- Lynnette & Foster Freiss Foundation
- Tides, A Force for Social Good
- Tiffany Foundation
- Wanderlust Fund
- Weisman Family Foundation
- William Penn Foundation
- Wyland Foundation
- Littlefield Foundation

“The ocean is a global reminder that time is fleeting, and that our actions have far-reaching consequences, both good and bad.”





## Big Thanks to Our Individual Donors

**I**ncreasingly, preserving our planet's resources has become an urgent matter, and the well-being of our blue planet depends on our ability to safeguard what remains. Here at Mission Blue, we are deeply dedicated to the task of protecting and restoring the ocean. Our mission is to work with passionate citizens and leaders from all over the world to make this vision a reality.

Our progress would not be possible without the ongoing support of generous donors like you, and we are immensely grateful for your contributions to our cause. Together, we can create a sustainable future for the ocean and all the life that depends on it.

We understand that our donors are the heart of our organization, and we appreciate your steadfast support. Your donations allow us to take concrete steps to protect the ocean and the countless species that call it home. We are committed to working alongside you to ensure that future generations inherit a planet where the ocean is healthy and thriving.

Thank you for your commitment to our mission and for being an essential part of our efforts to safeguard the ocean.

## Join The Blue Circle

**M**ission Blue has created The Blue Circle, an exceptional group of donors who realize that, by working together, we can protect the ocean, Earth's most precious resource — the blue heart of the planet. We are well on our way to developing a community of ocean protectors who have made a significant commitment to advance Mission Blue's globally important work.

To learn more about The Blue Circle [visit the website](#).

# Board of Directors



**Sylvia Earle, PhD**  
President & Co-Chair



**John Vermilye**  
Co-Chair



**Dona Bertarelli**



**Linda Glover**



**Sharon Kwok**



**Hussain Aga Khan**



**Gabrielle McGee**



**Shannon O'Leary**



**Robert Nixon**



**Shari Sant**



**Vasser Seydel**



**Will Travis**

## EMERITUS

Jenifer Austin  
Gigi Brisson  
Meg Caldwell  
Phyl Clempson  
Patty Elkus  
Erik Gordon  
John Hanke  
Daryl Hannah  
Michael Holland  
Ann Hurley  
Dan Laffoley  
Carl Gustaf Lundin  
Ann K. Luskey  
Greg MacGillivray  
Jim Toomey

# Mission Blue Staff



**Laura Cassiani**  
Chief Advancement  
Officer



**Waldo Martin**  
Chief Operating  
Officer



**Deb Castellana**  
Director  
Strategic Alliances



**Huntley Penniman**  
Director  
Communications



**Shannon Rake**  
Hope Spot Manager



**Max Bello**  
Director  
Global Ocean Policy



**Dr. Tessa Hempson**  
Chief Scientist



**Dan Laffoley, PhD**  
Chair  
Hope Spot Council



**Avrah Sellar**  
Communications  
Strategist



**Sean Malloy**  
Digital Content



**Brett Loveman**  
Digital Content



**Carolina Dratva**  
Development Consultant



**Courtney Mattison**  
Special Projects  
Consultant



**Amanda Townsel**  
Communications  
Consultant



**Susan Racanelli**  
Senior Director  
Philanthropy



**Robin Metoxen**  
Accounting

# Financial Report

## Financial Summary

### Assets

#### Current Assets

Checking/Savings	\$ 3,890,165
Accounts Receivable	\$ 50,605

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<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,940,770</b>
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Fixed Assets	\$ 14,886
Other Assets	\$ 1,600

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<b>Total Fixed &amp; Other Assets</b>	<b>\$ 16,486</b>
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<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,957,256</b>
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### Liabilities and Net Assets

#### Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$ 40,711
Other Current Liabilities	\$ 1,407

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<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 42,118</b>
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#### Net Assets

Beginning Net Assets	\$ 1,733,034
Without Donor Restrictions	\$ 512,319
Net Income	\$ 1,669,785

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<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,915,138</b>
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<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,957,256</b>
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**Revenues and Expenses**

**Revenue Without Donor Restrictions**

Corporate Contributions	\$ 7,968
Foundation Contributions	\$ 140,050
Board Members	\$ 160,000
Individual Contributions	\$ 743,118

**Total Revenue**

**Without Donor Restrictions \$ 1,051,136**

Revenue With Donor Restrictions	\$ 3,132,552
Investments	- \$ 13,733
Program Income	\$ 16,183

**Total Income**

**\$ 3,135,002**

**Total Revenue**

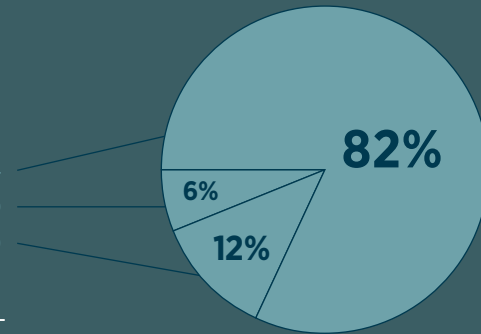
**\$ 4,186,138**

**Expenses**

Hope Spot Programs	\$ 2,058,224
Operations	\$ 154,260
Development	\$ 303,869

**Total Expenses**

**\$ 2,516,353**



Mission Blue Financials are available at [missionblue.org/about](https://missionblue.org/about)

## Mission Blue 2022 – Mission Blue, by Dr. Sylvia Earle There is Reason for Optimism

Looking back on the year 2022, there are new reasons for optimism that counter grave concerns about a potential planetary melt-down. Knowing is the key.

U.S. Special Envoy for Climate, John Forbes Kerry, has acknowledged that to solve the climate crisis, it is necessary to solve the ocean crisis and to solve the ocean crisis, it is necessary to solve the climate crisis.

The crisis has been and still is largely driven by a lack of awareness about what makes Earth habitable in a universe that is extremely hostile to life as we know it.

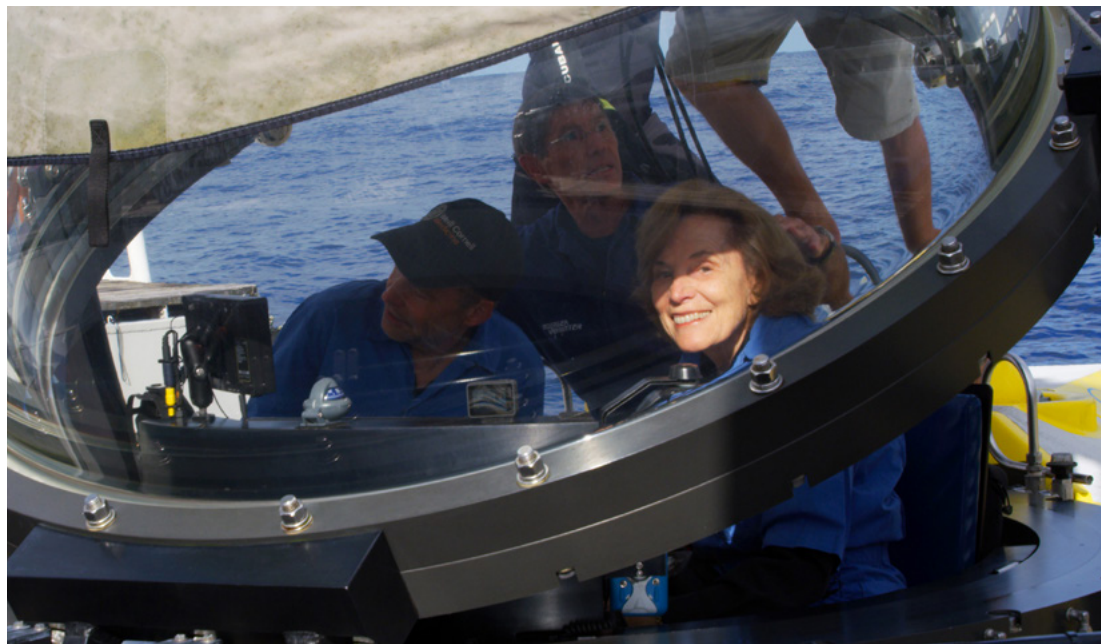
By consuming other species and converting wild lands and wild waters to favor ourselves, we have prospered beyond any other species, largely oblivious to the unintended consequences to planetary

chemistry and temperature. By the end of this century, at the present rate of extinction, more than a million species will be gone, no longer contributing to Earth's unique and tightly coupled biogeochemical systems — with emphasis on the “bio” — that we need to survive. Poverty, war, disease, and injustice flourish on an impoverished planet.

In 2022, the human population reached 8 billion, twice the number that existed in 1980. While our numbers are growing, wildlife and wild places are shrinking. Temperatures, ocean acidification, and pollution are increasing. Polar ice is declining, and sea levels are rising. Twenty-first-century humans are witnessing an unfavorable geological change in the span of a lifetime. In the sea, about half of the coral reefs, kelp forests, mangroves, seagrass meadows,

and coastal marshes have disappeared since the 1980s. Thousands of terrestrial species have become endangered, while many commercially exploited freshwater and ocean animals have been diminished by 90%. Fewer than 3 percent of the original bluefin tuna population roams the Pacific; only about 1% of the once abundant and widespread shortfin mako and oceanic white tip shark populations remain.

The reason for optimism? Now we know, as never before, why it matters to protect the fabric of life that makes Earth hospitable for our existence. After decades of deliberation, nations have come together with plans for a treaty enabling protection for the High Seas, about half of the planet, coupled with the widely-proclaimed 30x30 protection of land and ocean by 2030.



© KIP EVANS






A dozen sites designated as Hope Spots in 2009 now number over 150 community-based, data-gathering, champion-supported places, a steady growing global network of hope.

Mission Blue's charge, to "save and restore the blue heart of the planet," resonates with those who understand why the living ocean matters to everyone, everywhere, all of the time — "with every breath we take, every drop of water we drink."

Bravo and thanks to all of you — the individuals, the organizations, institutions, and corporations who are turning hope into action, taking on the challenge of securing an enduring future for ourselves within the natural systems that sustain us — **Mission Possible.**

## Be Part of the Action

Stay current with our important work via our social media channels.  
Join our social media community:

-  **Facebook**
-  **Twitter**
-  **Instagram**
-  **YouTube**
-  **Our Newsletter**

MISSION BLUE

“No Ocean, No Life.”

NORTH ATOLL, TUBBATAHA © TOMMY SCHULTZ





# No Blue, No Green.”



MISSIONBLUE™

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