



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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World Heritage Convention



WORLD HERITAGE MARINE PROGRAMME

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NEWSLETTER



Photo courtesy of Marc Spalding

Assessing Marine World Heritage in the Indian Ocean

In support of the Global Strategy toward a balanced, credible, and representative World Heritage List, a comparative regional assessment is being undertaken in the Indian Ocean. The assessment will focus on identifying and describing potential new marine sites that could be of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). In particular, the study focuses on marine areas under the jurisdictions of Comoros, France (Mayotte and Reunion Islands), Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, and Tanzania.

Funded through the Flanders Funds in Trust Agreement with UNESCO, with additional support from the Government of France, this project also aims to lay

the foundation for a more science-based approach toward identification of new potential marine World Heritage sites globally.

This initiative will assist national governments in the region with the nomination of marine World Heritage sites. In particular, it will help governments illustrate the comparative importance of sites at a global scale.

The assessment includes a meeting in Reunion Island, France, 14-16 February 2012, and will be finalized in June 2012. The Flanders Institute for the Sea (Belgium)



Mission of the World Heritage Marine Programme

Launched in 2005, the mission of the World Heritage Marine Programme is to establish effective conservation of existing and potential marine areas of Outstanding Universal Value to make sure they will be maintained and thrive for generations to come.

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Goals of the World Heritage Marine Programme

- Strengthen the credibility of the World Heritage List
- Strengthen conservation and capacity building for marine World Heritage sites
- Strengthen communication and outreach about the World Heritage Convention as an instrument for marine conservation

What is Marine World Heritage?



[WATCH 3 MINUTE VIDEO](#)

By the Numbers

There are 45 World Heritage marine sites in 34 countries inscribed on the World Heritage List. Jointly, marine World Heritage sites comprise one third of the planet's marine protected areas.

Funding

All World Heritage Marine Programme conservation activities are made possible thanks to the generous, ongoing support of Tides of Time partners Jaeger-LeCoultre and the International Herald Tribune, and the Government of Flanders.



Photo courtesy of Marc Spalding

Assessing Potential Marine World Heritage Sites in the Indian Ocean

Continued from page 1

will host an online database with literature and information.

Based on an analysis of existing marine World Heritage sites and their distribution among the 18 IUCN marine regions, the Indian Ocean has been identified as one of the marine regions under-represented on the World Heritage List. Presently, only two marine World Heritage sites are located in the Indian Ocean region: iSimangaliso Wetland Park in South Africa, listed in 1999, and Aldabra Atoll in Seychelles, listed in 1982. •

Strengthening the Network of Marine World Heritage Site Managers

Beginning in the early 1980s, with the listing of Australia’s Great Barrier Reef, 45 marine sites have been added to the World Heritage List—each with unique Outstanding Universal Value. Together, these sites are the crown jewels of the ocean and include some of the planet’s most pristine marine areas. Collectively, the site managers, technical teams, and local communities involved in site conservation represent a tremendous reservoir of expertise and experience. Considering the great challenges that lie ahead in protecting these special marine places, bringing that potential together is the key to forming a collective system of World Heritage site management rather than a loose collection of 45 sites—a system that is more than the sum of the individual parts.

Despite the differences in size and socio-economic conditions, many World Heritage marine site managers have common interests and concerns and can benefit hugely from working together. To enhance and promote the exchange of

good practices, the World Heritage Marine Programme is developing a site managers website. The website, launched in late 2011, consolidates information from all of the individual marine World Heritage sites management systems. It also contains management resources for marine sites, links to key topics, and a blog where marine World Heritage site managers can correspond with one another and learn from each other’s experience. In 2012, management best practices will be added.

In December 2010, all marine World Heritage site managers came together in Honolulu, Hawaii to discuss their management challenges and good practices. The site managers website is an outcome of those discussions. •



WATCH VIDEO ABOUT SITE MANAGERS



Photo courtesy of Tony Howard, Department of Environment and Conservation

New Marine World Heritage Sites Added

Australia’s Ningaloo Coast and **Japan’s Ogasawara Islands** were inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List during the 35th World Heritage Committee meeting in June 2011. There are now **45 World Heritage Sites** inscribed specifically for their exceptional marine values.

The 604,500 hectare marine and terrestrial property of Ningaloo Coast, on the western coast of Australia, includes one of the world’s longest near-shore reefs, extensive karst geology, and a network of underground caves and waterways. **Ningaloo Coast** is rich in marine life, including a wealth of sea turtles and annual gatherings of whale sharks. In addition, the site’s underground waterways support a variety of rare species.

The **Ogasawara Islands** are situated some 1,000 km south of Japan’s main archipelago and cover a surface area of 7,393 hectares. The ecosystems on the islands reflect a range of evolutionary processes illustrated through plant species from both southeast and northwest Asia, alongside many endemic species. The islands offer a variety of landscapes and habitat for a wealth of fauna, including the Bonin Flying Fox, a critically endangered bat, and 195 endangered bird species. Four hundred and forty-one native plant taxa have been documented on the islands. The surrounding waters support numerous species of fish, cetaceans, and corals. •



Photo courtesy of Martin Lange, 2011

A Roadmap for Capacity Building in Marine World Heritage Sites

In early 2011, the World Heritage Marine Programme led an assessment of threats and management gaps among all marine World Heritage sites. The objective was to better tailor the programme's capacity building and training initiatives to the actual needs of marine World Heritage site managers and their teams. The assessment surveyed site managers and also included a review of all official World Heritage Committee decisions made for each of the World Heritage marine sites over the past 10 years, with a focus on current and potential threats to the sites' OUV and management gaps.

A survey request for basic information about World Heritage marine site annual budgets and staffing showed significant differences in resources available to individual sites. In high-income countries (HICs), sites have an annual budget that

is typically ten times larger than in non-HIC countries.

Habitat loss was the highest-rated threat, closely followed by climate change, marine pollution, and overfishing. About two-thirds of the World Heritage marine sites appear to be affected by poor land use practices, tourism, and habitat loss as a result of coastal development, land reclamation, and dredging. Invasive species due to climate change were identified as the biggest future threats, with changes in sea temperature and ocean acidification as major disturbing factors, particularly in the 20 marine sites containing coral reefs. Overfishing was felt to be less of a problem in the future—sadly because there will likely be less fish to catch.

Unsurprisingly, a wide majority of site managers singled out financial resources

and staff, equipment, and facilities as some of the biggest management challenges. However, the regulation of outside influences and the ability to provide adequate monitoring and evaluation were considered equally important management issues.

The World Heritage Marine Programme is drafting a capacity-building strategy with priorities for the next three years, 2012-2015. The strategy takes into account the wealth of information, capacity, and expertise that exists among site managers, and the power this community can have when speaking with one voice. The strategy will be available for the general public in early 2012. Over the next three years, the marine programme will establish critical partnerships to facilitate the conservation of marine World Heritage sites. •

Ecosystem Management in Marine World Heritage Sites

The conservation of marine World Heritage sites increasingly requires a broad, big-picture perspective, rather than a concentration on what lies within a protected area's boundaries. Human activities in surrounding areas often influence the state of conservation within these exceptional places. During a 2010 meeting in Hawaii, marine World Heritage site managers concluded that several sites could benefit from a more ecosystem-based approach to conservation.

Over the course of 2011, the World Heritage marine programme began helping marine World Heritage sites in this endeavor. The first ecosystem-based management training was held in Mexico, 28 September–5 October 2011, to discuss The Whale Sanctuary of El Vizcaino and The Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California.

The Whale Sanctuary of El Vizcaino is the only calving and nursery area for the Eastern Pacific gray whale population. Among all of the world's gray whales, this is the only population that is still healthy. The conference participants developed an overview of the baseline conditions for these whales and their habitat, as specified in the OUV defined for the site. This lays the foundation for a comprehensive management plan that addresses the health of specific species.



Photo courtesy of UNESCO

Following the training, staff and other stakeholders had a clear understanding of the management plan, a commitment to move forward, and a pledge to raise the local community's awareness of the



Photo courtesy of UNESCO

site's World Heritage status—which includes stakeholders in tourism, fisheries and sea salt production. The initiative aims to attract additional resources that support the comprehensive management plan's development over the next two years - which the World Heritage Marine Programme will follow closely.

The Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California comprises nine individual marine protected areas, all located in the Sea of Cortez. The site currently lacks an overarching management plan that addresses the OUV of the entire region. The training emphasized the usefulness of marine spatial planning in the development of an overall management plan, which would particularly address the connectivity among the site's many segments. **Marine spatial planning** is a step-by-step, ecosystem-based management approach developed in 2009 by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic

Commission. For more information, **[download the Marine Spatial Planning guide](#)**.



Photo courtesy of UNESCO

Discussions were held with the Mexican Parks Service, CONANP, to identify next steps, which will likely include a meeting with individual site managers early in 2012.

The World Heritage Marine Programme and UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission will increase the availability of the training in 2012. •

A Step-by-Step Approach to Ecosystem-Based Management

If managed in isolation, World Heritage marine sites are vulnerable to coastal and marine resource development and exploitation outside their boundaries, especially overfishing, habitat loss, marine pollution, invasive species, and climate change. In general, many marine protected areas fail because of the degradation of the unprotected surrounding ecosystems. Therefore, protection of World Heritage marine sites must be integrated into plans for the surrounding marine area. A strategic approach can succeed by integrating marine site management into broader marine spatial management efforts.

Properly addressing threats to conservation requires consideration of the big picture. For example, an ecosystem-based management approach is already well established within the marine science community and is also embedded in the World Heritage Centre's natural heritage strategy. This approach considers the full range of activities affecting an area and makes effective management decisions based on the integrated local dynamics.

With tools such as Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and Global positioning systems (GPS), managers are able to visualize where and how activities affect the conservation of protected areas. For example, these tools have made it easier to track illegal fishing and map the migration routes of marine species.

The development of ecosystem-based management skills is a key priority. The World Heritage Marine Programme is developing a step-by-step guide to ecosystem-based management for marine World Heritage site management in close cooperation with IUCN and site managers, with publication planned for early 2013. While the guide will focus on the needs of World Heritage marine sites, it will be available and useful for other marine protected areas worldwide.

This work is made possible by the governments of Flanders (Belgium), with additional support from the Netherlands and Germany. •



Photo courtesy of UNESCO

Raising Awareness at the International Marine Conservation Congress

UNESCO's World Heritage Marine Programme and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) hosted a special event during the [International Marine Conservation Congress](#) on 15 May 2011 in Victoria, Canada.

The event raised visibility for marine World Heritage and the IOC's role in protecting exceptional ocean areas. The programme included speeches by: Fanny Douvère, Coordinator of the World Heritage Marine Programme; Julian Barbieri, UNESCO Programme Specialist; Charles Ehler, Consultant to UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission; Dan Lafolley, Marine Vice Chair of the IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas; and Aulani Wilhelm, Superintendent of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. •

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World Heritage Convention Celebrates Four Decades of Conservation [▶ LEARN MORE](#)

The World Heritage Convention will celebrate its 40th Anniversary this year. Legendary jazz musician and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Herbie Hancock will kick-start the festivities, performing at the opening ceremony in UNESCO's Paris headquarters on 30 January 2012.

Conserving Marine World Heritage: A Work in Progress

During 2012, the World Heritage Marine Programme will focus its attention on improving the conservation of sites already inscribed on the World Heritage list, particularly through strengthening the network of marine World Heritage site managers. •



"World Heritage is a building block for peace and sustainable development. It is a source of identity and dignity for local communities, a wellspring of knowledge and strength to be shared. In 2012, as we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, this message is more relevant than ever."

—Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO

World Heritage Committee Celebrates Marine Conservation



Photo courtesy of Fanny Douvère

As part of the 35th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Paris last June, the World Heritage Marine Programme hosted a special event dedicated to conserving marine World Heritage sites.

The event featured the release of a special report, *Navigating the Future of Marine World Heritage*, an exhibit highlighted how the World Heritage Marine Programme supports the five strategic objectives of the World Heritage Convention, including communication, community, conservation, capacity building, and credibility.

The evening included addresses by Mr. Nic Vandermarliere, Representative of the Flemish Government to France and UNESCO; Ms. Corinne Paget-Blanc, Communication Director of Jaeger-LeCoultre; Mr. Stephen Dunbar-Johnson, Publisher at International Herald Tribune; Mr. Tim Badman, Director of the IUCN World Heritage Programme; Ms. Wendy Watson-Wright, Executive Secretary of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission; and Mr. Kishore Rao, Director of the World Heritage Centre.

All three of the World Heritage Marine Programme's major partners—Jaeger-LeCoultre, International Herald Tribune, and the Government of Flanders—reaffirmed their commitment to the future development of the World Heritage Marine Programme and its work to conserve the crown jewels of the ocean.

The special evening was organized with the financial and technical support of the Government of Flanders. •

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Jaeger-LeCoultre Auction Supports Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary

The Swiss watch Manufacturer Jaeger-LeCoultre hosted its third [World Heritage marine sites online benefit auction](#), 18-22 April 2011. This year, the Manufacturer auctioned a limited series watch produced as a tribute to historical divers' watches: the Prototype N°1 of the Memovox Tribute to Deep Sea, "LeCoultre Spécial Amérique 1959" commemorative edition.

The winning bid at this year's auction was £16,208 (approximately USD 27,000). The proceeds were donated entirely to the [Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary](#) marine World Heritage site in Columbia. The funds will go toward the purchase of an inflatable boat for patrolling the island, doubling the size of the sanctuary's fleet. The sanctuary's current patrol boat, from the Colombian Navy, spends 20 days at a time on surveillance to control illegal

fishing. Illegal fishing of sharks, driven by the Asian demand for shark fins, is one of the biggest threats to this World Heritage site.



Together with the International Herald Tribune, Jaeger-LeCoultre signed the innovative Tides of Time partnership with UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. The partnership delivers financial support to the World Heritage Marine Programme in addition to a three-year international online and printed media campaign highlighting the conservation needs of marine World Heritage sites. The overall

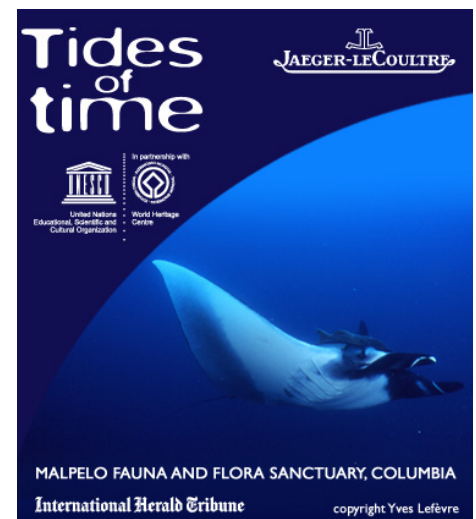


Photo courtesy of Tides of Time

goal of the Tides of Time partnership is to help defend and protect outstanding marine sites that require immediate intervention.

In 2009 and 2010 respectively, Jaeger-LeCoultre organized two similar auctions supporting the conservation of Tubbataha Reefs Marine Park in the Philippines and Sundarbans National Park in India. •

World Heritage Centre Strengthens Cooperation with NOAA

The World Heritage Centre (WHC) strengthened ties with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) in 2011 toward conservation of marine World Heritage sites. This joint commitment followed the successful cooperation of the two organizations in 2010, when they brought together all marine World Heritage site managers for the first time at Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in Hawaii.

In the spirit of cooperation, WHC and NOAA have built a comprehensive framework for joint activities as well as exchanges of data, information, resources, and technical knowledge, sustainable management and conservation of living

marine resources and habitats, enhanced access to technical and scientific data for marine resource and MPA managers, development and enhancement of research and monitoring capacity in the marine environment, and development of marine communication and outreach programmes.

The tasks for 2012 and 2013 include providing marine World Heritage site managers with basic information on adaptation to climate change through webinar tools and Web-based assistance. These activities will be coordinated in cooperation with NOAA's National Ocean Service International Program Office and Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. •

“We are quite pleased to work with UNESCO, in support of the marine World Heritage Programme. Together we can advance our mutual marine conservation and marine protected area goals, and create a more resilient ocean for future generations”

– Daniel J. Basta, Director of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

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The Marine Programme now also available on Facebook and Twitter

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