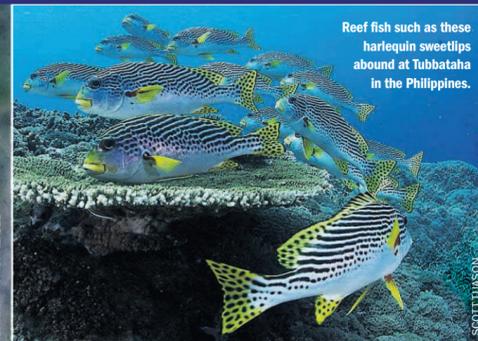


Tides of time



It is well known that 70 percent of the world's surface is covered by oceans, but much of their beauty, biodiversity and value for the overall environment is less well known. The marine program of the World Heritage Centre exists to bring attention to this patrimony and help protect it

The mangrove forest and tidal waterways of the Sundarbans in India are home to Bengal tigers and other threatened species.



Reef fish such as these harlequin sweetlips abound at Tubbataha in the Philippines.



Spinner dolphins at Papahānaumokuākea in Hawaii rest in the day and hunt at night.

WORLD HERITAGE | Preserving the oceans

A global effort to bring attention to exceptional marine areas and help protect them

A significant 40th anniversary next year will celebrate the natural and cultural treasures of planet earth. In November 1972, Unesco adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, an agreement that gave birth to the World Heritage List of natural and cultural sites.

At first, the focus of World Heritage was man-made attractions of cultural value (such as the Leaning Tower of Pisa or the Great Wall of China) and a smaller number of terrestrial natural sites such as Uluru (also called Ayers Rock) in Australia and Mount Everest in Nepal.

In 1981, Australia's Great Barrier Reef became the first marine site to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. It paved the way for others, and in 2005 World Heritage created a marine program to give more impact and visibility to efforts to preserve exceptional sites of the oceans and coasts.

"Marine World Heritage sites are unique,

very special places," says Fanny Douvere, coordinator of the program. "To be listed, a site must have outstanding universal value based on beauty, biodiversity, or singular ecological, biological or geological processes. Each listed site must have the capability to maintain these values. It is our mission to increase visibility about World Heritage status worldwide and to find funding to accomplish good conservation of these sites so future generations can continue to enjoy them."

Today, there are 43 listed marine sites out of the 180 natural sites recognized by the World Heritage Committee. They range from well-known places like the Everglades National Park in Florida and the Galápagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador to remote locations such as East Rennell in the Solomon Islands and Banc d'Arguin National Park in

Mauritania, which is so inaccessible that it sees fewer than 100 visitors a year.

The two newest, added late in 2010 — the Phoenix Islands Protected Area in Kiribati and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in Hawaii — have more than doubled the marine area protected under the World Heritage Convention to more than 540,000 square miles (nearly 1.4 million square kilometers).

Yet only about 1.2 percent of the world's oceans and coastal areas enjoy protected status, according to the World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

One argument for protected areas is that they can address the depletion of fish stocks. Man's efficiency in exploiting marine resources has dramatically altered the ocean's ecosystem.

Terry Garcia, executive vice president of

the National Geographic Society, cites estimates that 90 percent of the top predators of the sea, for example, have been eliminated.

"If no action is taken," Garcia notes, "some scientists project that most of the world's commercial fish stocks will be exhausted within the next 30 to 40 years."

The problems of illegal and excessive fishing are common to many of the World Heritage marine sites. So are three other challenges: climate change, marine pollution and habitat loss.

Climate change affects the entire planet but changes can be observed more quickly in the ocean than on land.

The industrialization of the ocean includes destructive fishing practices but also the exploitation of marine oil and gas reservoirs, and transportation of these resources on increasingly trafficked shipping lanes. The results are marine pollution and aggravated habitat destruction.

If the people working with marine World

Heritage sites "speak with one voice," as Douvere puts it, they can be more effective in reaching constituencies around the globe. Extending that outreach is a three-way partnership established in 2008 by the World Heritage Centre, the Swiss luxury watchmaker Jaeger-LeCoultre and the International Herald Tribune.

The "Tides of Time" is not only a multi-channel communications program but also the name of a special-edition watch designed by Jaeger-LeCoultre, presented in 2009. The watchmaker also organizes online auctions of unique timepieces to raise funds for specific sites. Recipients to date include Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in the Philippines, which invested in radar equipment to help detect illegal fishing, and Sundarbans National Park in India and Bangladesh. The latter, a mixed water and land environment, has concentrated on measures to reduce interaction between the area's human residents and the tigers that live there. ■

About World Heritage

The aim of the World Heritage Convention, adopted by Unesco members in 1972, is "to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity."

"Tides of Time" is a partnership among Jaeger-LeCoultre, Unesco's World Heritage Centre and the International Herald Tribune. The series presents some of the people who are helping preserve marine sites on the World Heritage List.

To see videos about World Heritage marine sites, visit the "Tides of Time" archive at whc.unesco.org/tidesoftime

Watch auction to benefit World Heritage site in Colombia

The destinies of deepwater sharks and a deepwater timepiece will intersect on April 18, when the Swiss watchmaker Jaeger-LeCoultre presents its third online auction for the benefit of Unesco's World Heritage marine program.

The timepiece to be auctioned is the Memovox Tribute to Deep Sea, one of a limited series of 359 that pays tribute to a legend of diver's watches, the Memovox Deep Sea Spécial Amérique 1959. The 1959 original Memovox Deep Sea was the first diving watch equipped with an alarm and self-winding caliber. The re-edition comes in a new size that reflects contemporary tastes and incorporates all the latest developments in Jaeger-LeCoultre calibers.

The World Heritage site chosen as beneficiary of 100 percent of funds collected from this sale is the Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary of Colombia. Malpelo is the largest

no-fishing zone in the Eastern Tropical Pacific and one of the world's top diving sites, known for its steep walls and beautiful caves. It is also a reservoir for large aggregations of hammerhead sharks (more than 200 have been spotted in a group), silky sharks (aggregates of more than 1,000) and enormous whale sharks, as well as the rare and elusive short-nosed ragged-toothed shark.

Proceeds from the auction will go toward the purchase of an inflatable boat to help surveillance efforts.

The winning bid for Jaeger-LeCoultre's iconic timepiece could help save many iconic creatures of the deep.

How to participate:

The online auction takes place on <https://auction.jaeger-lecoultre.com>. It starts on April 18 at 12 noon, C.E.T. (10 a.m., U.T.C.) and ends on April 21 at 6 p.m., C.E.T. (4 p.m., U.T.C.).

SUMMIT IN HAWAII | Navigating the Future

Site managers form a community to share strategies for conservation

They came to Hawaii from 24 countries and from every region of the globe. Most had never met before, yet in the space of three days they had begun to form a community that could benefit everyone on earth.

They were site managers from the 43 marine sites on the Unesco World Heritage list — marine areas of such outstanding scientific, ecological or aesthetic value that they are recognized as part of our global patrimony.

The first World Heritage sites were listed in 1978, and the first marine site in 1981. In 2005, the World Heritage Committee recognized the importance of coastal and marine World Heritage and created the World Heritage Marine Program. The conference in Honolulu, held Dec. 1-3, 2010, was the first time that so many marine site managers had come together face to face.

The rationale for getting together was precisely to foster the ideal of community, explains Fanny Douvere, coordinator of the

World Heritage Centre's marine program. One of her aims, she says, is to facilitate the exchange of best practices among site managers.

"To do my job effectively, I need to talk to the base — and get them to talk to each other," she explains. What better way than to bring them together at one time?

Hawaii's Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument was marking its 10th anniversary as a nationally protected area and it had just become a listed site, so the location and the timing were perfect for the meeting, titled Navigating the Future of Marine World Heritage. The program included presentations from experts such as Jean-Michel Cousteau of the Ocean Futures Society, but about 70 percent of the conference speakers were the site managers themselves, describing their specific situations.

Carlos Godínez Reyes, deputy director for the Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California in Mexico, admits that he

had been uncertain whether he would attend the conference. His agenda was full and he wondered whether Hawaii would have been "just another meeting." But he changed his mind quickly. "It's amazing how you can communicate with other colleagues who share your views and your problems," says Godínez Reyes. "Some of them are advanced, and some you can help when they are starting out. So it was amazing as a meeting, getting us all together."

Angelique Songco, manager for Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in the Philippines, had met some of her counterparts at other international events, so she was sure that a site managers' meeting would be beneficial. "Sometimes you get frustrated," says Songco, "and ask yourself, 'What am I doing here?' But then you realize there's a host of you. Some of your questions can be answered by others."

Tides of time: Conserving marine World Heritage was produced by the IHT Creative Solutions department and did not involve the newspaper's reporting or editorial departments. It is the 25th in a series on Unesco's World Heritage marine sites. The next installment, about the Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary in Colombia, will be published May 13. Text by CLAUDIA FLISI. For information on the IHT Creative Solutions program: www.nytimesglobal.com



Angelique Songco, manager of Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in the Philippines.

MANUEL DOUVÈRE

JAEGER-LECOULTRE

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