



Marine
Conservation
Institute

SPRING
'23

protecting **our ocean,**
protecting **our future**

**IMPACT
REPORT**



President's Message

In the wee hours of early Saturday morning March 4th, 2023, on the floor of the United Nations, I had my doubts. The fate of the treaty to protect the largest habitat on Earth—the high seas—and nearly twenty years of hard work were playing out in tense meetings between a small number of bleary-eyed diplomats. One moment a deal felt close and the next agonizingly far away. I watched the sun rise across the East River and saw the weary and worried faces of my colleagues. Time was working against us. Finally, in a last ditch, make-or-break effort on Saturday night, the UN delegates reached an agreement. We all rejoiced—"hallelujah" flashed on the group chat as High Seas Alliance colleagues scattered across the globe got the news.

Without supporters like you stepping forward with the conviction that we want our ocean wildlife protected, we could not have done this. Together, with hard work and commitment, we succeeded!

In the time between these two landmark meetings, we gathered with over 2000 colleagues at the International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) in Vancouver, Canada, where, still buzzing with the news of the Global Biodiversity 30x30 target, we announced three new Blue Parks. Our Blue Parks Network now includes 27 outstanding MPAs spanning 2.7 million square kilometers (1 million square miles) across the waters of 22 countries.

These Blue Parks protect critical marine ecosystems, revitalize ocean health, and benefit the well-being of local communities. Blue Parks membership recognizes outstanding efforts by governments, conservation organizations, MPA managers and local communities working to protect ocean wildlife. It is the tangible part of ocean conservation that we strive to catalyze while fighting for global agreements. These Blue Parks provide the conservation we want to deliver under the Global Biodiversity Framework and international efforts to protect the high seas!



Lance Morgan presents 2022 Blue Park awards to protected area managers from Colombia, Indonesia and the Philippines at the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal.

To be sure much work remains, despite these incredible steps forward. The voyage to protecting 30% of the ocean is going to be long. These efforts will only succeed if nations formally ratify the high seas treaty and agree to protect wild ocean places like the Emperor Seamounts or the Lost City.

“More progress on ocean conservation has been made in the past three months than at any other time in my career! In December, the United Nations adopted the 30x30 goal—to protect 30% of the ocean by 2030—as part of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Now with the historic agreement at the United Nations to protect high sea biodiversity we have the wind at our backs and an unparalleled opportunity to advance conservation.”

Conservation can move slowly and then suddenly, unexpectedly fast, blazingly fast. More progress on ocean conservation has been made in the past three months than at any other time in my career! We are excited and energized following a recent run of game-changing news for our ocean. In December, the United Nations adopted the 30x30 goal—to protect 30% of the ocean by 2030—as part of the Global Biodiversity Framework. We have been championing this goal since 2015, and now with the historic agreement at the United Nations to protect high sea biodiversity we have the wind at our backs and an unparalleled opportunity to advance conservation.

Lance Morgan
LANCE MORGAN, PhD
President & CEO

Marine Conservation Institute promises to stay at the forefront of MPA advocacy efforts. With our supporters and allies in the fight for our Blue Planet, we will continue to make our vision a reality—a network of highly protected Blue Parks across 30% of our ocean by 2030!

UN Ocean Conference
& 2022 Blue Park Awards
Lisbon, Portugal
June-July 2022



CBD COP15
Global Biodiversity Framework
Montreal, Canada
December 2022



Spotlight on
Success

30%
of ocean
protected

GOAL



High Seas Biodiversity Treaty
UN, New York, USA
March 2023



5th International MPA Congress
& 2023 Blue Park Awards
Vancouver, Canada
February 2023



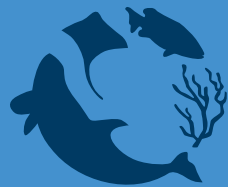


In 2023, Blue Parks received the prestigious UN Ocean Decade endorsement for promoting the science we need for the ocean we want.

2021
2030

United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

Blue Parks



Herring swim through kelp and seagrass within Gitdisdzu Lugyeys (Kitasu Bay), a First Nations-led marine protected area along the central British Columbia coast. Kitasu Bay was named a Blue Spark in February 2023 at the 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress in Vancouver, Canada.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are the most cost effective tool to safeguard and replenish our ocean

All MPAs are not created equal—more than 80% are “paper parks” that fail to protect biodiversity. Many lack effective management and compliance strategies or fail to regulate destructive extractive activities like bottom trawling and offshore oil drilling.

Recognizing and incentivizing conservation success

Providing a science-based standard for MPAs, Blue Parks ensure design, regulations, management and community engagement work together to return conservation benefits.

Blue Park Awards incentivize conservation success by recognizing exemplary MPAs that deliver true and measurable benefits. In partnership with the Blue Endowment Fund, awards are now accompanied by cash prizes.



Science-based evaluation criteria

A Science Council, comprising international and interdisciplinary marine scientists with MPA expertise, decides which MPAs earn Blue Park Awards using science-based criteria.

A commitment to the future

By accepting a Blue Park Award, communities, managers and governments own the responsibility to safeguard marine biodiversity and our living planet.

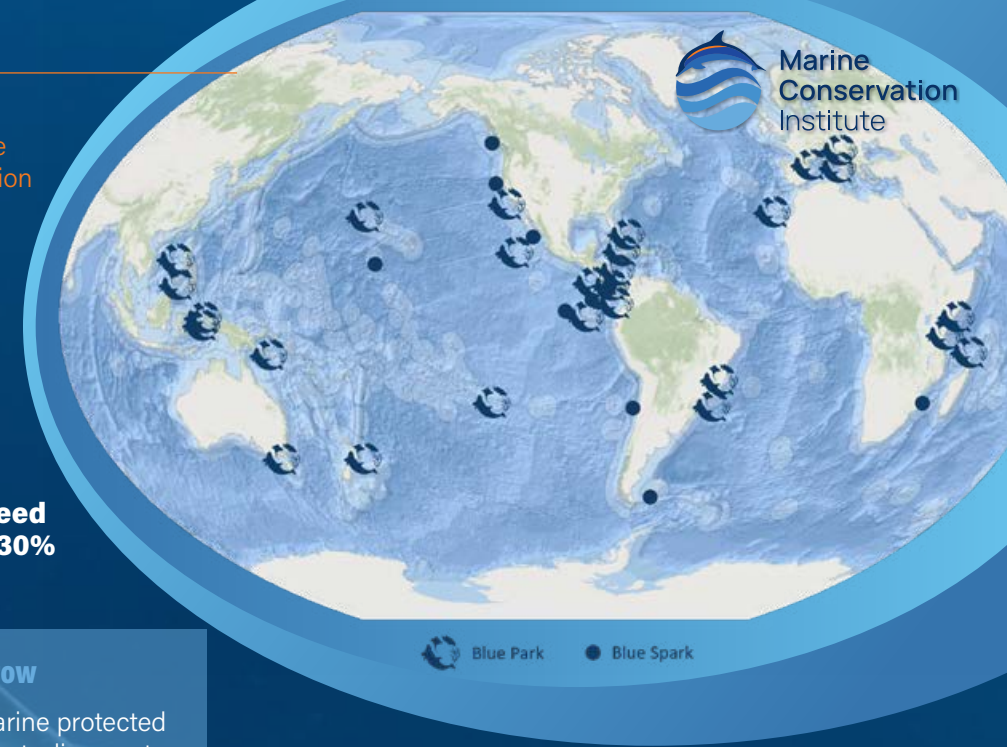
Uniting the ocean's best protected places

Building a global network

Twenty-seven MPAs have earned the name “Blue Park” for their outstanding conservation efforts, covering roughly 2.7 million square kilometers of ocean.

The Blue Parks standard is a guide star for MPA success

Blue Parks build a needed bridge between the lackluster quality of existing protections and the biodiversity conservation that we need for a revitalized ocean with at least 30% protection in quality MPAs.



Blue Sparks are the Blue Parks of tomorrow

Our scientists are working with aspiring marine protected areas around the world to empower them to live up to their promise and become tomorrow's leaders in ocean conservation. Blue Sparks Action Grants will launch in 2023 thanks to the Blue Endowment Fund!

Santuario Piedra del Viento

Blue Spark Update

Chile: Central Coast, O'Higgins region

Fundación Romplentes and local community groups achieved formal Sanctuary designation in 2022. Coupled with recent wins before the Chilean Supreme Court, Piedra del Viento serves as a regional example of how community-led conservation can prevail in the face of wealthy landowners and government inaction.

Gitdisdzu Lugyeys MPA

Blue Spark Update

Canada: British Columbia, Central Coast

The 2023 Blue Spark designation for this Indigenous-led protected area reflects the leadership and commitment of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Nation and indicates that the protected area is making progress towards earning a prestigious Blue Park Award for conservation excellence.

2022 & 2023 Blue Park Awards

Three new Blue Parks were welcomed into the network at the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, in July 2022 from Colombia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

An additional three Blue Parks were inducted at IMPAC5 in Vancouver, Canada, representing Brazil, Panama and the UK. These six new Blue Parks together protect almost one million square kilometers of ocean, nearly doubling the size of the network.

“Being recognized as a Blue Park alongside the main marine areas in the world is a great honor for us and motivates us to continue facing the challenges of conserving biodiversity and maintaining marine ecosystem services so essential for the quality of life on the planet.”

Kelen Luciana Leite
Alcatrazes Archipelago Wildlife Refuge, Brazil



and the people who champion them

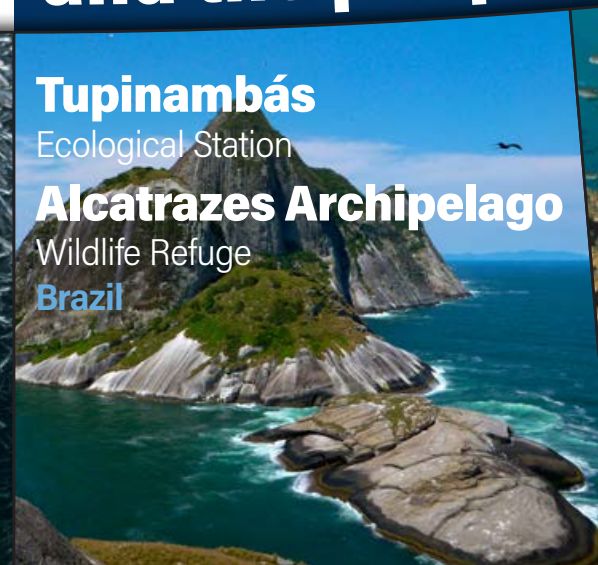
Apo Reef
Natural Park
Philippines



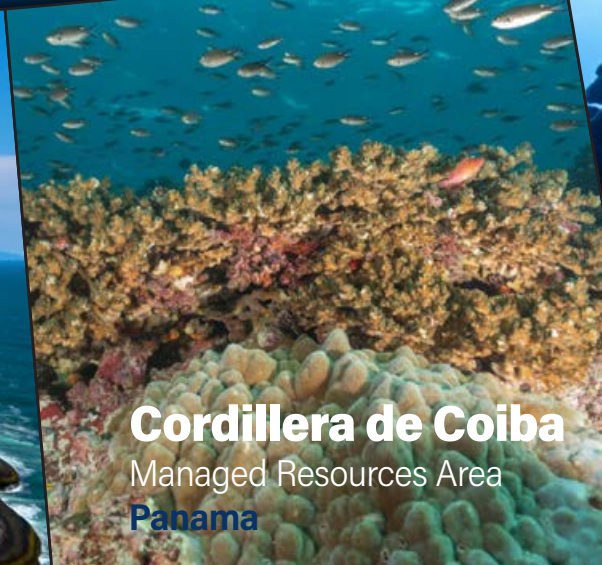
Old Providence
McBean Lagoon
National Park
Colombia



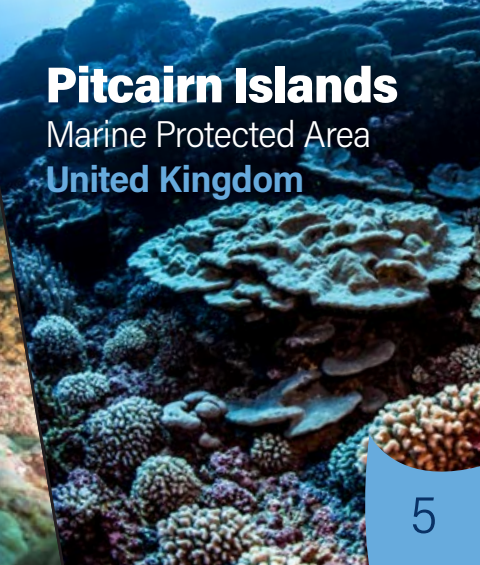
Raja Ampat Islands
Marine Conservation Area
Indonesia



Tupinambás
Ecological Station
Alcatrazes Archipelago
Wildlife Refuge
Brazil



Cordillera de Coiba
Managed Resources Area
Panama



Pitcairn Islands
Marine Protected Area
United Kingdom

Marine Protected Area Zones by Fishing Protection Level

- Fully / Highly Protected
- Less Protected / Unknown
- Designated & Unimplemented
- Proposed / Committed



Marine Protection Atlas

The interactive MPAtlas.org web application shows global and national MPA coverage. MPAs are categorized by establishment stage and protection level, using state-of-the-art assessment methodologies such as the MPA Guide Framework.

Reality Check: Only 8% of the ocean is in any kind of MPA, and less than 3% is highly protected

We need to accelerate the pace of place-based conservation to meet global conservation targets such as 30x30. Nations are pursuing ambitious global conservation goals and use protected area coverage as a key indicator of success. Although there are more than 17,000 MPAs, they cover less than a tenth of the ocean with only 2.9% of the ocean fully or highly protected.

Clarity and transparency in MPA reporting

The Marine Protection Atlas (MPAtlas) has fully implemented The MPA Guide. Marine Conservation Institute has worked with a global team of scientists and conservationists to lay out a credible framework for accountability and provide consistency when assessing

efforts to plan, establish and manage MPAs. The MPAtlas team and our international collaborators are compiling a comprehensive database of MPA Guide assessments, underpinning all MPAtlas data services. As of spring 2023, over 90% of the ocean area within MPAs has been assessed by the MPAtlas team, with over 99% coverage in countries such as the United States.



Protection levels and stages of establishment

The Atlas allows users to envision how much of the ocean is currently fully to highly protected, see where MPAs are not yet implemented, and much more. Since launching in 2012, the Atlas has focused on tracking where strong protections for marine life have been successfully enacted on the water, where it matters to marine life.

Tracking Global MPA Impact

Marine Protection Atlas brings together the best available information on MPAs to hold governments accountable to their commitments and enable the conservation community to work together to protect 30% of the world's ocean by 2030.

805

MPA GUIDE
Complete Assessments

1173

MPA GUIDE
Draft Assessments

90%

GLOBAL MPA
Footprint Assessed

99%

USA MPA
Footprint Assessed

BY THE
NUMBERS

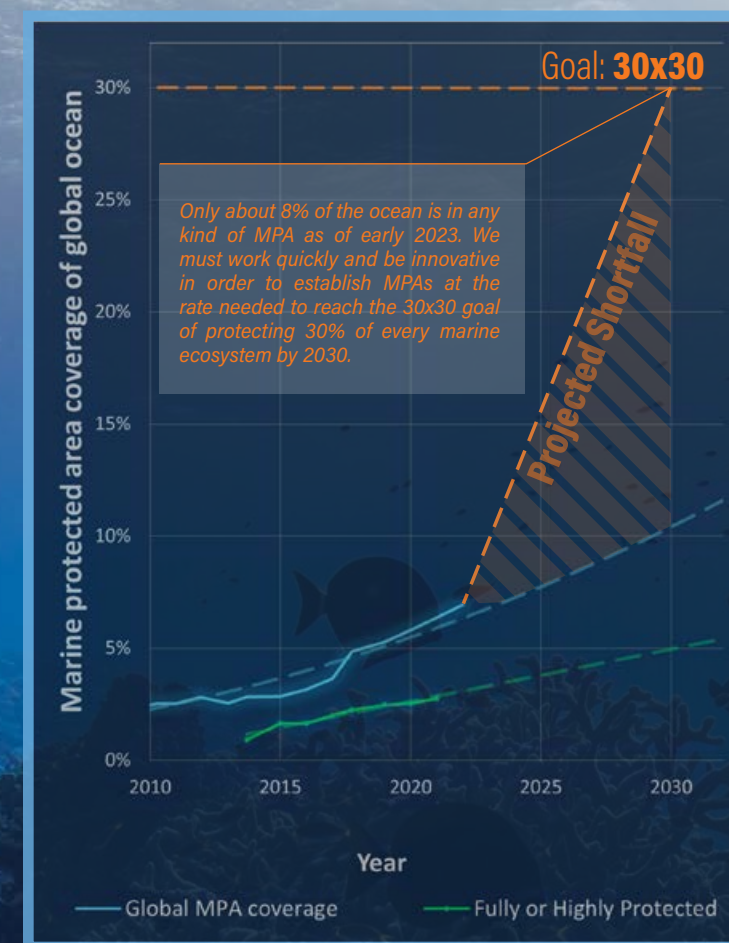
2.9%

GLOBAL OCEAN
Fully/Highly Protected

8.2%

GLOBAL OCEAN
In Any MPA

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The MPA Guide provides a scientific framework for categorizing MPAs using consistent criteria based on establishment stage and protection levels that reflect their conservation benefits. It is intended to motivate more meaningful protection. Governments and MPA planners can use the MPA Guide to better understand how their MPA regulations affect conservation outcomes.



World's 100 Largest MPAs

protection level assessed for 90% of all MPA area

Global ocean protection: quality is lagging behind quantity

Pike, et al. in press.

Much of the ocean area currently deemed "protected" remains unimplemented or allows human impact incompatible with the conservation of biodiversity.

A Scientific Synthesis of Marine Protected Areas in the United States: Status and Recommendations

Sullivan-Stack, et al. 2022. *Frontiers in Marine Science*.

The US is close to achieving 30x30 but has a long way to go to improve the quality, quantity and representativeness across all regions.

Avoiding the misuse of Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in the wake of the blue economy

Claudet, et al. 2022. *One Earth*.

OECMs represent unique opportunities to achieve conservation agendas. However, potential misuse by governments and economic sectors could compromise the outcome of these efforts.



Applying Marine Protected Area Frameworks to Areas beyond National Jurisdiction

Nocito, et al. 2022. *Sustainability*.

The MPA Guide reinforces the importance of a holistic and precautionary governance structure for MPAs on the high seas.

Recent Publications

Marine Protection Atlas proudly supported by

OCEANS5

DONA BERTARELLI
PHILANTHROPY

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Emperor Seamounts

NW Pacific

Extending over 2,000 km past the Hawaiian Islands lies a chain of more than 80 underwater mountains. The nutrient-rich waters of the Emperor Seamounts support vast biodiversity, tunas and whales swim above their summits, and the skies are filled with seabirds. Sponges and corals, including black corals dating back 4,200 years, make beautiful forests of fans, trees, whips and other forms, providing shelter for countless species.

Salas y Gómez & Nazca Ridges

SE Pacific

These two unique chains of submarine slopes and summits are separated from South America by the rich, cold waters of the Humboldt Current and the yawning abyss of the Atacama Trench. They provide critical habitats and migration corridors for at least 82 threatened or endangered species, along with many others of ecological and economic importance. The Salas y Gómez and Nazca ridges are still largely ecologically intact, but they will only remain so with our help.

Protecting Vulnerable and Important Areas in the Deep Sea & on the High Seas

Explorers have been astounded by the richness and haunting beauty of deep-sea wildlife at deep sea features such as vents, ridges and seamounts—ancient underwater volcanoes that support endangered whales and sea turtles, unique anglerfish, rare deep water corals and sponges, octopus, and many other species. Seamounts serve as fueling stations for migratory species like seabirds and sharks. The deep sea is one of the least protected ecosystems on Earth, and we work with global coalitions from the coast of California to the deepest depths of international waters to address threats and protect these biodiversity hotspots.

Marine Conservation Institute is a founding member of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition and High Seas Alliance. Thanks to conservation provisions in the new treaty, we will be able to advocate for strong and lasting protection for the precious gems of the high seas.

For more than a decade now, Marine Conservation Institute has worked with partners to assemble scientific data. We have already identified a number of these important places where we are working to establish marine protected areas in the coming years.

Calling for a Deep Sea Mining Moratorium

The deep-sea mining industry is champing at the bit to start, in advance of adequate science and safeguards. Monstrous machines are being built that will grind up the seafloor and vacuum up huge swaths of the seabed to suck up minerals and polymetallic nodules. In so doing they will destroy all living things in their path and kick up massive sediment plumes in one of the deepest and most fragile ecosystems on the planet. Once they start, million-year-old ecosystems will be lost forever, and we won't know the full scope of the loss until the damage is already done.

The good news is that, with advances in battery technology, we don't need to mine the deep sea. Many governments, manufacturers and retailers are beginning to listen to the coalition's call for a moratorium on deep-sea mining. Much work remains to defend the deep, and we need your support now more than ever.

**DECADES IN THE MAKING:
A Historic High Seas Biodiversity Treaty**

The high seas is the largest habitat on Earth and home to millions of species, yet just 1% of its area is protected. The new treaty will provide a path to establishing MPAs in these waters. It is also a key tool for meeting the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework target of protecting at least 30% of the world's ocean by 2030.

A few highlights of the treaty:

- We now have the missing tool to establish MPAs and other area-based conservation tools through a process of negotiation that encourages consultation and cooperation with existing decision-making bodies.
- Environmental Impact Assessments must be performed for new activities on the high seas likely to produce adverse impacts.
- New rules direct the costs and rewards from new fields of scientific discovery to be shared equitably; developing countries will receive assistance with research funding, capacity building and the transfer of technology.

Scientists' Warning of an Imperiled Ocean

A recent paper by Marine Conservation Institute scientists, published in *Biological Conservation*, calls on upon humanity to recognize the damage that we are collectively doing to our global ocean, and urge the world to take immediate and transformative actions to safeguard and restore a healthy ocean.

BACKGROUND: In 1992, the Union of Concerned Scientists published the "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity" spelling out the alarming trajectory of human activities around the world. In 2017, more than 15,000 scientists from 184 countries signed a second warning letter to humanity to caution against our continued destruction of global ecosystems. In the recently published publication in *Biological Conservation*, we reaffirm this message with a warning specifically focused on the ocean.

US Marine Conservation Policy Advances

- **Protected the last 10% of *Oculina* deep sea corals off the coast of central Florida from the threat of imminent shrimp trawling in June 2022.**

Marine Conservation Institute lead a coalition that successfully urged the chief of NOAA-Fisheries to deny a request to trawl there by the local fishery management council.

- **Strengthened the draft Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary management plan in July 2022.**

With the Florida Keys Restoration Partnership, we drastically improved upon earlier drafts and will strive to ensure that areas of the sanctuary can recover from ocean warming and excessive use.

- **Presidential memorandum and petition for important regulatory changes to strengthen the marine sanctuary program in October 2022.**

The program must be reformed to accomplish its stated purpose of conserving marine life in the most important places in US waters.

- **Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Act introduced in the Spring of 2022.**

After passage in the House Natural Resources Committee in December, the act will be reintroduced in early 2023. This bill will authorize government spending on rescuing and rehabilitating stranded sea turtles, putting saving turtles on the same footing as rescuing and rehabilitating marine mammals.

- **Advocated for protection of Rodriguez Seamount off central California in fall of 2022.**

We testified at public input meetings for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary for special protections for Rodriguez Seamount within the proposed boundaries, which we believe will be granted.

- **Proposed expansion of sanctuary around Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument.**

The Biden-Harris Administration proposal calls for a sanctuary to overlay the existing monument and extend to the full 200-mile limit around each island, adding 700,000 sq km to the ocean protected by US marine protected areas. Dr. Lance Morgan remarked, "The new sanctuary will provide protection for wondrous marine life, large seabird populations, migrating and nesting sea turtles and numerous seamounts, while contributing towards achieving the President's goal of conserving 30% of US lands and waters by 2030."

US Policy & Advocacy

"To achieve the high level of conservation needed to protect marine life and restore our ocean the sanctuary must provide a high level of protection and eliminate commercial fishing in line with the existing monument. We have been working with NOAA and Fish & Wildlife Service for over a decade to create a management plan for the Pacific Islands monument, and the addition of the Sanctuary program's management expertise creates a strong template to model protections for other US marine sanctuaries."

Lance Morgan, PhD

Seamounts, Deep Sea & High Seas



Marine Conservation Institute staff and board strategize over conservation priorities at Lake Leonard Reserve amongst groves of Northern California coast redwoods. Staff retreat facilities provided courtesy of board member Sam Dakin.

Our People

Interns

inspiring the next generation of
ocean scientists and advocates

Alexandra Azevedo
Viktoria Balogh
Emma Calhoun
Nicolas Colletier
David Derrick
Sarah Goh
Elena Jaxtheimer
Amy Jones
Tiffany Konieczna
Menelas Kosadinos

Alea Laidlaw
Ethan Machemer
Jericha Major
Courtney Milley
Elisabeth Minnick
Tess Noone
Patrick O'Donnell
Laura Osborne
Kellie Rana
Caroline Ronveaux

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Michael Gravit
Sarah Hameed
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Nikkie Harasta
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Nandita Parker
Michelle Scobie
Sandy Trautwein
Justin Xavier
Michael Sutton, Advisor
Sebastian Nicholls, Advisor
James C. Greenwood, Emeritus
Sylvia Earle, Emeritus

(ordered left to right)



2022 Community Engagement Fellow Martha Eimba

Hailing from Papua New Guinea, Martha worked with Marine Conservation Institute through a Community Engagement Exchange program sponsored by the US Department of State that brings together young civic society change-makers from over 100 countries for a three-month fellowship with US-based host organizations. Back home, Martha is a director of Sea Women of Melanesia, where she helps indigenous coastal and island peoples by empowering women and girls to build resilient and sustainable communities while implementing climate adaptation and marine conservation strategies to support them for generations to come.



Supporters & Donors

Marine Conservation Institute staff, board and supporters sail on San Francisco Bay while learning about the Institute's conservation programs and fundraising in support of our mission to protect wild ocean places.

We are grateful to the following for their generous support in 2022:

Foundations

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ARIA Foundation
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Marc & Lynne Benioff
Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy
Blue Sea Waves Foundation
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The Ocean Foundation
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The Sahsen Fund
Sonoma County Community Foundation
Pharaoh C. Thompson Foundation
The Waitt Foundation
The Winslow Foundation

\$50,000+

Meredith E James Charitable Fund

\$25,000+
Samuel Dakin
Yonel Grant
Benjamin C. Hammett
David & Signe Johns
Gail Osherenko & Oran Young

\$10,000+
Kyle Horner
Diana & Craig Parker
Douglas & Nandita Parker
Nathalie Udo & Thomas Watt
The Solstice Fund

\$5,000+

Garrett Albright
Timothy & Mary Evnin
April Minnich & Glenn Bucksbaum
Phyllis Morrical Revocable Trust
SandCloud

\$1,000+

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Thomas & Julie Atwood
Cathleen Bailey & Shih
Chien Kiang
Wendy Benchley
Keith & Patty Bongiovanni
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Gail Milliken
Lance & Angela Morgan
Monica Najmabadi & David Bacci
Elliott & Irene Norse
Tom & Rogers Olverson
Angus Paradise
Donald Ross & Susan Kirchoff



Lance Morgan bestows honors on Ben Hammett, a longtime champion of ocean conservation and supporter of Marine Conservation Institute, aboard the tall ship Matthew Turner.

Jeff Ryder
Law Offices of Christina M. Saad, LLC
Jeff & Tami Smith
David Terry
Marie Unini
Dario Urbinati
Wendy's Wish Giving Fund
Meghan Wilmesher

\$100+

Marian Alcidi
Julie Alonso
Harish Kumar
Ananthasayanam
Apple
Vicki Athans
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Marsha Gross
Sarah Hameed
The Estate of Dixie Hartness
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Symetra
Vishal Talwar
Andrew Thompson
Matthew Tillotson
Jennifer Tobkin
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USAA
Noah Usiak
Katie Hills Uzoka
Madanagopal Doraiswamy
Venkatesan
Caitlin Virtue
Maurice Warner
Leslie Watling
Timo Weber
Charis Whitaker
Justin Xavier
Eveline Ulmer Zipser
Loretta Zweig

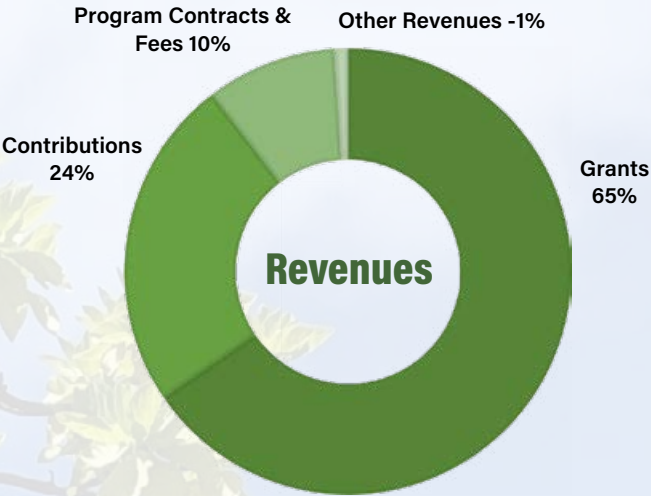
In-Kind

BJ Blanchard
Samuel Dakin
Linette Edison & Mary Streshly
Henhouse Brewing Co.
Jack London Village
Lagunitas Brewery
The Marine Mammal Center
Passaggio Winery
Schermeister Winery
St Francis Winery



Financial Statement

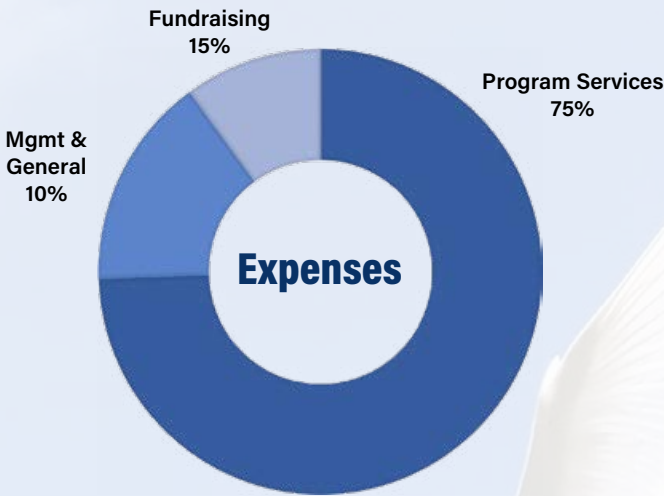
Year ending December 31, 2022



Revenues

Grants	\$945,830
Contributions	\$349,105
Program Contracts & Fees	\$136,872
Other Revenues	\$(13,754)

Total Support & Revenue	\$1,418,053
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Expenses

Program Services	\$945,830
Fundraising	\$349,105
Management & General	\$136,872

Total Expenses	\$1,296,171
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Platinum
Transparency
2023

Candid.

We are a platinum-level GuideStar charity

Marine Conservation Institute holds a commitment to transparency and accountability.

Marine Conservation Institute is a proud Member of

Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (founding)
High Seas Alliance (founding)
Coral Reefs on the High Seas Coalition
National Ocean Protection Coalition
30x30 Ocean Alliance
Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE)
California Seamount Coalition
Florida Keys Restoration Partnership
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Our work is made possible through Partnership with

Bitonga Divers / Inhambane Bay
Blue Climate Initiative
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
Charles Darwin Foundation
EarthEcho
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Friends of NOAA
Global Conservation
Global Ocean Trust
Heirs to Our Oceans
Linking Tourism and Conservation
Marine Applied Research & Exploration
Marine Geomatics Research Lab
MarViva
MigraMar
Mission Blue
National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) & Centre de Recherches Insulaires et Observatoire de l'Environnement (CIRIOBE), France
National Geographic - Pristine Seas
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
Oceanic Global
Oceano Azul
OCTO
One World One Ocean
Only One
Oregon State University
Pew Charitable Trusts -
Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy
Fundación Rompientes
Save the Waves Coalition
SeaLegacy
SevenSeas Media
Sin Azul No Hay Verde
SkyTruth
Turtle Island Restoration Network
WildAid - Marine Program
Wildlife Conservation Society
UN Environment Programme & World Conservation Monitoring Centre
UN Ocean Decade

“

Marine Conservation Institute is saving wild ocean places for us and future generations. I am proud to support their Marine Protection Atlas and their goal to highly protect 30% of our ocean in this decade.

”

- Dona Bertarelli



**Marine
Conservation
Institute**

marine-conservation.org | [@savingoceans](https://twitter.com/savingoceans)

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photo: SeaLegacy / Cristina Mittermeier