

Ocean Legacy



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World-scale marine reserves—places where no fishing or other extractive activity is allowed—protect our global marine heritage for future generations and celebrate our shared ocean legacy.

PROTECTING THE SPECIAL PLACES IN THE SEA

Although 71 percent of the planet's surface is water, remarkably little of the Earth's marine environment is protected. Unrelenting pressures from industrial fishing and other extractive activities threaten life in the world's oceans. Habitat loss, pollution and overfishing have led to the global depletion of fish and other marine life, and a downward spiral of productivity in the world's oceans.

Marine reserves—places where no fishing or other extractive activity is allowed—are one potential way to address the continued loss of our living marine resources and to protect our global marine heritage. However, most of the reserves created to date, as well as those being proposed, are relatively small

in size and designed to provide primarily local benefits. Few nations have examined the potential for placing off-limits large, ecologically significant expanses of sufficient size to protect entire ocean systems. Even in Australia's Great Barrier Reef, one of the world's most treasured ecosystems, only 33 percent is closed to fishing. In most countries, the land protected in terrestrial parks far exceeds the area in fully protected marine reserves, and most maritime nations have few or no marine reserves at all.

Ocean Legacy originated as a continuation of work done by the Pew Environment Group in 2005 and 2006 to establish a fully protected marine reserve in the northwestern

Hawaiian Islands. That effort resulted in designation of the largest, permanent "no-take" marine reserve in the world, an area that encompasses 360,000 square kilometers (138,000 square miles) of largely unspoiled reefs, atolls, shoals and islands.

Inspired by this success, we collaborated with the Oak Foundation, the Sandler Family Supporting Foundation and The Robertson Foundation to create Ocean Legacy. Our aim, over the next five years, is to establish three to four large, world-class, no-take marine reserves that will provide ecosystem-scale benefits and help conserve our global marine heritage.