



BLUE MARINE
FOUNDATION

INTO THE

WORKING TO PROTECT OUR OCEANS

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OUR OCEAN - AN OCEAN
OF POTENTIAL

BLUE

WELCOME

Welcome to a special edition of Into the Blue.

For this special edition, we have some inspiring ocean updates from countries who are leading in protecting 30 per cent of their oceans by 2030. Fresh off the press, the newsletter dives into groundbreaking announcements from Our Oceans in Greece and the Dominican Republic’s ambitious announcement to preserve migratory pathways of key species like sperm whales.

Discover how you can help Blue Marine achieve our mission to effectively protect of at least 30 per cent of the ocean through the Big Give’s Green Match Fund and have your donation doubled.



Cover photo
Crimson reef, Raja Ampat

Photo: Jenny Stock

Diver in the Dominican
Republic

Photo: Max Bello

Our Oceans in Greece

At Our Ocean Conference in Athens, the Greek Prime Minister committed to expanding the country's current MPA network from 20% to 32% and to ban bottom trawling in all marine protected areas from 2026 putting Greece in the lead of the whole of the European Union.

The Greek government also announced the pioneering initiative of four fisheries restricted areas (FRAs) in the waters surrounding the Greek Cycladic Island of Amorgos. The marine protection initiative was started by the fishers of Amorgos and supported by Blue Marine, as a response to a drastic decline in fish and heavily polluted waters. The fishers developed a management plan aimed to reverse overfishing and tackle ocean pollution, which includes seasonal fishing closures in the crucial breeding season in April to May.

The four FRAs now confirmed are a cooperative agreement between the Greek State, local governments, the scientific community, environmental organisations and the local fishing community. The Minister of Rural Development and Food has formally committed to the fisheries restriction protection of Amorgos. On the plenary stage he said "This example (Amorgos) constitutes one more commitment of the Greek government. It is the best example to us - those in power - of citizens acting ahead of the government." This announcement is the result of over two years of hard work and collaboration between the fishers, Blue Marine, the Cyclades Preservation Fund and the Agricultural University of Athens.

In the last year, Amorgos has become a live fisheries research laboratory, where the Agricultural University of Athens, in collaboration with the fishers, has conducted a fisheries study and the results have been submitted to the Ministry of Fisheries in order to proceed with the legal adoption of the proposed measures and the designation of the no-take zones.

"The case of Amorgos is unique in Greece. It is an innovative example of cooperation between fishers, scientists, institutions, civil society, local and national authorities with the common goal of protecting the seas and local fishers' livelihoods. The success of this initiative can play a vital role in the way we protect our seas in Greece and can become a beacon of inspiration and positivity for other fishing communities in the Aegean Sea, Greece and throughout the Mediterranean."- Angela Lazou, Greece Projects Manager.

Read the full article [here](#).



Greece became the first European country to ban bottom trawling in marine parks.

READ FULL ARTICLE

Aerial perspective of the sapphire waters.

Photo: iStock

Local fisher from Amorgos.

Photo: Giorgos Moutafis

Angela Lazou Dean in the field

Photo: Giorgos Moutafis

Our Oceans in Greece. Giorgos Stratakis, General Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, Anni Mitropoulou, Executive Director of the Cyclades Preservation Fund, Lefteris Avgenakis, Minister of Rural Development and Food, Michalis Krosman, President of the Professional Fishing Association of Amorgos, Stavros Keletsis, Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Food, Angela Lazou Dean, Greece Project Manager from Blue Marine Foundation

Photo: Jo Coumbe

Dominican Republic pledges to protect 30 per cent of its waters



The Dominican Republic has now become one of only a handful of countries in the world to have legally designated protection of over 30 per cent of its waters, making good Global Biodiversity Framework promises to reach the target by 2030. The designation also includes the first Caribbean trans-boundary marine protected area, straddling the boarder of the Colombian MPA on the Beata Ridge – a pivotal region for species connectivity.

The areas were identified based on the scientific information from two major expeditions which took place this year. Funded by Blue Marine Foundation, Blue Nature Alliance

and Wyss Foundation, the first of two research expeditions concentrated on the southern side of the Beata Ridge – an area of critical importance for cetaceans, sea birds, and sharks. The habitat serves as both a feeding ground and travel route for rare seabird species, and cetaceans such as sperm or pilot whales and dolphins, as well as acting as a nursery for diverse marine species including the critically endangered oceanic whitetip shark.

A secondary expedition supported by Mission Blue concentrated on Silver Bank, undertaken by Yachts for Science on a Bering Yachts vessel. The Silver Bank is one of the most important breeding and calving grounds for the North Atlantic humpback whale

population. Every year, between January and April, thousands migrate to the warm, sheltered waters of the Silver Bank to mate, give birth, and nurse their calves.

A global commitment to reach 30x30 was agreed in Montreal as part of the Global Biodiversity Framework two years ago. Now, nearly halfway through the ocean decade, few counties are leading on this promise. The world must now look to countries like the Dominican Republic – a shining example of what international cooperation and collaboration can achieve.

“The Government of the Dominican Republic have taken a momentous

step toward marine conservation leadership with this evidence-based designation. It will preserve migratory pathways of key species like sperm whales and advance MPA connectivity across borders, hopefully acting as a catalyst to accelerate the establishment of a network of marine protected areas throughout the Caribbean.” Dr Judith Brown, Project Director of Blue Marine. Read full article [here](#).

It will preserve migratory pathways of key species like sperm whales and advance MPA connectivity across borders.

JUDITH BROWN, PROJECT DIRECTOR OF BLUE MARINE

WATCH THE FILM

A healthy ocean

Photo: Max Bello

Trans-boundary marine protected area

Photo: Max Bello

Graysby

Photo: Max Bello

The Big Give 2024

Inspiring local support for the largest Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Italy

The Big Give's Green Match Fund is open until 25 April, and Blue Marine are thrilled to be taking part to raise funds for our Aeolian Islands Project.

We are at a pivotal moment to support the community of the Aeolian Islands in their preparation of transitioning towards becoming a model for marine conservation, following all three mayors on the Aeolian island of Salina having agreed on the designation of a new Marine Protected Area.

Contributions to the Big Give will directly support initiatives like ecotourism development, promoting sustainable seafood practices among local businesses, and connecting the youth to their marine environment through snorkelling sessions.

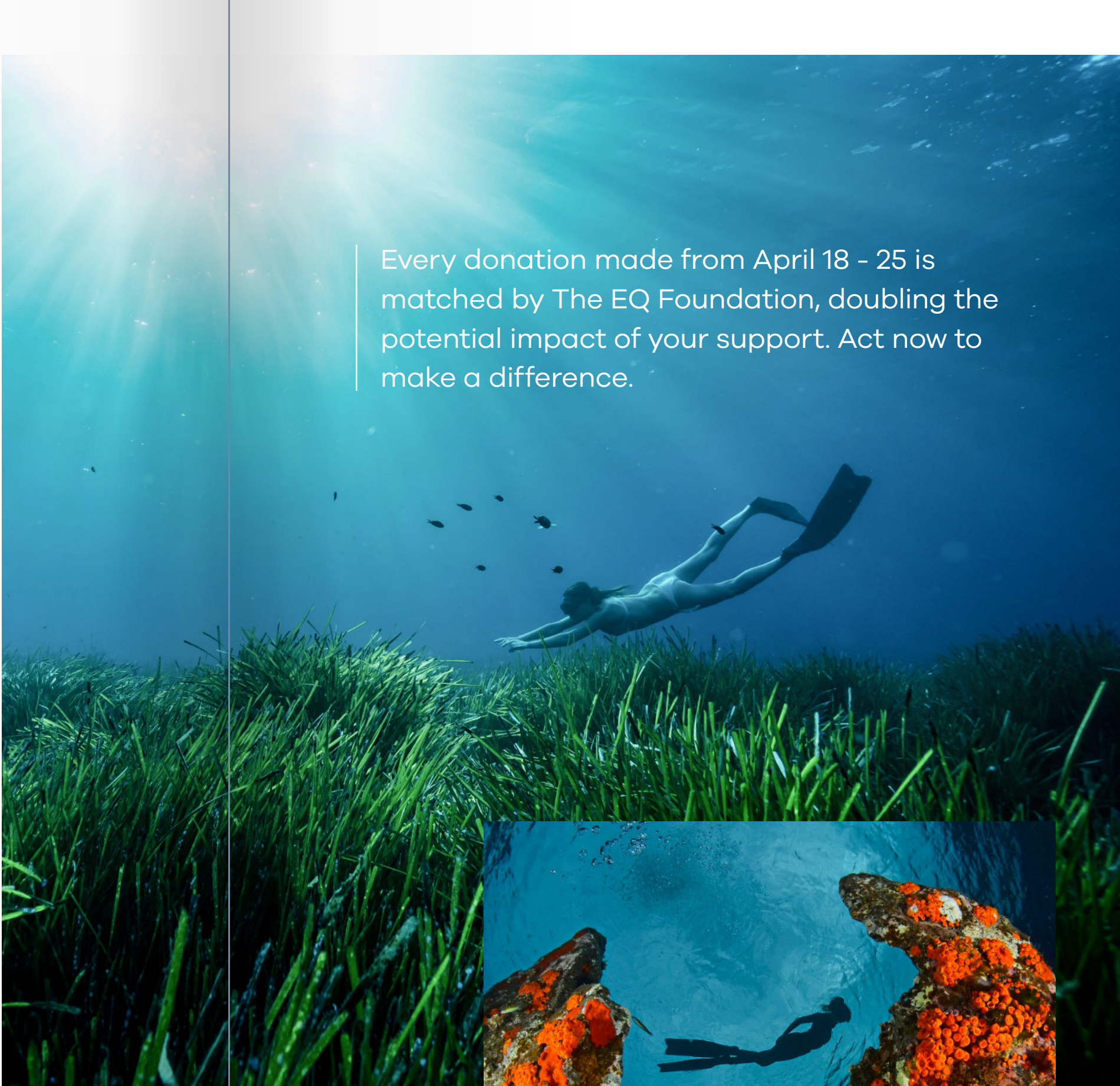
Every donation made from April 18 - 25 is matched by The EQ Foundation, doubling the potential impact of your support. Act now to make a difference.

Help us make waves for marine conservation in the Aeolian Islands this Earth Day and have your donation matched by the EQ Foundation. Donate [here](#).

The programmes:

- 1. Restaurants and fishers as guardians of marine biodiversity**
Experts in sustainable fishing methods will run a series of workshops with 35 local restaurants and fishers to promote sustainable seafood consumption while preserving and enhancing marine biodiversity, finishing with an open event for the community.
- 2. Salin Attiva** Stakeholder seminars.
An aeolian NGO will be running seminars open to the whole community, with a third of the population expected to attend. Local governance, marine stakeholders and the public will be focusing on economic opportunities that the MPA can bring to the local community through sustainable fishing and conscious tourism.
- 3. Snorkel Programme** A local NGO are leading snorkelling sessions for middle school students and will visit the neighbouring MPA of Milazzo in Sicily. The students will have sessions on marine biology and experience the beauty of the underwater world. The students can then bring their experience and knowledge back home, increasing local engagement with protection of marine life.

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DONTATE TODAY

Aeolian islands
Photo: Danny Copeland

Swimming amongst the colourful reef
Photo: Francesco Sesso



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THANK YOU *for your support!*

To learn more about marine conservation at Blue Marine please contact:

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To stay up to date with the latest news and events follow the Blue Marine on social media.

[@bluemarinefoundation](https://www.instagram.com/bluemarinefoundation)



Francesca Page

Photo: Fish

