



BLUE MARINE  
FOUNDATION

# INTO THE

WORKING TO PROTECT OUR OCEANS

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

| DOGGER BANK

| ASCENSION ISLAND

| DEEP SEA MINING

# BLUE

**Cover Photo:**

Humpback whale and calf, Tonga  
*George Duffield*





# WELCOME

## A Reflection of 2023

With 2023 set to be the warmest on record, it's hard not to experience moments of despair. My colleagues who work in the Dutch Caribbean reported the worst coral bleaching they have ever seen.

And yet so much of Blue Marine's work this year shows that it is possible to turn things around: From the UK government backing a moratorium on deep sea mining to the government of Jersey proposing to protect 27% of their waters. From a Convex field trip increasing our understanding of how the seabed absorbs carbon to the Blue Marine team at COP28 raising the profile of the ocean as a climate ally alongside world leaders. From Charles witnessing how life is already springing back on the half of the Dogger Bank which is protected from trawling to Jude and me looking out from the shore of Ascension at one of the biggest no-take marine reserves in the world.

These – and many more – signs of hope fill us with impetus to achieve even more in 2024. We hope you find them uplifting to read in this first edition of 'Into the Blue'.

I'd like to thank all our supporters – your funding, time and enthusiasm is what enables us to carry on fighting for the oceans. And most of all, I'd like to thank my wonderful colleagues, whose dedication, hard work and ingenuity is incomparable.

Wishing everyone a peaceful Christmas and a hopeful New Year.

**Clare Brook**  
CEO

Biodiversity in Ascension  
Island

Photo: Paul Colley







# The 2024 Ocean Awards are open!

The Ocean Awards recognise individuals, community groups, organisations and businesses that have made significant contributions to the health of the marine environment, to the sustainable management of marine resources, or to public engagement with the oceans and seas during the qualifying period. The project must have been completed between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023.

Do you know someone who deserves to win an Ocean Award? The 2024 nominations are [open](#) now!

You can learn more about the past winners [here](#).

SEE MORE

Seagrass coring Bahamas

Photo: Beneath The Waves

Las Chelemeras were awarded the Local Hero award last year

Photo: Caitlin Cooper

Dr. Austin Gallagher used tiger sharks to map the world's largest seagrass meadow

Photo: Beneath The Waves



## Dogger Bank

“In the 1950s, every school child knew that Dogger Bank was where all the fish were. There were once flapper skate, there were sturgeon and huge halibut the size of a man. All gone as far as we know. Now the UK part of the Dogger is protected from trawling and dredging we have a chance to bring them back,...” – Charles Clover, author of Rewilding the Sea and co-founder of Blue Marine.

After four days on the North Sea, on an expedition to the Dogger Bank; arranged by Doggerland Foundation and supported by Blue Marine, Charles and Danny Copeland, the film-maker, have safely returned. The expedition surveyed the seabed and ecology of the bank to find the best places for restoration. The mission according to Emilie Reuchlin of Doggerland Foundation is to “resuscitate the Dogger Bank as the beating heart of the North Sea ecosystem.”

Charles Clover aboard the ship

Photo: Danny Copeland

GET TICKETS

“Now the UK part of the Dogger is protected from trawling and dredging we have a chance to bring biodiversity back...”

CHARLES CLOVER



# Protecting Jersey's waters



27%

OF JERSEY'S WATERS  
COULD BE PROTECTED

Jersey is taking an important step to protect its waters and has released its marine spatial plan – a vision for “a thriving marine environment providing environmental, economic, cultural and social benefits.”

The plan would see a remarkable 27 per cent of Jersey's waters protected, up from 6.5 per cent. It would nurture biodiversity, combat climate change, foster employment opportunities, and promote community wellbeing. We congratulate the Government of Jersey for taking this important step and encourage **you to help** safeguard Jersey's marine environment for future generations by completing the

consultation form, before January 2nd, to help support the Jersey Marine Spatial Plan.

Find out how Blue Marine's work and research have supported this bold plan for Jersey's waters [here](#).

An aerial shot of Jersey's intertidal zone.

Photo: James Bowden

READ FULL ARTICLE

*“The government's marine spatial plan is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect our seas while supporting sustainable livelihoods and local economies, leading the way for marine conservation in Europe.”*

FREDDIE WATSON, JERSEY PROJECT MANAGER.

# So long and thanks for all the fish

Throughout the UK's domestic waters, overfishing is driving many species into steep decline, Blue Marine co-founder, Charles Clover believes it is the responsibility of the UK government to manage fishing quotas who have been failing to “restrain the fishing industry from annihilating the wild fish and shellfish on which it depends,” for decades. Clover claims that the government has breached the 2020 Fisheries Act

Charles Clover believes it is the responsibility of the UK government to manage fishing quotas

which requires the aim to fish within sustainable limits based on the best available scientific advice. Read his feature interview in the Times [here](#).

READ FULL ARTICLE

Destructive trawler pulling in a net of herring

Photo: Getty



92%

BRITAIN'S DOMESTIC PROTECTED AREAS ARE OPEN TO DESTRUCTIVE FORMS OF FISHING

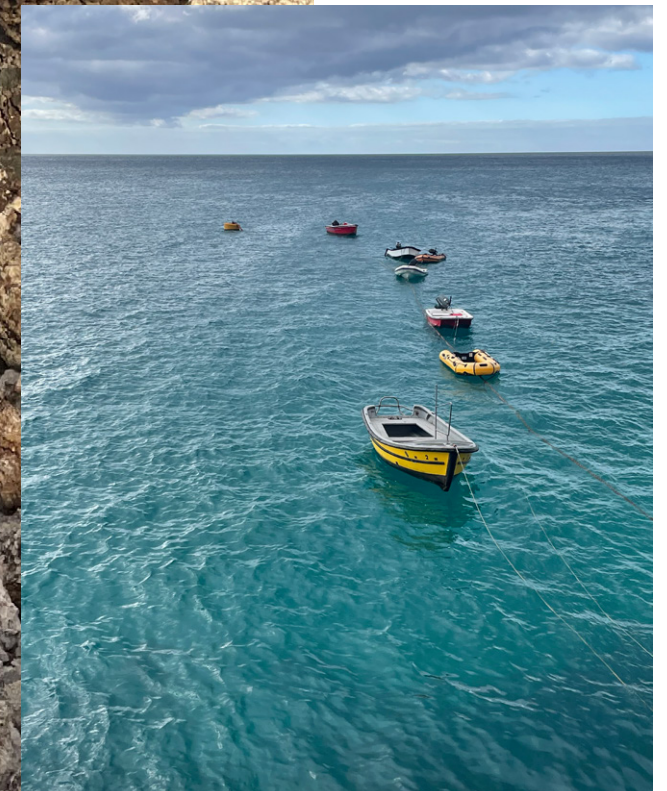




# Ascension: a gift to the marine world



Ascension has made  
a gift to the world by  
protecting biodiversity



Clare Brook and Dr Judith Brown spent a week on Ascension in mid-November.

Ascension Island is surely one of the strangest places on our planet. A landscape so other-worldly that it is the location for Martin MacInnes' recently published science-fiction novel, *In Ascension*.

Since 2019, Ascension has hosted one of the largest and most effectively monitored no-take marine protected areas in the world. Around this remote and isolated island, 445,000 square kilometres of mid-Atlantic ocean are entirely free from industrial fishing.

Clare and Jude had a fascinating time on island, meeting the thriving conservation department, the Administrator and other government officials, the island council and the fishers' association. Their message in every meeting was the same: Ascension has made a gift to the world by protecting biodiversity in an area nearly the size of

France and the world should recognise and reward Ascension. It was thrilling to see the many improvements already made on island thanks to the endowment fund established by Blue Marine, in recognition of the MPA. And exciting to discuss what might be funded in future.

Clare Brook and Jude Brown with the headmistress of Two Boats

Protected as far as the eye can see – and further!

Jude Brown leads Clare across Ascension's moonscape in search of endemic shrimp.

Photos: Clare Brook



# A GLIMMER OF HOPE

## UK Government supports moratorium on deep sea mining

This month marks a turning point for the deep ocean – home to some of the least explored, most vulnerable habitats on earth, as the UK joined a growing global call for a moratorium on deep sea mining.

Deep sea mining poses an existential threat to marine life in the deep sea and while it is difficult to fully grasp the damage it would do or the scale of the proposed mining industry, there is, now,

widespread public and political opposition to this controversial activity. Thirty-five thousand people in the UK signed a petition calling for a moratorium – every one of whom should feel proud for using their voice to protect the ocean.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

*“Deep-sea mining poses an existential threat to some of the most vulnerable, least explored habitats on the planet.”*

CLARE BROOK



# 35,000+

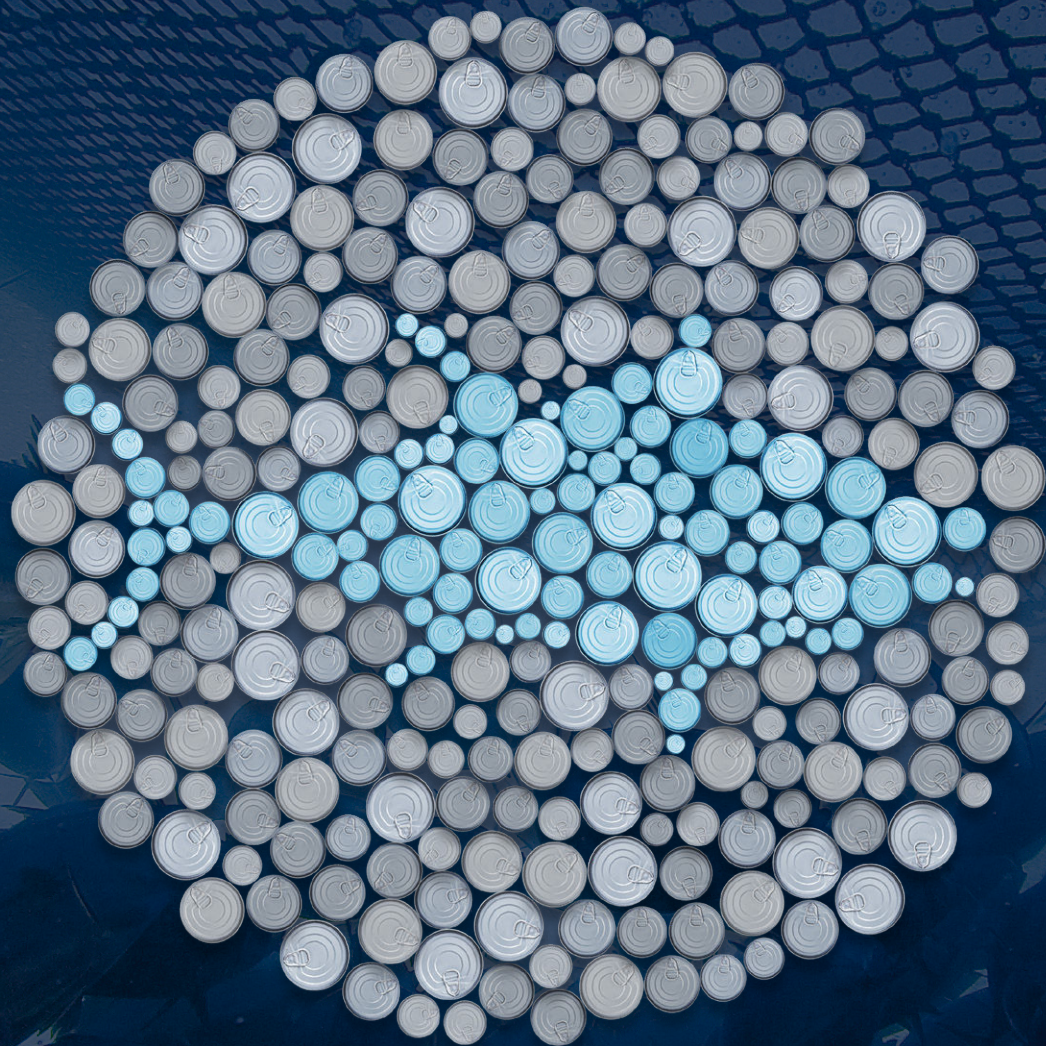
people in the UK signed a petition calling for a moratorium

A bioluminescent comb jelly rising from the deep ocean  
**Photo:** Alexander Semonov



# Canned Hypocrisy

UK retailers selling tuna caught with destructive FADs



The truth behind canned tuna

Photo: Graphic designed by Alex Graves

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

Following a six-month investigation by Blue Marine, Bloom Association and Greenpeace UK into canned tuna sold by UK retailers, our report, 'The UK's Tuna Blind Spot', reveals that only one of the UK's top ten supermarkets, M&S, can demonstrate that none of the canned tuna sold in its stores is caught using destructive fish aggregating devices (FADs), highlighting the double standards or 'canned hypocrisy' between sourcing policies that cover most UK retailers' 'own-label' canned tuna, and the brand-name tuna that they sell alongside it.

The report comes amid an overfishing crisis unfolding in the Indian Ocean and speaks to the many issues associated with drifting FADs which are responsible for the mass capture of juvenile overfished bigeye and yellowfin tuna. We are calling on UK retailers to stop selling tropical tuna caught around drifting FADs in the Indian Ocean by not entering into any new supply agreements for tuna caught in this way.

Read about the canned hypocrisy of UK retailers [here](#).



580

RIDERS HAVE PARTICIPATED

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

## London to Monaco: Turning the Tide for Ocean Conservation

Lady Amelia cut the blue ribbon to launch the ride to London to Monaco

Photo: Darren Fletcher

The epic annual London to Monaco cycle ride and high-profile networking event is aimed to raise funds and awareness for our ocean. Over the last six years, 580 riders from 17 different countries, global sponsors, and event partners have helped raise over £2.5 million for ocean conservation around the world. This year's ride raised a splendid £150,000 for our oceans, the race was launched by Blue Marine Ambassador Lady Amelia Windsor and welcomed to the finish line by H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco.

*"When I see the good work being done by teams like Blue Marine, I feel optimistic that we can stop the damage to our planet together."*

LADY AMELIA WINDSOR

Join us on an epic adventure and ride from London to Monaco with us in 2024: sign up [here](#).

Read the full article [here](#).





BLUE MARINE  
FOUNDATION

# THANK YOU

for your  
support!

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

Alea Laidlaw  
Information Officer  
[alea@bluemarinefoundation.com](mailto:alea@bluemarinefoundation.com)

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

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



Sea Angel floating in the deep sea

**Photo:** Alexander Semonov

