



INTO THE

ACTION TO PROTECT OUR OCEAN

ISSUE 18 | NOV/DEC 2025



2025 HIGH WATER MARKS

HIGH SEAS TREATY

SUBSIDIES AGREEMENT

BLUE

Cover Photo:
Dolphins, Makua Beach, Hawaii
Toby Matthews / Ocean Image Bank



WELCOME

Blue Marine is advancing ocean conservation through international agreements and community action. This edition covers the High Seas Treaty coming into force in January 2026, the pressures facing Antarctic krill, the World Trade Organisation's agreement to curb harmful fishing subsidies and increased funding for the UK's Blue Belt Programme. We also highlight George Russell's charity helmet auction and our award winning film *The Bottom Line*. As we reflect on a year defined by major conservation milestones, we invite you to join our bike ride challenge to support the ocean in 2026.

Don't forget to follow Blue Marine on [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for the latest news.

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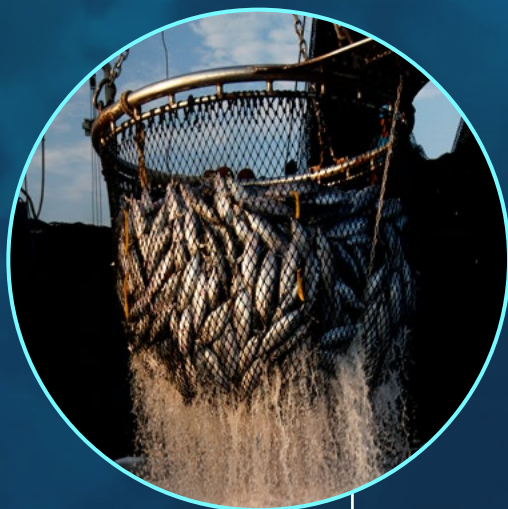
School of jacks, Cabo Pulmo National Park, Mexico

Photo: Hannes Klostermann / Ocean Image Bank

2025 High Water Marks



As we approach the end of 2025, we reflect on the progress made. Throughout 2025, we worked to secure meaningful conservation, strengthen legal protections and support vital marine wildlife. These achievements show how collaborative action can drive real progress.



5 March

We took legal action against DEFRA and had our day in court, highlighting that the UK government set 2024 fish catch quotas above scientific advice for over half of stocks, jeopardising both marine life and fishing communities.

18 March

After months of campaigning to #SaveAfricanPenguins, in partnership with SANCOBB and Bird Life, a favourable settlement was reached with the fishing industry to protect six critical marine areas.



6 May

Blue Marine hosted OCEAN WITH DAVID ATTENBOROUGH world premiere.

8 June

#TheBottomLine campaign helped trigger a government plan to close 41 English MPAs to bottom trawling.



17 July

Thanks to a Presidential Decree, Amorgos became Greece's first official community led MPA.

25 July

Together with BLOOM, we won a landmark case at the EU Court, setting a precedent that NGOs have the right to challenge the European Commission when it rolls back conservation measures.



19 September

The UN High Seas Treaty passed 60 ratifications, opening the door for protection for over 43 per cent of the planet.

26 September

The Bottom Line film scooped two trophies at the Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards.



Looking forward, we remain committed to build on this momentum and to ensure a healthier, more protected future for the ocean.



Shanty highlights impact of fisheries mismanagement

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A lifelong fisherman has released a powerful protest shanty highlighting the decline of small scale fishing communities along England's coast. Martin Yorwarth's song, Coast Town, calls attention to the struggles faced by inshore fishermen in places such as Newhaven, Hastings and Southend, where many small boats can no longer survive due to dwindling fish stocks and limited fishing opportunities. Blue Marine coproduced the film in support of small scale fishers.

The shanty argues that government policies have favoured large industrial vessels over small boats, giving factory ships a disproportionate share of fishing quotas while inshore fleets receive only a small fraction.

Yorwarth's message echoes wider concerns across the sector. Key fish populations, including mackerel and Northern shelf cod, are now in serious decline after years of mismanagement. Despite being passed in 2020, the current Fisheries Act has not halted this downward trend.

Policymakers need to prioritise the long term recovery of fish stocks, without which small scale fishing communities face an uncertain future.

Read more [here](#).



High Seas treaty to become law in January

On 19 September, Morocco and Sierra Leone ratified the High Seas Treaty, marking the 60 ratifications required to bring it into force. It is the first legally binding international agreement safeguarding marine biodiversity in the High Seas, which make up half the surface of the world. The treaty will come into legal effect on 17 January 2026 and can be a tool to create marine protected areas to halt ocean degradation. It will increase equity for developing nations by promoting access to marine resources, science and decision making, which in turn will strengthen their ability to benefit from the ocean.

Blue Marine's Projects Director, Dr Judith Brown, said: "This is an historic moment in ocean conservation. The agreement will help strengthen ocean governance, build climate resilience and ensure that the high seas are managed for the benefit of all nations and future generations." Discussions have begun to consider areas for High Seas MPA proposal, including Walvis Ridge off south-west Africa, the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges off Chile, the Lord Howe Rise and South Tasman Sea east of Australia, the Sargasso Sea and the Thermal Dome in the Eastern Pacific.

Find out more [here](#).

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Humpback whales, Tonga

Photo: Kurt Arrigo / Ocean Image Bank



Antarctic Krill Face a Critical Crossroads

[READ MORE](#)[Antarctic krill](#)**Photo:** iStock

As the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) wraps up, the future of Antarctic krill hangs in the balance. These tiny crustaceans, a cornerstone of the Southern Ocean ecosystem, are under unprecedented pressure from industrial krill fishing. Harvested for Omega 3 supplements, to feed farmed fish and pet food, krill extraction risks destabilising marine life and even influencing the global climate.

At this year's CCAMLR meeting, the 27 member states of CCAMLR failed to agree on any meaningful conservation measures. This year marks a decade since the last regional marine protected area was agreed upon. This is hugely disappointing as the wildlife of

Antarctica remains vulnerable to exploitation and climate change.

There is, however, a glimmer of hope. UK retailer Holland & Barrett has withdrawn from the krill market, advocating for stronger Antarctic protections. This decision, driven by public pressure, reflects growing consumer demand to put Antarctica on the international conservation agenda.

Marine scientists call for urgent action to safeguard the Southern Ocean. As Dr Sylvia Earle emphasises, it remains “one of the last truly wild places on Earth,” and without strong protections, overexploitation could irreversibly damage one of the planet's most fragile and essential ecosystems.

Read more [here](#).

Milestone agreement on subsidies comes into force

[READ MORE](#)[Fishing subsidies](#)

Photo: Alex Hofford

After 25 years of discussions on fishing subsidies at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), a legally binding agreement has come into force that aims to remove the worst of them. The [Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies](#) prohibits government support for illegal fishing activities, for fisheries that target overexploited stocks and for vessels on unregulated parts of the High Seas. It is estimated that global subsidies to marine fishing total \$35 billion a year, of which [\\$22 billion are considered harmful](#), contributing to the depletion of fish populations.

The WTO has established a [Fish Fund](#), a voluntary mechanism to provide developing economies

assistance needed to implement the new obligations. Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity are already required to report subsidies they give for fishing activities by the end of this year, under the Kungming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Blue Marine senior economist, Kaija Barisa, said: 'This is a long awaited step towards better management of our seas – countries will be held to account for implementing its principles. WTO members that have ratified the agreement, such as China and the EU, need to end harmful subsidies, starting with those supporting illegal fishing in the High Seas.'

Learn more [here](#).



Hats off to the winner of George Russell's Blue Marine helmet


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F1 Star and Blue Marine Ambassador George Russell gifted the ocean themed helmet that he wore during the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in September to raise funds for our projects – and went on to finish second in the race. The helmet was whisked straight from Baku to Monaco for Blue Marine Yacht Club charity auction, where bidders had a chance to buy the unique piece and raise funds for marine protection projects. ‘I have never auctioned off one of my race helmets before,’ said George in a video message to the auction. ‘This has literally come straight from the podium. The ocean is a place where

I really feel at peace. I am concerned how our sea is under real threat from overfishing and malpractice. It’s an honour to be working with Blue Marine Foundation.’

The winner bidder had the chance to meet George privately, received the signed helmet, had a chat and a photo taken together. Meanwhile, life as a Blue Marine ambassador seems to be suiting the Mercedes driver. In his next outing, at the Singapore Grand Prix in October, George went one better and took the checkered flag in first place.

Read more [here](#).



More funds for the Blue Belt

The UK government has confirmed an increase in funding for the Blue Belt – the world’s largest marine conservation initiative. Support for the programme in 2025/26 will rise from £8 million to £8.5 million. The uplift was confirmed in the government’s response to the Environmental Audit Committee’s inquiry into the marine environment. It will increase the programme’s capacity to address climate change and protect the vulnerable and unique marine ecosystems of the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs).

The Great Blue Ocean coalition (GBO), which includes Blue Marine,

has worked closely with the government and UKOT communities throughout 2024/25 to advocate for the increase. Covering more than 4.4 million sq km of ocean, an area 18 times the size of the UK, the Blue Belt programme plays a vital role in meeting the country’s 30x30 commitment and offers taxpayers exceptional value for money. As we look ahead to the autumn budget, GBO is calling on the government to extend funding through to 2029, ensuring that this vital work can continue and expand.

For updates, you can follow the [coalition’s LinkedIn account](#).

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Spotted eagle rays

Photo: *Amanda Cotton / Ocean Image Bank*



Our shocking film wins at Cannes

Blue Marine campaign film 'The Bottom Line' has scooped two major gongs at the 2025 Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards. The shocking short won a Gold Dolphin Trophy in the Environmental Issues & Sustainability category and a Black Dolphin Trophy, awarded for Best Storytelling. Directed by BAFTA nominee Ben Mallaby and starring Blue Marine ambassadors Theo James ('White Lotus') and Stephen Fry, the film was a coproduction with Atomized Studios. The campaign film has now obtained with no fewer than seven awards ranging from activism, news, politics and charitable effort categories.



'The Bottom Line' was made to support our campaign for a ban on bottom trawling in English marine protected areas. Blue Marine Communications Director, Jo Coumbe, said: "We all had a feeling we were making something pretty special. It's hard to bring the challenges facing the ocean to a vast public audience – to make the unseen seen – but I'm delighted we succeeded."

Find out more [here](#).

[READ MORE](#)

[The Bottom Line](#)

Photo: *Duncan Nicholls*

New year, new you: ride for Blue

As we look ahead to 2026, we invite supporters to start the year with a resolution that makes a real difference: ride for the ocean. Next September we will once again take to the road to raise awareness and vital funds for Blue Marine projects around the world.

On **15 September**, riders will take on a 100 km route from London to Sussex, home to our Sussex Kelp Recovery Project, with support from Climpson & Sons and expert organisation from Just Pedal.

From **20 to 22 September**, our Ride to Monaco returns, covering three days of spectacular cycling from Gap in the south of France to Monaco ahead of the Monaco Yacht Show.

Join us on the journey and help protect the ocean with every mile. Sign up [here](#).



[SIGN UP HERE](#)

Yoshitomo Nara Donates Artwork

Blue Marine is delighted to announce the gift of a unique drawing entitled Walk On! by Japan's premier artist Yoshitomo Nara, sold through Christie's Private Sales to benefit the charity. With the addition of the donated works offered in Christie's 20th/21st Century auctions in October 2024, the total raised through Blue: Art for the Oceans now approaches £1million.

Nara's drawing donation continues the artist's ongoing support of environmental charities around the world. This donation allows Blue Marine to continue our work, safeguarding the ocean's health.

For Nara, this contribution also cements his personal commitment to the health and sustainability of our collective environment. Renowned and celebrated in his home country of Japan, he has supported many international climate change initiatives and climate aware exhibitions.

Blue Marine and its Art Committee extend our sincerest thanks for this donation.



Yoshitomo Nara
Untitled (Walk
On!), 2021
Work on Paper
53.3 x 34.7cm

For Nara, this contribution also cements his personal commitment to the health and sustainability of our collective environment.



THANK YOU
*for your
support!*

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

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

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



Aerial of beach in
Albany, Australia

Photo: Ocean Image
Bank, Merr Watson

