



**BLUE  
MARINE**



**2025 REVIEW**



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# Blue Marine rows harder in choppy waters

# 30x30

Blue Marine has been invited by 12 different governments to advise on how they can reach their 30x30 targets.

**It's a challenging time for NGOs. Swathing cuts to overseas aid and nature budgets combined with unhelpful, or downright hostile, policies towards nature and climate, have been soul-destroying. For those who have been fighting so long to protect the environment and humanity, the words of WB Yeats must ring true: 'Too long a sacrifice, can make a stone of the heart'.**

Mercifully, in the ocean, the news has been far more positive:

Firstly, genuine progress has been made with the ratification of the High Seas Treaty. Early in 2026, it will be legally possible to have marine protected areas in the two-thirds of the ocean that lie beyond national jurisdiction.

Within national boundaries we are also making significant progress; just this year Blue Marine has been invited by 12 different governments to advise on how they can reach their 30x30 targets.

This year has seen a real sea change in public awareness of the ocean and the true nature of destructive overfishing. The wonderful film OCEAN with David Attenborough was catalytic, and it was Blue Marine's great privilege to host the premiere in May.

Perhaps linked to this rise in public consciousness, companies, unlike many governments, are becoming more supportive of nature. The generosity we encounter from corporates, from trusts and foundations and from individuals is unprecedented. Financial support is, of course, vital for our work, but the collective enthusiasm and encouragement from our supporters keep our spirits aloft.

Finally, it's a privilege to work alongside the wonderful, resourceful, driven, mutually-supportive Blue Marine team. When a wall is put up in front of us, the first thing we do is work out how we're going to scale it or go round it - or make a film about it! Thanks to the team, we have defied the political headwinds and delivered our biggest, most impactful year so far. We know we have far more to achieve in 2026, but we're heading into the second half of the Ocean Decade full of ideas and positivity.



Clare Brook  
CEO

**This year has seen a real sea change in public awareness of the ocean and the true nature of destructive overfishing. The wonderful film OCEAN with David Attenborough was catalytic, and it was Blue Marine's great privilege to host the premiere in May.**

Photo Max Bello, Canaries

**In a year defined by shifting priorities and unpredictable politics, it has been a profound relief to all of us on the Board to discover that Team Blue Marine Foundation is, in fact, not a sailing crew dependent on favourable winds, but a rowing team - steady, resilient and relentlessly forward-moving. Where gusts and squalls might have stalled others, our team has simply put their backs into the oars.**

What has emerged is a spirit of collective strength: a team that understands that progress is not a matter of chance, but of rhythm, consistency and shared purpose. Remarkably, despite the headwinds facing nature and ocean conservation globally, Blue Marine has not only kept its course but increased its speed. This year's achievements demonstrate something essential: when the weather turns, strong teams don't wait for calmer seas - they row harder, together - and move faster than ever.



Dr Arlo Brady  
Chairman and Trustee



# Vision

A healthy ocean, abundant with life,  
that supports people and climate.



# Mission

To ensure the effective protection of at least  
30 per cent of the ocean by 2030 and the  
sustainable management of the whole ocean.



### March

Our legal action against Defra was heard in court, after it set 54 per cent of 2024 fishing quotas above scientific advice, jeopardising marine life and fishing communities.

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

### May

Blue Marine hosted the film OCEAN with David Attenborough world premiere at the Royal Festival Hall.

### July

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

In Greece, we saw the Presidential Decree for Amorgos signed and published, making the nation's first community-led MPAs official.

The 2025 nesting season for green turtles on Ascension Island has been the busiest ever, with 13,008 nesting attempts recorded between December and July.

### September

In the UK, we have worked with our partners as part of the Great Blue Ocean (GBO) coalition to advocate for continued funding of the Blue Belt programme, which rose from £8 million to £8.5 million despite wider budget cuts.

The first World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies came into force after nearly 20 years of negotiations. It is a binding agreement to curb the harmful subsidies that enable industrial-scale overfishing.

The UN High Seas Treaty passed 60 ratifications and took effect on 17 January 2026, enabling the creation of marine protected areas on the high seas for the first time, opening the door for protection for 43 per cent of the planet.

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

# 2025 highlights

### April

Our legal brief helped the UK uphold a critical ban for the sandeel fishery, in a first-of-its-kind arbitration.

Argentina announced the creation of Patagonia Azul Provincial Park, a vast marine sanctuary in the country's southern province of Chubut. It is Chubut's first marine provincial park and spans 729,000 acres.

### June

In the UK, OCEAN with David Attenborough, and our #TheBottomLine campaign helped to trigger a government plan to close 41 English MPAs to bottom-trawling, about 30,000 sq km.

The Chilean Environment Minister announced plans for an expansion of the Juan Fernández and Desventuradas marine protected areas. If realised, this would see a further 350,000 sq km of ocean highly protected and bring Chile above 50 per cent protection.

President Brotherson announced what would be the largest MPA in the world, in the waters of French Polynesia. Building on over a decade of work by Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy, Blue Marine Foundation was invited to become part of the Te Moana collective, a collaborative group supporting the French Polynesian government on their major designations at UNOC. The MPAs include 1.086 million sq km of highly and fully protected ocean.

Javier Diaz, representing the Government of Curaçao, announced plans to establish the nation's first offshore marine sanctuary, covering 9,128 sq km and reaffirming Curaçao's 30x30 commitment.

### August

In Greece, we saw the Presidential Decree for Amorgos signed and published, making the nation's first community-led MPAs official.

Below photo ReWilding Argentina.



Photo Emma Nicol, Lundy Kelp

Total impact across all strategic goals

446,620 sq km

of ocean on the path to protection through MPA commitments, designations and fisheries closures

13,750

stakeholders supported to shape ocean policy and drive community action

12

changes to marine policy influenced

29 countries

Delivered conservation outcomes in

alongside 266 global conservation partners



Our impact towards Blue Marine's strategic goals:



Secure effective protection of the ocean

We create effective MPAs that are closed to destructive fishing and other damaging activities, enabling marine life to recover.

In 2025, we secured public commitments to expand the Juan Fernández MPA in Chile (by 250,000 sq km) and Curaçao's first offshore marine sanctuary (9,218 sq km) Additionally, our political and public advocacy has placed 41 MPAs in England under consultation for increased protection - and has closed 20 offshore MPAs in Scotland to bottom trawling.

Our impact in 2025:

442,308 sq km

of ocean placed under improved protection or formal commitments toward protection

12,250

stakeholders empowered through livelihood development, capacity building and education



63

existing MPAs advanced in the process toward stronger protection

2

new MPAs committed through public announcements or designations

Next year, we aim to turn commitments into action, collaborating with the Government of Chile and local communities to secure the official designation of the Juan Fernández MPA extension; working with the Government of Curaçao to designate and finance the offshore MPA; supporting the Government of French Polynesia to designate over one million sq km of highly and fully protected MPA; and progressing BBNJ MPAs.



# Tackle overfishing and support low-impact fishing

We expose and address the most damaging and over-exploitative forms of fishing, and encourage a transition to sustainable, low-impact fishing which benefits local economies and coastal communities.

In 2025, we won a breakthrough case against the EU, creating a new precedent that EU decisions are open to NGO challenge. In Greece, four fisheries restricted areas were designated in Amorgos, fulfilling the local fishers' longstanding call for protection.

## Our impact in 2025:

# 16

instances of legal action, pressure, research or support systemically change the way the ocean is governed



# 4,312

 sq km

ocean effectively closed to harmful fishing and destructive practices

# 700

fishers, scientists, students and decision-makers engaged

# 12

changes to marine policy

In 2026, our efforts will tackle inequity in the UK fisheries sector, combat harmful fisheries subsidies and campaign for equitable and sustainable fishing in the High Seas. Furthermore, we will continue working with small-scale fishers in Amorgos to replicate their model of sustainable fisheries co-management across Greece.



# Restore vital ecosystems

In areas so denuded that protection alone is not enough to recover life, we restore marine habitats to regenerate vulnerable and threatened species.

In 2025, we advanced efforts on the Solent Seascape Project, pioneering a seascape-level, partnership-based model of marine habitat restoration in Europe; and we supported community-based restoration of blue carbon habitats globally.



## Our impact in 2025:

# 800

community members engaged through livelihood generation and environmental stewardship

# 133

hectares of vital habitat restored

# 109,900

seedlings, saplings and juveniles deployed across our sites

# 6

marine and coastal habitats under restoration

Above: Volunteers collecting seagrass seeds, Isle of Wight Photo Luke Helmer. Top of page: Solent, Photo Matt Jarvis.

In the coming years, we will scale up our restoration model to the Amvrakikos Gulf in Greece, facilitating the recovery of 405 sq km of the Ionian Sea. Within our projects, we will develop sustainable financing mechanisms and work with regulators to unlock policy barriers to restoration, ensuring longevity of restoration efforts.



# High water marks

Feature articles of Blue Marine's flagship work in 2025.



Left: Blue Marine's team with ambassadors Stephen Fry and Theo James on set for *The Bottom Line*  
Photo: Duncan Nicholls.

# Attenborough powers public opinion

**Shocking scenes in the film OCEAN with David Attenborough galvanised public support for a ban on trawling. Blue Marine was proud to host the premiere of a film that became a rallying cry for change.**

'If we save our sea, we save our world.' In the past decade, there has perhaps been no greater rallying cry for the ocean than this simple statement by David Attenborough. The line comes from the ground-breaking documentary OCEAN with David Attenborough, and in May 2025, Blue Marine was immensely proud to host the film's global premiere, in collaboration with the filmmakers, Silverback Studios and Open Planet Studios. The world watched as the feature-length documentary made its debut at the Royal Festival Hall in London, before an audience of thousands that included royalty, global leaders and hundreds of schoolchildren. But the transformative impact of the project reached far beyond the screen.

From the beginning of our involvement, Blue Marine was invited to secure the greatest possible impact for the film, which included footage never seen before of the devastation caused by bottom trawling in marine protected areas (MPAs). Exclusive clips were shared with government ministers, and the film's release became a focal point for change. Passion and urgency marked the public response, with 75 per cent of UK adults voicing support for a ban on bottom-trawling in marine reserves. More than 18,000 people joined our campaign to demand action from policymakers.

The momentum was unstoppable. In June, the UK government announced plans to ban bottom-trawling in 41 English offshore MPAs, potentially freeing 30,000 sq km of ocean from the practice. If enacted, it would mean 84 per cent of English MPAs would be safe from bottom trawling – a seismic shift in UK marine conservation.

But the impact was not just political. The film's message reached 1.6 billion people through global media, with hundreds of press mentions amplifying the call for ocean protection. On social media, our campaign materials and

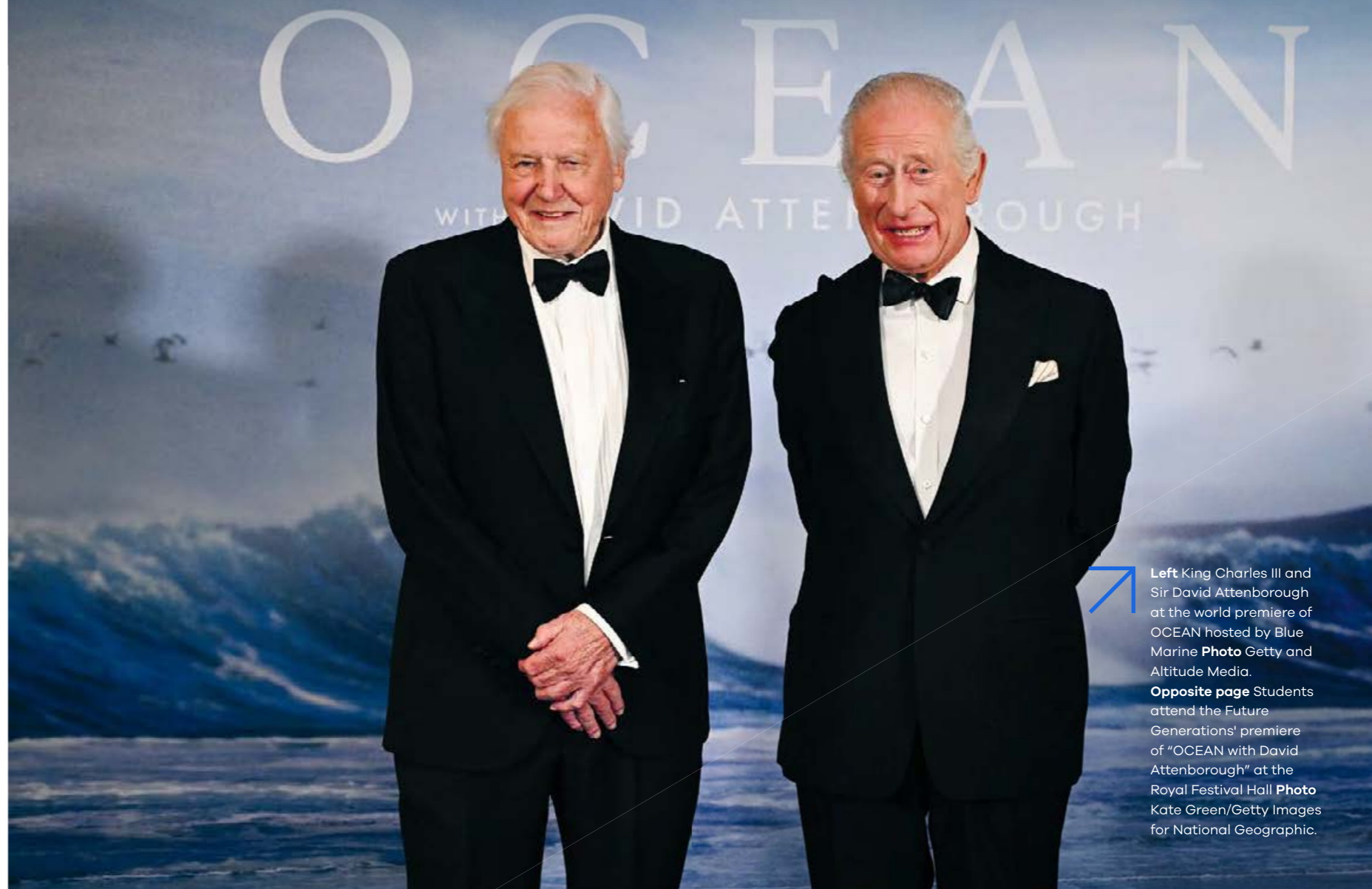


the trawling clip were widely shared, sparking conversations and inspiring action across communities and generations.

Perhaps most moving was the response from young people. More than 600 pupils attended a special educational screening – the Future Generations' Premiere – and for many it was a turning point, a moment of awakening that fuelled student advocacy and ignited new conservation ambition. As one teacher reflected, 'The students were shocked, mesmerised, blown away. They experienced the emotional rollercoaster needed in this generation to bring about awareness and change.'

Blue Marine's involvement in OCEAN with David Attenborough has been a catalyst for hope and progress. We have helped lift the lid on destructive practices that have persisted for too long, and together with our partners, supporters and the wider public, we have shown that change is not only possible but that it is happening now.

As Blue Marine CEO Clare Brook so powerfully put it: 'David Attenborough's magnificent film OCEAN has lifted the lid on a destructive and wasteful practice that has no place in protected areas.' This inspiring collaboration is a testament to what can be achieved when science, storytelling and the public unite for the good of our planet's blue heart.



Left King Charles III and Sir David Attenborough at the world premiere of OCEAN with David Attenborough hosted by Blue Marine **Photo** Getty and Altitude Media.

Opposite page Students attend the Future Generations' premiere of "OCEAN with David Attenborough" at the Royal Festival Hall **Photo** Kate Green/Getty Images for National Geographic.

# When the truth lands on the table

Blue Marine's film *The Bottom Line* showed the grisly reality of trawling bycatch, and moved 10,000 people to respond to a government consultation to ban industrial fishing in UK marine reserves.

Following the global release of the documentary *OCEAN* with David Attenborough, Blue Marine launched *The Bottom Line*, a campaign that confronted audiences with the stark, often hidden truth about bottom-trawling in the UK's so-called marine 'protected' areas (MPAs). At its centre was a darkly satirical and deeply affecting short film, starring Blue Marine ambassadors



Right Blue Marine's ambassador, Theo James, covered in bycatch caught by a UK beam trawler. Opposite page ambassadors Stephen Fry and Theo James alongside Blue Marine's team, seeing bycatch before filming *The Bottom Line* Photos Duncan Nicholls.

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Theo James and Stephen Fry, and directed by Ben Mallaby. In its final, harrowing moment an avalanche of rotting bycatch thunders on to a pristine restaurant table, forcing viewers to reckon with the devastation that can lie behind a supposedly 'sustainable' seafood dish.

The message was clear. Despite designation, the majority of UK MPAs still permit bottom trawling, a method that razes fragile seabed habitats and indiscriminately kills marine life. Research revealed that 74 per cent of England's inshore MPAs and a staggering 92 per cent in Scotland remain open to this destructive practice.

As much as 80 per cent of everything caught in the nets of bottom trawlers is discarded or destroyed. Seeing this reality up close while making the film was sobering even for seasoned conservationists. The bycatch, authentically sourced and delivered to set in south London, was almost beyond belief. Among it, baby sharks, rays, cuttlefish and anglerfish were all swept up and discarded as collateral. Our analysis of the bycatch found 27 species within that single haul, including five species of shark or ray and numerous juveniles. 'It is morally corrupt to allow what should be thriving ecological wildernesses to be reduced to shells of destruction,' said Stephen Fry.

We launched *The Bottom Line* on the day of the *OCEAN* global premiere, accompanied by a public petition calling for a ban on bottom trawling in marine reserves. More than 17,000 people signed, helping to trigger the UK government's consultation to prohibit bottom-trawling across 41 English MPAs, which would protect 30,000 sq km. A second wave of action followed, fronted by Fry and James, urging the public to respond directly to the consultation. Through the combined campaigning efforts of Blue Marine, Oceana UK and Only One, more than 10,000 consultation responses were then submitted.

The campaign film and its message generated 722 pieces of earned media coverage and had an editorial reach of 1.6 billion. Social media content alone was viewed 4.6 million times. Influencers, partners and supporters spread the call for change, and the film was recognised with seven national and international awards.

The response demonstrated that when the truth is exposed, people act. *The Bottom Line* united voices across the UK and beyond, demanding that our seas receive the protection they have long been promised. As Attenborough himself noted, 'It's hard to imagine a more wasteful way to catch fish.' Thanks to the global impact of both *OCEAN* and the campaign it inspired, the tide may finally be turning.

# A landmark ruling on access to justice

**Blue Marine's victory at the European Court of Justice was a watershed moment for ocean protection.**

July 2025 marked a turning point in the fight to safeguard the Indian Ocean's stocks of tropical tuna, when Blue Marine and partner Bloom Association won a landmark legal ruling at the European Court of Justice. In our challenge against the European Commission, the court found in our favour and condemned the Commission's decision to block a crucial fisheries management measure designed to protect Indian Ocean tuna from destructive fishing practices.

Had the European Commission not objected to the measure, it would have curbed the use of harmful drifting fish aggregating devices (FADs) by its distant-water tuna fleets. FADs cause marine pollution and create significantly higher bycatch than free-school fishing, which affects threatened species such as sharks, rays and turtles.

Worse still, the use of drifting FADs results in the capture of millions of juvenile tunas. Of the yellowfin tuna caught around the devices by purse-seine vessels in the Indian Ocean, 97 per cent are juveniles. A recent study has estimated that between 2007 and 2021, industrial fishing vessels released 1.41 million FADs, which drifted across an area of at least 134 million sq km or 37 per cent of Earth's ocean surface.

Blue Marine's legal challenge stemmed from 2023, when an important conservation and management measure led by Indian Ocean coastal states was



➤ **Left** Drifting FAD washed up in the Indian Ocean **Photo** FAD Recovery Project. **Below** Abandoned buoys from drifting FADs in Seychelles **Photo** Jess Rattle. **Opposite page** Jess Rattle and Priyal Bunwaree in the EU Court of Justice.



voted in at a special session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) in Mombasa in Kenya. It introduced a closure period in the region, during which fishing on drifting FADs would be prohibited. Despite similar measures being in place in other seas (where the European fleet fishes far less), the EU objected, ensuring its fleet would not have to comply.

In February 2025, Blue Marine and Bloom appeared in court to challenge this decision and hold the European Commission accountable for its actions. The court ruled that that the EU 'actively blocked' measures for stronger protection of certain fish stocks, preventing these from being implemented in its own legal framework. The court further stated that the decisions of the EU must be open to legal scrutiny as they could undermine EU law, in particular the EU's environmental policy objectives, which include the 'prudent and rational utilisation

of natural resources' and 'promoting measures at the international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems'.

This positive ruling is a major step forward for access to justice and for ocean protection. It is an important tactical win for the Indian Ocean's tuna stocks, and marks a broader opportunity for NGOs to challenge the European Commission, highlighting the importance of being able to hold EU institutions to account when they fail to follow their own laws.

The Commission has appealed the ruling, but Blue Marine is committed to seeing out the case and to seeing a ban introduced on drifting FADs in the Indian Ocean. We would like to thank Brussels firm De Bandt for its pro bono legal support.

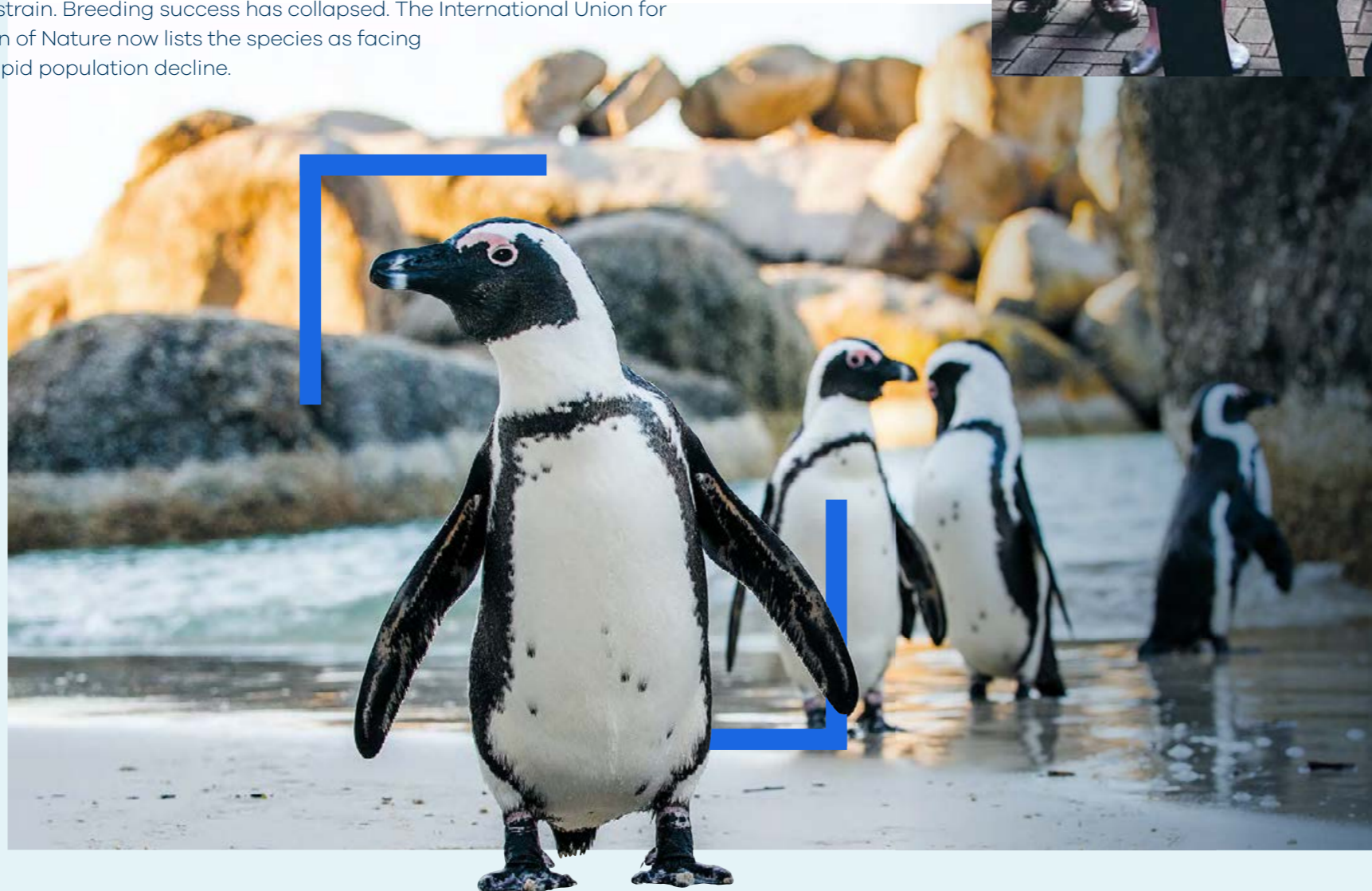
# Love saves the day

**A Valentine's campaign for the critically endangered African Penguin melted hearts and helped secure landmark legal protection.**

Once abundant along the wild coasts of South Africa and Namibia, the African Penguin is now perilously close to disappearing forever. With 97 per cent of its population lost, fewer than 10,000 breeding pairs remain and in 2024 this iconic seabird was formally uplisted to Critically Endangered. If nothing changes, we could witness its extinction within our own lifetime.

Overfishing of the penguins' primary food sources – sardines and anchovies – has left them starving and struggling to breed. Climate change is shifting fish distributions, storms are flooding nests, and noise from coastal development is disrupting their natural behaviour. Oil spills, predation and habitat disturbances add further strain. Breeding success has collapsed. The International Union for Conservation of Nature now lists the species as facing extremely rapid population decline.

Opposite page Campaigners outside the South African High Court  
Photo Peyton Joe Basson & Ayanda Kanise. Right African Penguins  
at Boulders Beach, south of Cape Town Photo iStock.



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But in 2025 a collaborative Blue Marine campaign brought hope in the form of a landmark legal breakthrough. Working with our partners at the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds and BirdLife SA, which had already lodged a legal challenge with the South African government, we launched #SaveAfricanPenguins.

The campaign was led by celebrated South African ocean storyteller Zandile Ndhlovu, and set out to reveal the plight of the penguin, capturing hearts and minds across the country and around the world. Our aim was to compel the South African government to reconsider its position on six proposed areas of protection along the coastline where penguins breed, feed and raise their young.

To reconnect people with the birds themselves, we deliberately sought to humanise the species, spotlighting their monogamy, their tender lifelong partnerships and their place in South Africa's cultural identity. A Valentine's Day activation – 'Penguin Love in Peril' – captured the imagination of the world's media.

Polling commissioned by Blue Marine revealed that 82 per cent of South Africans would vote for leaders who commit to protecting endangered species. The message was unmistakable, the public wanted action. Influencers and public figures, including South African cricketer Rassie van der Dussen, helped amplify the call, contributing to a press reach exceeding 2.2 billion through hundreds of stories worldwide. Our public petition on OnlyOne surged past 40,000 signatures, adding momentum in the crucial weeks before our partners' court deadline.

In March 2025, after months of coordinated effort, a breakthrough arrived. Just days before its court date, the South African government agreed to settle. It committed to the implementation of fishing closures around six major penguin breeding colonies, safeguarding waters essential to 76 per cent of the global population. It was one of the most meaningful protections the species has ever secured and a testament to relentless, united campaigning, powered by public pressure.

The African Penguin is more than a beloved emblem. It is a sentinel of ocean health, a pillar of coastal economies, and an irreplaceable thread in South Africa's natural heritage. Blue Marine will continue to champion stronger protections and sustainable fisheries so that this resilient species can be given not just a chance, but a future.

# Protection shaped by local voices

St Vincent and the Grenadines is a small island nation with a vast ocean legacy. The southern Caribbean waters of SVG are home to lush seagrass meadows, coral reefs bursting with colour and tangled mangrove forests where young fish take shelter. It is a rich marine realm of 36,000 sq km that supports queen conch, sharks, lobsters and reef fish of exceptional variety.



Below Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Environment Fund and Blue Marine working together. Top right Conch dive survey Photo Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Environment Fund.

But the ocean here isn't just scenery – it's supper on the table. It provides a livelihood for fishers whose families have relied on the sea for generations. It's a heritage woven into stories, festivals and identity. The sea feeds, employs and defines the nation.

Despite this strong sense of connection, the ocean is under strain. Only 0.23 per cent of SVG's waters are strongly protected, and designated marine protected areas (MPAs) are too often lines on a map without the enforcement to make them real. As a result, vital species are in danger. Working alongside the St Vincent and the Grenadines Environment Fund (SVGEF), Blue Marine has spent the past four years listening to fishers, collaborating with the government and diving beneath the waves to uncover what is happening in the water.

In 2022, the Ministry of Agriculture invited Blue Marine to conduct a comprehensive marine assessment, including the key fisheries. More than 80 underwater surveys, a review of existing research and extensive discussions with local stakeholders provided a clear and urgent message. Species such as the queen conch, already threatened across the Caribbean, are being overfished to critical



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Underwater surveys, a review of existing research, and extensive discussions with local stakeholders provided a clear and urgent message.

levels. Fishers who depend on the ocean may soon find nothing left to catch. Climate change is tightening its grip, compounding pressures on small island nations like SVG.

But hope is alive in the community. Blue Marine and SVGEF are now turning assessment into action. Together, we are working to implement new marine governance measures, backed by science and shaped with local voices. Fishers themselves proposed and approved a 'closed season' during conch spawning - and conch nursery areas to be closed to fishing. Young Vincentians are being trained as survey divers to monitor stocks, building careers that protect the resources on which their families rely.

Community ownership is more than strategy – it's transformation. In a remarkable moment of

collaboration this year, local whalers not only proposed but agreed to an immediate ban on hunting orcas. Days later, a pod of eight orcas swam safely past their boats, spared by their collective decision. Soon after, legal protection was officially gazetted for orcas and bottlenose dolphins, safeguarding them for future generations.

Meetings with the Fisheries Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, national parks officials, fishers and whalers have led to tangible commitments – including the creation of conch nursery zones and new management measures to protect SVG's most vulnerable species. A movement is growing here: powered by science, shaped by community and driven by the belief that the ocean's future belongs to those who depend on it most.



# Strategies for change

In addition to our project locations across the world, Blue Marine has developed eight specialist units. These act as global strategies for change, unlocking ocean conservation.

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Photo istock

# Blue Legal

Blue Legal was involved in two major court cases this year. In the UK / EU sandeel dispute we supported the UK government at the International Court in the Hague, with an *amicus curiae* brief arguing for the supremacy of UK environmental law over access rights for fishing vessels. Arbitrators found in favour of the UK, setting the tone for other fisheries access agreements across the world.

We were not so successful in the UK High Court, where we were arguing that the UK should stick to scientific advice in determining its fishing quotas. Despite considerable media coverage and some of the best legal advice available on the public law points at issue, the court found against us.

Blue Legal's efforts extend well beyond legal proceedings and enforcing environmental laws. We also research laws and support our project teams, other NGOs and community groups. Much of this remains confidential, but conservation projects require legal support that can include: property rights in fishing quota; constitutional law in small island states; the role of traditional laws in decision-making at sea; competition law; complex rules against state aid; and even the law of the World Trade Organisation.

To provide all this would not have been possible without our network of supporters, including pro bono support this year from Cleary Gottlieb, Baker McKenzie, Taylor Wessing, Reed Smith and Cooley. Thanks also to the Legal Sustainability Alliance and Linklaters, who hosted a special screening of OCEAN with David Attenborough to City lawyers.



Right: The Blue Marine team outside The Royal Courts of Justice, arguing for quotas within scientific advice.



# Blue Investigations



Blue Investigations works to research, expose and combat harmful and unsustainable practices affecting our ocean. In 2025 we had a significant win at the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and published five high-impact reports and exposés. In July, we used the favourable ECJ ruling (see page 18) to highlight the fact that most UK retailers sell tuna caught using destructive drifting fish aggregating devices (FADs).

Our report showed that fleets using FADs also 'go dark' for months by disabling their mandatory tracking systems. These vessels are largely insured in the UK, and our peer-reviewed legal paper highlighted the responsibilities of the UK insurance industry and the pivotal role it could play in curbing this activity.

Blue Investigations worked with other units on our striking 'Four Horsemen' report (see page 30), exposing how dwindling UK fish populations and an inequitable quota system leave most fishers out in the cold while a handful of companies make eye-watering profits. We also published an exposé of the stark contrast between the profits of the European fishing companies that supply much of the UK's tuna and the exploitative and discriminatory treatment of Ivorian and Senegalese crews on board their vessels. This ranged from delayed or withheld salary payments to insufficient medical care, and from unfair employment terms to excessive working hours. In the preceding five years, several companies had paid shareholder dividends of more than €60 million, while their West African crews still fight to be paid the International Labour Organisation minimum as a base salary.

Above: Priyal Bunwaree and Jess Rattle together with colleagues from Bloom Association at the European Court of Justice.



**The media team drives home Blue Marine's messaging through film, celebrity engagement, social media – and even sea shanties.**

It was a seismic year for Blue Media, as we stepped into the global moment of reckoning brought about by OCEAN with David Attenborough. Hosting the film's world premiere made us part of a collaboration that reached billions and helped catalyse political action on bottom trawling around the world (see page 14). We used the moment to launch #TheBottomLine, supported by Blue Marine ambassadors Stephen Fry and Theo James (see page 16), and are awaiting a government decision on effective protection in English MPAs.

All this came after the success of a #SaveAfricanPenguins (see page 20), and the launch of our film The Great UK Fishing Scandal to coincide with our day in the High Courts of Justice (see page 26). Elsewhere we supported the fisherman's shanty Coast Town, which highlighted the plight of small-scale coastal fishers. We raised a flag at the mid-way point of the Ocean Decade by releasing the film The Race to 30x30 with Sylvia Earle and showcased another film at the UN Ocean Conference to celebrate the protection of St Helena.

Ambassador engagement reached new heights when Mercedes F1 driver George Russell was announced as a Blue Marine ambassador and auctioned his racing helmet in support of our projects, strengthening a year defined by creativity, influence and tangible conservation impact.

With 2,500 pieces of earned press media throughout the year, Blue Marine secured an editorial reach of well over 10.5 billion. More than a quarter of a million people now follow Blue Marine on our social channels (we invite you to join us!), reaching more than 8 million people in 2025.

**Above** Save African Penguins campaigners outside the Court of Justice in Pretoria **Photo** The Wildlife Trusts.



# Blue Education

**Our education team creates engaging tools to build a lasting commitment to ocean conservation.**

This year, we advised the English Curriculum Review on adopting a cross-curricular Earth Systems approach to ocean learning. We invited Curriculum Review panellists to the Future Generations' premiere of OCEAN with David Attenborough, showing key education policymakers the strong public appetite for change (see page 15). In addition, we launched the Blue Marine Max Stenbeck Legacy Programme, which will deliver ocean advocacy film-making workshops, field-trips to conservation projects and teacher-training opportunities. The aim is to reach thousands of children. Blue Marine's education resources also achieved the Green Tick of quality assured approval, a trusted mark of excellence awarded by leading UK professional body the Association for Science Education.

Further afield, we partnered with Maldives Resilient Reefs to kick-start a Blue Ocean Learning Toolkit for teachers. Nineteen marine science teachers, local NGOs and UNICEF's climate resilience officer contributed fresh, locally grounded case studies during the first planning workshop. Representatives from the Ministry of Education and the National Institute for Education attended, as well as the principal examiner for Cambridge International's marine science iGCSE.

In Mozambique, Blue Marine is supporting Sea Her, a programme run by Love The Oceans to promote gender equity and reduce the exclusion of women in ocean spaces. We have been working with Leonor, who began her journey through its literacy programme. Her story is being brought to life in a new film that traces her path from learning to swim to emerging as a confident ocean steward.

**'The students were shocked, mesmerised, blown away, and experienced the emotional rollercoaster needed in this generation to bring about awareness and change. Let's hope they ride this wave of determination for years to come.'**

**Sarah Haar, Deputy Head of Year 8, Sydenham School, London**



**Above** Leonor Marrengula, assisting swimming lessons in Mozambique, facilitated by Love The Oceans **Photo** Mario Guilamba.



# Blue Policy

In the policy world, 2025 was a challenging but successful year that brought out the best in the team. Against a political backdrop of global and national retrenchment on conservation objectives, Blue Policy – in collaboration with others – achieved some positive steps forward. Most notable were the ending of industrial sandeel fishing in UK waters, and the proposal to remove bottom trawling from all of England’s offshore demersal MPAs. We still await the final decision but are cautiously optimistic.



Above Clare Brook and Aisling McGarrigle outside No 10 for a meeting with the PM’s environmental advisors  
Photo Henry Alexander.

The unit engaged with the breadth of UK policy-makers, from briefing to meetings about MPAs with the Secretary of State to briefing the Prime Minister’s advisers ahead of World Ocean Day. We collaborated with Blue Investigations and Blue Economics on ‘The Four Horsemen of the UK Fisheries Apocalypse’, a report that highlights four key failings of the UK government in protecting its marine environment and its fisheries. With a focus on failing marine protection, overfishing, inequitable quotas and harmful subsidies, the report shows where policy is inadequate to protect our seas, and how it can be reformed to create thriving ocean and coastal communities.

We took ‘The Four Horsemen of the UK Fisheries Apocalypse’ to the Labour Party conference to complement ‘Hook, Line and Subsidy’, our first ever panel at a political conference. The event highlighted two of the main issues from the report affecting small-scale fishers: overfishing and the inequitable quota system. The panel included former Climate Minister Kerry McCarthy, MP for Bristol East, and opened up dialogue with government about the issues facing our most vulnerable coastal communities.



# Blue Economics

Blue Economics works to quantify the total economic value of effective marine conservation while highlighting the real cost of destructive fishing. The team aims to develop new ways of directing capital at scale towards ocean protection while supporting the delivery of Blue Marine’s projects.

In 2025, we worked with the governments of Namibia, Barbados and the Dutch Caribbean, hosting workshops for civil servants on natural capital accounting and sustainable finance. The sessions led to the development of the first natural capital accounts for Barbados, supporting the island in its marine spatial planning process. Following a workshop in the Caribbean attended by governments from nine different islands, we conducted an in-depth analysis of the potential of a regional cruise fee across our project countries. The work is being used to help develop a sustainable finance plan for Curaçao and its neighbouring islands, to support the designation and implementation of their 30x30 commitments.

In the UK, the work of Blue Economics focused on exposing the governments’ provision of harmful fuel subsidies within the fisheries sector. We co-authored the ‘Four Horsemen of the UK Fisheries Apocalypse’ to highlight the way that existing policies are facilitating the degradation of the UK’s marine environment and coastal communities. In the Solent, we continue to support the development of some of the world’s first marine biodiversity credits through publications, methodology developments and community engagement.

Below Dan Crockett and Kaija Barisa met with Te Moana Collective to support French Polynesia in creating the world’s largest marine protected area. Photo Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy.



# Blue Climate

**At COP30 in Belem, Brazil, Blue Climate launched the 2030 Saltmarsh Breakthrough alongside our partners WWF, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, the UN Climate Champions and the Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action. It was the first ever event at a UNFCCC COP dedicated to saltmarsh, and was opened by Mary Creagh, UK Minister for Nature. The Saltmarsh Breakthrough is a global call to turn the tide on conserving and restoring these vital ecosystems by scaling actions and investments. It built on the launch earlier in the year of the first 'State of the World's Saltmarshes' report alongside Salt of the Earth at the UN Ocean Conference in Nice.**

We have been working to promote the importance of climate-smart MPAs, publishing a report building these concepts into our international projects work. They are essential for effective ocean protection, enhancing the 30x30 target and maximising climate mitigation and adaptation benefits.

We are also working to support St Andrews on a carbon modelling study to assess bottom trawling's impact on sediment carbon. This work is highly complementary to the Convex Seascape Survey and our political work addressing bottom trawling in MPAs across the UK.

We have continued to work with local NGOs in the Philippines and Indonesia to support the restoration of 20 hectares of abandoned aquaculture ponds to healthy mangrove forest. These projects aim to empower local communities with regenerative alternative livelihood opportunities, as well as recover biodiversity and fish nursery habitat - while increasing blue carbon sequestration and enhancing coastal resilience.



Left Maddie Millington-Drake with UN Climate Champions COP30 Photo UN Climate Champions.



# Blue Science

**Blue Science works to ensure all projects are underpinned by robust science and supported by modern technology**

Blue Science has provided technical expertise across multiple international projects this year. In Barbados, we supported the Government's marine spatial planning efforts by identifying research priorities and developing a baseline report of marine and coastal biodiversity. Our work in St Vincent and the Grenadines brought together its Environment Fund and local fishermen to conduct conch surveys and support lobster conservation initiatives. In Uruguay, we supported an eDNA project in partnership with ETH Zurich to monitor biodiversity in potential marine protected areas (MPAs). Blue Science also worked with Blue Climate to publish a report designing and integrating climate-resilient MPAs into marine spatial planning.

In the Maldives, we supported local partners in uncovering local seafood sourcing characteristics of tourism operators and recommended future fisheries management actions. We also supported the trial of vessel monitoring systems (VMS) on five small-scale fishing boats after an extensive consultation period with the fishing community. The use of VMS is now providing greater transparency around fishing activities conducted through the sustainable resort fishery programme of our partners Maldives Resilient Reefs. Blue Science will continue to review the success of the trial through 2026, and this will support the team's wider work to further digitise the #FishForTomorrow programme next year. In addition, the team received funding from Zendesk to kick-start an exciting project to understand the barriers and opportunities for technology use within MPA design and management. This work will be conducted in collaboration with conservation technology network WILDLABS.

**In the Maldives, we supported local partners in uncovering local seafood sourcing characteristics of tourism operators, and recommended future fisheries management actions.**

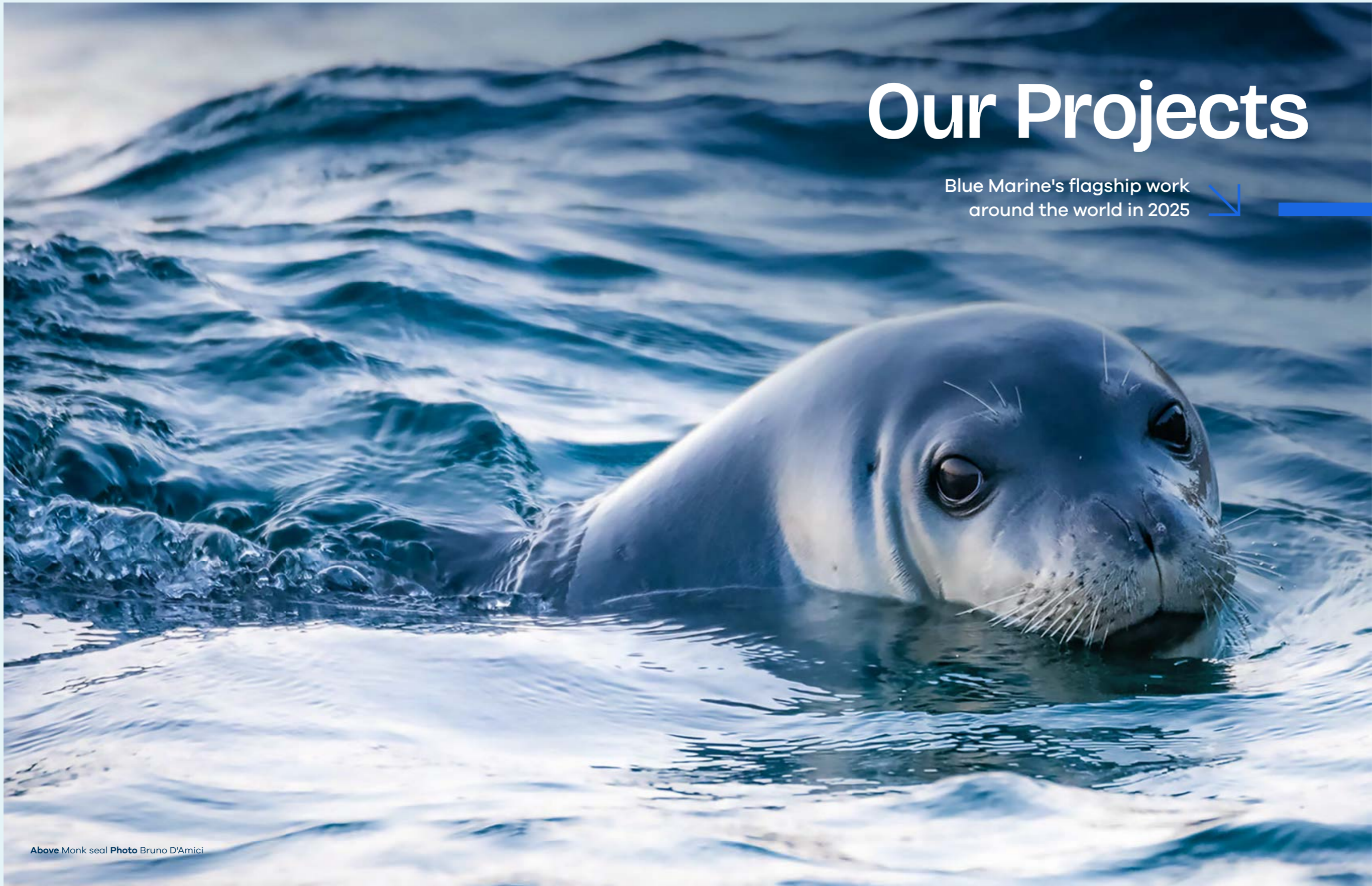


Above Jake Edmiston speaking to a local fisher in Laamu Atoll, Maldives, about a VMS device installed on this vessel Photo Coral Lutteridge.



# Our Projects

Blue Marine's flagship work  
around the world in 2025



Above Monk seal Photo Bruno D'Amici



The places where Blue Marine works with local partners to make a difference.



● Caribbean

- BARBADOS
- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
- ST KITTS AND NEVIS
- ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
- DUTCH CARIBBEAN

● Atlantic Ocean

- ARGENTINA
- NAMIBIA
- SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE
- URUGUAY
- SOUTH AFRICA
- BRAZIL

● Mediterranean

- GREECE
- BALEARIC ISLANDS
- ITALY
- TURKEY
- CYPRUS
- THE CASPIAN SEA
- TUNISIA
- LIBYA

● Indian Ocean

- THE MALDIVES
- INDONESIA
- MOZAMBIQUE
- BAHRAIN

● Pacific Ocean

- MEXICO
- CHILE
- PHILIPPINES
- FRENCH POLYNESIA

● UK Overseas Territories

- ASCENSION ISLAND
- ST HELENA
- TRISTAN DA CUNHA
- SOUTH GEORGIA AND SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS

● British Isles

- THE SOLENT
- SUSSEX
- ESSEX
- CHANNEL ISLANDS
- LYME BAY
- SCOTLAND
- BERWICKSHIRE

● North Sea

- BELGIUM

# British Isles projects

## From Scotland and the Channel Islands, to Dogger Bank and the Sussex coast

New measures in October 2025 saw more than 90 per cent of Scotland's offshore marine protected areas (MPAs) closed to bottom-towed fishing, an area of 170,000 sq km. While some areas remain unprotected this sets a strong base for future protection inshore. At the Coastal Futures conference, Blue Marine presented its just transition cost-benefit analysis, providing policy-makers with a pathway to move to lower-impact fishing. Throughout the year in Scotland, we helped to amplify the voices of the Our Seas coalition at parliamentary events and Holyrood engagement, strengthening the call for sustainable coastal management. We also took co-ownership of the 'MPA Reality Check' website with the Marine Conservation Society and the Wildlife Trusts, enabling us to report on MPA progress in UK waters with these partners.

Following Blue Marine's research and advocacy in the Channel Islands, the Jersey government will be debating plans for MPAs that will protect 22 per cent of its waters from mobile gear from September 2026 onwards. The Jersey marine spatial plan was presented at a major conference in Norway in July and at the UK's first maerl conference in Falmouth in April. Carbon held within local seagrass is being included within the Island's greenhouse gas budget. The snorkel trail programme has introduced more than 1,200 Jersey children to marine life, inspiring the next generation of ocean stewards. We also delivered presentations and engaged local conservation bodies in Guernsey and Sark, where we have been invited to propose an MPA for the Sark government that would lead to all inshore waters being protected.

2025 REVIEW



Main photo David Palfrey. Below Blue Marine volunteers after helping to collect samples of maerl. Bottom Our Seas members, supporters and MSPs gathered outside the Scottish Parliament to ask for more ocean protection, more fish and more jobs.



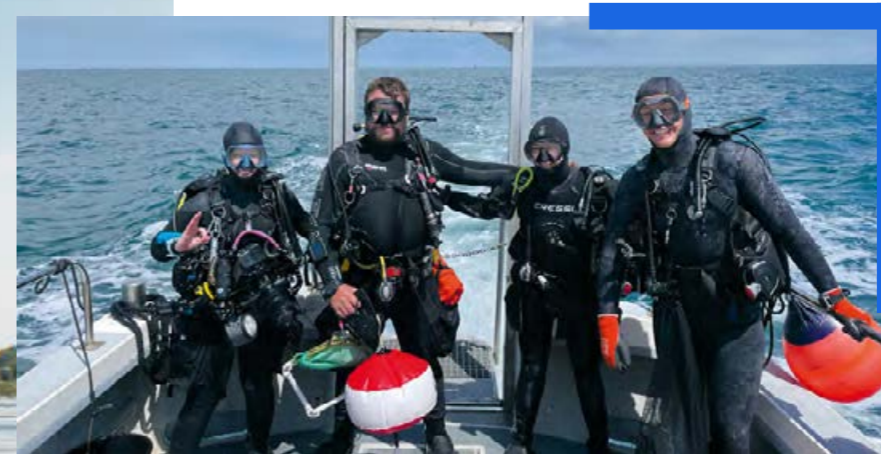
of Jersey's waters to be protected from mobile gear by September 2026 following Blue Marine's research and advocacy in the Channel Islands.

In April 2025, Blue Marine and the Sussex Kelp Recovery Project hosted the first UK Kelp Summit. Drawing more than 150 attendees, the event showcased 20 studies and initiatives, and the kelp ecosystem monitoring that followed the Sussex Nearshore Trawling Byelaw, which banned bottom trawling from more than 300 km of Sussex waters in 2021. Blue Marine launched its report on UK Kelp Recovery, Barriers and Optimum Conditions to promote protection and recovery of these vital ecosystems.

Safeguarding the future of small-scale coastal fishing communities is vital for the environment as well as for society, local economies and heritage. The environmental impact of small-scale fishing vessels is far lower than the bottom trawlers that devastate fish stocks and seabed habitats. Together with Inshore Small-Scale Fisheries (ISSF) partners, we are challenging the status quo to reverse the current decline and ensure that the voice and value of the UK's small-scale fishing fleets is recognised. At a packed Parliamentary event in April, hosted by Noah Law MP and Fisheries Minister Daniel Zeichner, we presented the report 'Securing Sustainable Inshore and Small-scale Fisheries', which crystallised the findings of two regional workshops with more than 120 participants, including 53 fishermen.

In restoration, in addition to the flagship Solent Seascape Project featured on page 36, Blue Marine's work included Rewilding the Dogger Bank, an international coalition working to protect the Dogger Bank from harmful human activities through legal interventions and to actively restore horse mussel reefs. Partners in the project have secured partial protection of Dutch and German sections of the bank to bottom-towed fishing in November, and we have legal challenges

in place to get to 100 per cent protection in 2026. We continued to collaborate with the UK Sturgeon Alliance to restore the fish to UK waters, with a focus this year on increasing public awareness of species in the UK.



# United Kingdom Overseas Territories



94%

of the United Kingdom's unique biodiversity is found in its Overseas Territories.

£8.5M

committed to the 'Blue Belt' Programme for the following three years - an increase of half a million pounds per annum.

42%

of total UK waters are fully protected, thanks to the 'Blue Belt'.

4.3M

sq kms of ocean in the 'Blue Belt' has commitments to protect - of which over 3.9M sq km has been designated.

36

community projects on Ascension Island supported through the Ascension Island Marine Protected Area Community Trust fund.



## Ascension Island – record green turtle season

The 2025 green turtle nesting season on Ascension Island was the busiest ever, with over 13,000 nesting attempts recorded. Conservation interns, supported by Blue Marine, carried out 2,000 hours of monitoring.

13,000 nesting attempts

## St Helena Dive Scholarships

Diving qualifications open pathways for personal growth, education and employment. The scheme helps build a skilled and confident community connected to the ocean and has so far trained eight dive scholars.



Above Dive scholars at St Helena learnt skills fundamental to dive safety Photo Craig Yan.

## Monk seals in Cyprus

Protecting the Akrotiri ecosystem in Cyprus, which has been overfished for years, will restore a key biodiversity area, supporting the recovery of critically endangered Mediterranean monk seals, green turtles, guitarfish and a host of other marine species.

## Lobbying for increased Blue Belt protection

The UK Government Blue Belt programme supports the UK overseas territories, including the protection of vast and ecologically important waters surrounding the British Antarctic Territory and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI). The conservation NGOs of the Great Blue Ocean coalition played a key role in the government review that saw the expansion of the fully protected segment of the SGSSI MPA by 166,000 sq km to nearly half a million sq km.

# Mediterranean projects

**This year, our team in Brussels joined the fight for effective conservation in Italian waters when it took a legal complaint to the EU over bottom trawling in six MPAs.**

At United Nations Ocean Week, fishers from Sicily joined Blue Marine's team to meet with Costas Kadis, the Fisheries Commissioner, to discuss a new MPA around the island of Salina. Simultaneously, we are expanding MPAs in Sardinia, Puglia and Liguria by 450 sq km, and there is more to come in 2026.

There is an extinction crisis in the Mediterranean. For the last two years, we have been working with local university students, fishers and scientists to monitor shark catches in the Strait of Sicily and the north coast of Africa. The evidence is alarming. Many of the species we are observing on fishing vessels or for sale at fish markets are highly vulnerable and are protected through international treaties. They include critically endangered great white, mako and hammerhead

sharks, and angel and mobula rays. Among these, we are documenting a high number of juveniles and pregnant females, substantiating our theory that the seamounts and vast seagrass meadows of the Gulf of Gabès, off Tunisia, are important breeding areas for Mediterranean sharks and rays. In light of this growing evidence for urgent marine protection, we look forward to the next Our Ocean Conference in Kenya, where we will highlight the issue with decision-makers.

**We are expanding MPAs in Sardinia, Puglia and Liguria by 450 sq km, and there is more to come in 2026.**



**Above** Pelagic Sandbar shark in Pelagic marine protected area **Photo** Rocco Canella.



# Prime Minister backs fisher-led Amorgos MPA

**Two major conservation milestones were achieved in Greece this year. A highly protected area was designated around Formicula Island in the Ionian Sea to safeguard endangered monk seals. In the Aegean, four fishing protected areas were designated around Amorgos, marking Greece's first community-led marine protected area.**

These designations pave the way for inclusive, science-based marine conservation. Closely monitored and enforced, the fishing bans around Amorgos are designed to allow fish stocks to recover, supporting the long-term sustainability of local economies. The power of the Amorgos community-led model was recognised at a meeting on the island, moderated by Blue Marine's Angela Lazou Dean, where the Prime Minister announced his intention to replicate the Amorgos approach and establish ten additional fishing protected areas. These measures would advance Greece's progress toward achieving 10 per cent strict marine protection.

It was not a good year for invasive lionfish, blue crabs and long-spined sea urchins - people are starting to eat them! More than 3,000 guests attended the first Blue Crab Festival, and we are developing market chains for crab and urchins. At the Athens Culinary School, we held a masterclass for 40 students, who will take invasive recipes to the plates of city restaurants.

Fishers, suppliers and buyers were encouraged to catch, sell and promote delicious invasives through national outreach alliance Pick the Alien.

We also launched a restoration project in the Amvrakikos Gulf, whose resident dolphins, rays, sharks, seabirds and turtles are under threat. Collaborating with local partners, Blue Marine has initiated actions to restore key habitats, protect biodiversity and promote sustainable practices.



**Below** Greek Prime Minister visited Amorgos to honour Amorgorama, an initiative that has led to the designation of four new fishing protected areas on the island **Photo** CPF/A.Theochari.





# Protection for Italian seas

The 'AMPower' project began this year in collaboration with Greenpeace Italy. Its aim is to conserve Italy's network of marine protected areas (MPAs) and ensure their effective management.

Among the first involved are Asinara Island in Sardinia, Torre Guaceto in Puglia and Bergoggi in Liguria. Initial monitoring activities, meetings and events have started, aimed at strengthening the scientific basis for protection and building a network among local stakeholders, MPA authorities, regional administrations and the Ministry of the Environment.



'With guidance from Blue Marine's biologists we formed the Aeolian Islands Responsible Fishing Association. After visiting other MPAs, we saw how fish numbers recover under proper protection. Today, we believe small-scale fishing can thrive alongside coastal conservation and even support it. This approach can give our local economy a chance to recover.'



Left: Dr. Giulia Bernardi in Salina. Photo: Gianfranco Taranto. Main photo: Fisherman in Salina. Photo: Danny Copeland. Bottom left: Capo Carbonara marine protected area corals.



## A first for the Aeolians?

With support from Blue Marine, Salina is working towards the first MPA in the Aeolian archipelago, north of Sicily. The Salina Blue Island project has supported fishers, tourism operators, restaurateurs and students on the island through events to showcase the opportunities that an MPA can offer for sustainable management. A school snorkelling programme brought children closer to the marine environment, while an artist residency wove together art, community and local knowledge. Blue Marine continues to facilitate the political dialogue required for official designation of the MPA. Its bottom-up model was highlighted at the UN Ocean Conference and at EU Ocean Week in Brussels, where local fisherman Santino Ruggera shared his experience.



# Building momentum to protect the Caribbean

Across the Caribbean, small island nations stand on the front line of climate change. For communities in Barbados, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Dutch Caribbean and Dominican Republic, the ocean is critical for livelihoods, culture and a sustainable future. Supporting these communities means protecting the marine life that sustains their tourism and fisheries - from keystone species such as turtles, reef fish, sharks and whales to the critical habitats they depend on, including seagrass meadows, mangroves and coral reefs.

Blue Marine is helping protect their waters through marine protected areas (MPAs) designed to safeguard biodiversity where protection matters most.

In Barbados, the government has pledged to protect 30 per cent of its waters, funded through a pioneering debt-for-nature swap. In 2025, Blue Marine provided strategic guidance to develop the island's first Marine Spatial Plan, a blueprint for the ocean's future. It comprises three protection scenarios, supported by a baseline technical report and a natural capital assessment that measures the financial value of the marine environment within the country's Exclusive Economic Zone.

In the Dutch Caribbean, Blue Marine is working with the Curaçao government and local NGO partners to protect 30 per cent of its waters.

2025 REVIEW



**Left** Green turtle resting at Carlise Bay, Barbados  
**Photo** Sophie Locke.  
**Above** Curaçao's Prime Minister Gilmar Pisas  
**Photo** Fiona Llewellyn

Working with environmental consultancy Eftec, Blue Marine led the creation of Barbados's first natural capital account and supported a two-day training workshop attended by more than 35 government officials across finance, economics, statistics, environment and development. Their positive feedback was a powerful signal that Barbados is building an ocean economy shaped by science and owned by its people.

Blue Marine and partners such as island experts Terra Mare are also supporting the drafting of technical reports, planning enforcement pathways and preparing management plans for the new MPAs. Scientific expeditions are underway too, mapping offshore seascapes, collecting environmental DNA, filming research in action, and planning a cetacean survey to better understand whale populations that migrate through Barbadian waters.

Protecting nature is a movement that is spreading across the region. In the Dutch Caribbean, Blue Marine is working with the Curaçao government and local NGO partners to protect 30 per cent of its waters. To build momentum among other islands towards the 30 per cent target, a Blue Marine workshop brought together governments from Barbados, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Kitts and Nevis, the Dominican Republic and all six Dutch Caribbean territories to discuss options for sustainable long-term financing for MPAs.

Curaçao's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2030 co-authored by Blue Marine was officially published in March 2025, including key major priority actions: a 30 per cent offshore no-take MPA, reproductive zones for fisheries, habitat restoration and a strong governance framework. Conservation-minded Prime Minister Gilmar Pisas reaffirmed his support at the UN Ocean Conference, pledging not just paper parks, but enforced, meaningful protection.

Across the region, from bans on catching parrotfish in Curaçao, to new seagrass and mangrove protections in St Maarten, the story of ocean conservation is being written by the communities that depend on the sea. With science as a compass and people as its guardians, the Caribbean is charting a future where nature and livelihoods can thrive together.



# Latin America

**Our partners in Argentina achieved significant victories this year along the Patagonian coast, crowned by the creation of the Patagonia Azul Provincial Park. A marine protected area (MPA) of 295,135 hectares, it now safeguards migratory routes for whales, feeding grounds for seabirds and the country's largest colony of South American fur seals. The province of Chubut also granted legal protection to seven species including humpback and sei whales, Commerson's dolphins, the white-headed steamer duck, the southern giant petrel and the broadnose sevengill shark.**

These protections were strengthened by studies that identified dozens of new humpback whales, documented their presence across new seasons, recorded more than 29 weeks of whale vocalisations and revealed the long-distance travels of fur seals. Research teams also expanded live camera networks that now stream the daily lives of penguins, shags and petrels. Meanwhile advocacy campaigns raised national awareness about the threat of industrial fishing and promoted MPAs as the solution.

In Chilean Patagonia, Blue Marine collaborated with local partners to deliver a formal proposal to double the size of the Diego Ramirez-Drake Passage MPA, and our partner Defendamos Patagonia engaged with millions of viewers through its public-facing campaign to push polluting salmon farms out of MPAs. For its part, Chile's government announced plans to extend its offshore MPAs, potentially protecting more than 50 per cent of territorial waters.

**Main photo** Elephant seal pup in Patagonia Azul MPA, Argentinian Patagonia  
**Photo** Rory Moore. **Right** Magellanic Penguin in Patagonia Azul MPA, Argentinian Patagonia  
**Photo** Rory Moore. **Top right** Researchers tag and track broadnose sevengill sharks along the Atlantic coast **Photo** Ignacio Gutierrez.



**Chile's government announced plans to extend its offshore MPAs, potentially protecting more than 50 per cent of territorial waters.**



Our partners in Uruguay, Mar Azul Uruguayo (MAU), helped to identify five key locations for protection at the IUCN's regional workshop on Important Shark and Ray Areas. Field campaigns detected aggregations of endangered guitarfish in rocky coastal habitats, and these findings will be published. Public engagement reached new heights through strategies such as participating in La Paloma's Artisanal Fishing Festival, where shark footage captivated audiences. At Argentina's largest fishing tournament, MAU scientists convinced organisers to remove guitarfish from catch categories.

MAU has also trained naval personnel in satellite monitoring to combat illegal fishing, and 'Agua Invasida', a documentary on illegal fishing, premiered to government officials and lawmakers, sparking widespread media coverage. MAU is now focusing efforts on the Pez Limón zone following the discovery of coral formations threatened by unauthorised Argentine fishing vessels. Another four MPAs are in the pipeline, and we continue to give the government the data and support it needs to fulfil its commitment to protect at least 30 per cent of Uruguay's marine territory.

In Mexico, it was a profitable year for the ex-shark fishers of Baja California, who are turning to tourism and high-value markets for sustainably caught fish. This has taken enormous pressure off shark populations in the inshore. Further offshore, industrial longliners and purse-seiners continue to threaten the fragile food chains of the Pacific and the Sea of Cortez - the Dos Mares (Two Seas). The proposition of a huge, 200,000 sq km MPA around such a populated area is bound to invite opinions. Negotiations are ongoing with government and local stakeholders to find an approved vision for the 'aquarium of the world' that promotes its equal and sustainable use.



Elephant seal in Patagonia Azul MPA,  
Argentinian Patagonia **Photo** Rory Moore.



# Protecting African waters through community-led conservation

**Where the cold Benguela Current sweeps up the southwest coast of Africa, the waters are among the most productive marine ecosystems on Earth, generating vast upwellings that sustain fisheries, coastal livelihoods and extraordinary biodiversity. From seals and penguins to hake and sardines, the ocean fuels the economy and identity of the region.**

The focus of Blue Marine's work in Africa is empowering local communities while safeguarding the ocean ecosystems that sustain them. From pioneering marine protection in Namibia, to trialling small-scale mussel aquaculture in Mozambique and protecting whale sharks in São Tomé and Príncipe, we are supporting long-term conservation driven by local knowledge and scientific evidence.

Namibia has designated the Namibian Islands' Marine Protected Area (NIMPA), a vast sanctuary for endangered African Penguins, Cape gannets and important lobster fisheries. But its management still needs to be implemented, as well as raising local awareness and buy-in. In addition, national protected area coverage remains below the ten per cent goal to which the Namibian government has committed.

To help achieve these goals, we are working alongside the government and partners the Namibian Nature Foundation. We continue to support and advocate for the implementation of the revised NIMPA's operational management plan and regulations, which are key to ensuring effective protection. A dedicated workshop with government officials drew up a roadmap to ten per cent marine protection, explored sustainable finance options, and set future monitoring and research priorities.



**Left** Turtle swimming in Mozambique **Photo** Tom Armitage. **Bottom** School of fish in Mozambique **Photo** iStock. **Top right** Dr. Judith Brown presenting at workshop in Namibia on BBNJ, including potential for Walvis Ridge to be considered for a High Seas marine protected area **Photo** Sharon Kahunda.



Building local capacity is essential to lasting change. We finalised a Namibia Ocean Literacy Toolkit, delivering teacher training, workshops and school programmes to inspire the next generation of ocean stewards. Our economic support has also helped cost national MPA expansion and is contributing to the development of a sustainable finance plan to ensure long-term protection.

In Mozambique, we support local partner Love The Oceans (LTO) to strengthen fisheries management and community resilience. As well as establishing baseline shark research, we are supporting fishers to transition from destructive gill nets to more sustainable kayak line-fishing, empowering local women through an aquaculture initiative that improves household income while reducing pressure on local fish stocks. LTO continues to expand women's swimming and literacy programmes, helping participants engage more fully with marine resource management and business opportunities. LTO also leads experimental monitoring of the aquaculture systems to establish suitable and sustainable techniques to scale up the programme.

In São Tomé and Príncipe, we are working to monitor and protect whale sharks, building national conservation capacity and advancing protection through science. Observation data collected with local partners has contributed to whale sharks being listed as a protected species in the new draft MPA Act and Fisheries Act. More than 3,000 fishers have been reached through community whale shark education sessions, while our partner Over the Swell has now successfully tagged six whale sharks and recorded more than 80 sightings, alongside more than 100 observations of other shark species.





Main photo: Andy Mann. Left: Max Bello; Andy Mann.

# Our Antarctica

**Marine life in the Antarctic - including whales, penguins, seals and many seabird species - is facing a dual threat from climate change and the exploitation of krill. Krill is the basis of the Antarctic ecosystem, relied upon by almost all Antarctic wildlife, but it is being extracted for use in omega-3 supplements, as feed for farmed salmon and as pet food.**

As countries prioritise profit over protection, this year marked a decade since any meaningful conservation progress in the region. The Our Antarctica campaign is seeking to inject urgent ambition into marine conservation in the area.

In its first year, the campaign has amplified high-level support from Angola, Brazil, Chile, Madagascar, Panama and Tonga. Scientists, ocean leaders, policymakers and public figures, including Dr Sylvia Earle, Benedict Cumberbatch and Cara Delevingne, have

come together as Antarctic Avengers, to call for the Southern Ocean to be closed to krill fishing and to shine a light on the stalemate in Antarctic marine protection, to protect both our biodiversity and planetary health.

Through engaging with policymakers, campaigning, research, press and media, the campaign has been instrumental in putting the issue on the international agenda, bringing us one step further to unlocking new marine protected areas.



# The Maldives

## Local teamwork driving national change.

Blue Marine's work in the Maldives continues to show how strong local partnerships can drive change at national level. In 2020, we helped establish the local NGO Maldives Resilient Reefs (MRR), and today we continue to support its growth as a leading voice for marine conservation. Together, we helped secure the designation of six marine protected areas in Laamu Atoll in 2021 and are now working with island councils to develop the country's first community-conserved area.

Our campaigns are shaping national policy. Three advocacy drives have led directly to government action, while a National Coordinator for Protected Areas - employed by MRR and embedded within Ministry of

Tourism and Environment - is helping to deliver a 30x30 conservation roadmap for the Maldives. Community empowerment remains at the heart of our work. MRR has trained more than 50 citizen scientists in Laamu, and in July convened a three-day workshop of tourism representatives and government agencies to accelerate collaboration around seagrass conservation.

With the launch of the #SeagrassIndustryLeaders Circle, 20 resorts have committed to end the removal of seagrass for aesthetic reasons. We continue to scale sustainable seafood sourcing, with our programme now implemented across two atolls, creating models that protect ecosystems while supporting the livelihoods of local fishers.

**Below** Launch of the Seagrass Industry Leaders circle where 20 resorts pledged to protect at least 80 per cent of their baseline seagrass areas.



**Below** Surveying coral reefs in Raja Ampat. **Photo** Zafer

# Indonesia

## Training rangers and divers in the Raja Ampat archipelago

Within the Raja Ampat archipelago, located in West Papua, Indonesia, Blue Marine has partnered with the Raja Ampat SEA Centre to advance science, education and community-led conservation in the Dampier Strait MPA. This year saw major progress toward our vision of protecting globally significant reefs, with local Papuans at the forefront. We trained two new Papuan marine rangers who will support the existing local programme - and we built a new patrol vessel for them. As of November, patrols increased from three per month to six per week. Five Papuan dive guides graduated from the SEA Centre dive school programme, opening non-extractive livelihood pathways in diving and tourism. The team became Reef Check-certified and completed 16 surveys across 8,000 sq miles, establishing vital baselines to monitor reef health.



# The Solent Seascape Project

Recognised by the UN, subject of a film and even its own songs, this is restoration on a grand scale.

Endorsed by the United Nations as a Decade Action, the Solent Seascape Project continues to demonstrate the benefits of restoration both for nature and for local people. Active restoration has resulted in the first seagrass growth in the Hamble river in nearly a century and created an area of new saltmarsh habitat larger than a football pitch. Native oyster populations are being re-established through the placement of more than 20,000 oysters in the Hamble. Even the Royal Navy has helped out, by testing a remote underwater vehicle to collect imagery of the oyster reef.

Major habitat creation works were completed at Sidlesham Ferry Wetlands to support breeding seabirds and waders, and monitoring of seabird colonies across the Solent has recorded an increase in the number of sites being used. Data from the project's monitoring programme saw seven academic papers published this year, as well as the Solent State of Nature Report and Data Explorer. Contributions to policy development include work on marine restoration licensing reform and marine-specific methods for the Plan Vivo Nature standard, which could generate restoration credits by 2028.

Community engagement has led to more than 700 volunteer hours on seagrass seeds collection, while creative communications initiatives engage new audiences and raise awareness of the project. An artist-in-residence, Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Richard Walters, has producing a collection of original songs about the seascape with local musicians, while a short film about the importance of the Solent to its residents won the 'Most Inspiring Film' award at the Big Blue Film Festival.

Above Volunteers collecting seagrass seeds.  
Below Native Oysters Photos Matt Jarvis.



## Convex Seascape Survey

**A five-year study of the continental shelves to understand the potential of sediment in the carbon cycle.**

This year, our modelling work made great strides in accurately locating and characterising carbon-rich muddy hotspots, leading to new understanding that could inform site-specific management decisions. Away from our desks, we undertook international fieldwork expeditions to Canada, Australia and South Africa to investigate the role of marine life in carbon storage and the impact of protection. The data generated in Australia is supporting local collaborators by feeding into a consultation process and zoning approach for a new marine park.

A further team visited Antarctica to explore the complex contributions of both great whales and seaweed to carbon storage in the region. Meanwhile, back in the UK, colleagues used a converted fishing vessel to simulate the impact of trawling on seafloor biology and chemistry to further our understanding of the impact of human activity on carbon stores.

Five new publications added to our growing results, covering topics from seabed sediment distribution to the role of fish digging and disturbing the seafloor. We shared our progress and findings at key international conferences, including the One Ocean Science Congress and the UN Ocean Conference in Nice. Excitingly, our contribution to international goals for marine conservation and climate action was formally acknowledged in August when the Convex Seascape Survey was endorsed by the UN Ocean Decade programme.



Top Measuring cores for subsampling during fieldwork in the Plymouth Sound Photo Matt Jarvis. Above Gail Fordham during fieldwork collecting sediment cores in Algoa Bay, South Africa Photo Naomi Hart.



# Funding & Finance

Strong growth and efficient operations



Fur seals in Juan Fernández Photo Max Bello



# Thank you

Photo George Duffield

We extend our deepest gratitude to our supporters – your generosity makes our conservation work possible. In particular we would like to thank: Rituals for their visionary 10 per cent Profit Pledge; Convex Group for driving the Convex Seascape Survey; Cristina Stenbeck for invaluable unrestricted funding; the Max Stenbeck Foundation for amplifying our education programme; the Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme for

supporting the Solent Seascape Project and our work to revitalise the Amvrakikos Gulf; the Avilan Ocean Foundation for their passion and organisational support; Rolly and Francoise van Rappard for backing our global MPA work, legal team and Blue Media; Peter Lürssen for his long-term commitment to our mission; the People's Postcode Lottery for their continued organisational support; and Flotilla Foundation for their support of our legal and climate work.

### MAJOR PARTNERS

Major partners are essential to Blue Marine's progress and global impact, and have made significant contributions to restoring the ocean to health.



### CORPORATE PARTNERS

Our corporate partners provide vital core support that underpins our work around the world.



### TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to our Trust and Foundation partners for their generosity, and for believing in our vision and work.



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Photo George Duffield

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Steve Edge  
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Murielle Pickard  
Simon Pickard  
William Saloman  
Elizabeth Scarlett  
Olly Williams  
Andrew Winch  
Jane Winch

# Blue Marine Yacht Club

**The BMYC auction raised more than €360,000 for our projects**

The global yachting community and supporting donors continue to give ocean conservation their backing by joining the BMYC. At our annual Monaco event, members and guests enjoyed a personal video message from Blue Marine's new ambassador, F1 driver George Russell. George generously donated for auction the special-edition Blue Marine helmet in which he had just finished second in the Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

Featuring a design that glistened with marine life, the helmet created a real buzz and was gallantly secured with a winning bid of £60,000.

Over dinner, Blue Marine's Fiona Llewellyn and Ambra Messina took guests on an inspiring journey across the world's ocean, as they brought to life our vital marine protection work from the high seas to the Caribbean, the Mediterranean and Italy. Members and guests were presented with a beautiful pledge card with which to select and sponsor projects from around the globe.



2025 REVIEW



Above Blue Marine ambassador George Russell gifted the ocean themed helmet that he wore during the Azerbaijan Grand Prix. Left Blue Marine's team at our annual BMYC dinner in September 2025 Photo Lucie Werner. Bottom left Fundraising dinner where Formula 1 driver, and Blue Marine ambassador, George Russell's helmet was auctioned Photo Lucie Werner.

## About the BMYC

The Blue Marine Yacht Club (BMYC) was launched in 2012 by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco, its Founding Patron, and has the health of the ocean at the heart of its philosophy. By putting the superyacht community on the front line of marine conservation, the BMYC is mobilising an industry that loves and relies on the ocean and which can direct major resources into tackling the problems the ocean faces, while also helping to slow climate change. BMYC members lend their support not just with financial donations, but with their influence, connections and expertise. This enables Blue Marine to unlock new project areas, increase global marine protection and restore vital sea habitats, which protect vulnerable species but also absorb and store carbon.

To join the BMYC is to team up with a committed group of people who have a unique ability to influence the way the ocean is managed for years to come.

For further information about joining the Club please contact:  
[sara-jane@bluemarinefoundation.com](mailto:sara-jane@bluemarinefoundation.com) +44(0)7435 289410



BMYC Supporters:



# The Solent Wave

On 6 June, cyclists and walkers joined us for a day to celebrate our work in the Solent. Partners including Winch Design, Burgess on their Bromptons, and Lateral Engineers made the 135 km cycle ride from Somerset House in central London, Blue Marine's HQ to Chichester Marina on the south coast. At the same time, Blue Marine's Luke Helmer led walkers through the woodlands and wetlands of Chichester Harbour, explaining the challenges the area faces. We started the day with coffee from Climpson and Sons, and were welcomed by their delicious espresso martinis, before concluding with speeches and a barbecue.

**Below** Participants cycled past Big Ben at the start of the ride **Opposite page from top** Cyclists gathered at Somerset House before setting off to the Solent; Dr Luke Helmer shows walkers through Chichester's woodlands; Blue Marine's team celebrated a successful ride; Cyclists enjoyed sunshine throughout the day.

Special thanks to: Just Pedal for organising the ride; the Merry Harriers for supporting it with a wonderful spread; Kalas and Steve Edge Design for their beautiful cycling jerseys; Chichester Marina and the Boat House Chichester for hosting us; Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Chichester Harbour Conservancy and the Solent Oyster team for telling us about their incredible work and providing stands and educational sessions en route.



# 135 km

cycle ride from Somerset House in central London to Chichester Marina



# Our People

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**George Duffield**  
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**Jess Rattle**  
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**Jenny Murray**  
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2025 REVIEW



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 Consultant



# Finance overview

The financial year ending 31 March 2025 saw Blue Marine achieve another record year for income, growing by six per cent to £12.98m. This year-on-year growth is a credit to our donors and partners who, despite operating in challenging global economic conditions, continue to support our mission with great passion and generosity.

We pride ourselves on deploying funding efficiently and securely. The charity spent £12.09m in the financial year, including £3.29m of unrestricted funding spent on delivering charitable activities. This designation of funding was a £1.02m (+45 per cent) increase from the prior year and reflects the ambition of the Board of Trustees to ensure we generate the maximum conservation return from every pound received. We often designate unrestricted funding to pursue those conservation opportunities with

the greatest urgency and potential impact, highlighting the importance that unrestricted funding provides to our responsiveness and effectiveness.

Blue Marine continues to carry out significantly more conservation work than ever before. The headline charitable expenditure for the year of £12.09m was materially reduced by a budget rephasing of the Convex Seascape Survey (CSS), but the underlying performance demonstrates a

+19 per cent increase in charitable expenditure during the year. The coming financial year promises exciting new partnerships and further significant growth in funds deployed towards our charitable activities.

In preparation for the exceptional years ahead and with 2030 looming, this year also saw continued investment in our governance and support functions to best facilitate the

effectiveness of our frontline teams. Combined with the CSS budget rephasing mentioned above, the proportion of funds spent on charitable expenditure dropped temporarily below our target of 85 per cent, though we are confident that this will return to the targeted values considering the major activities underway in the coming financial year.

Our financial stability continues to support our relentless ambition to protect and restore life in the ocean, as we push ahead into 2026.

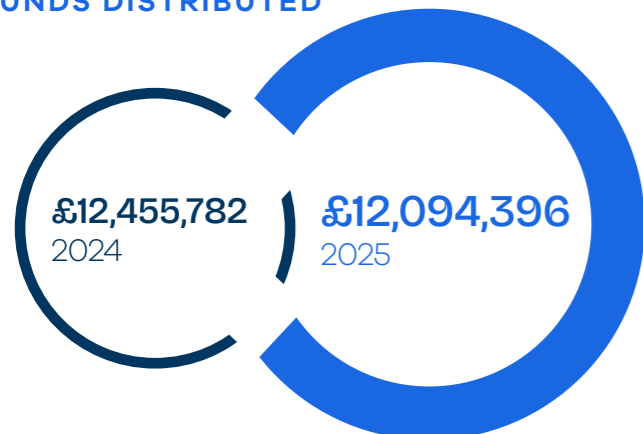
## TOTAL INCOME



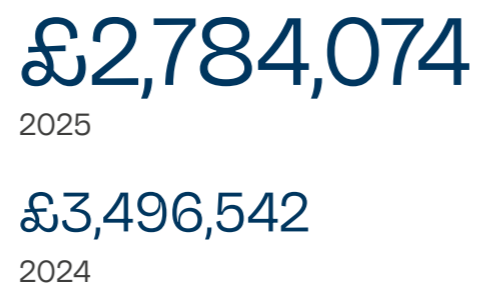
## HOW ARE FUNDS SPENT AT BLUE MARINE?



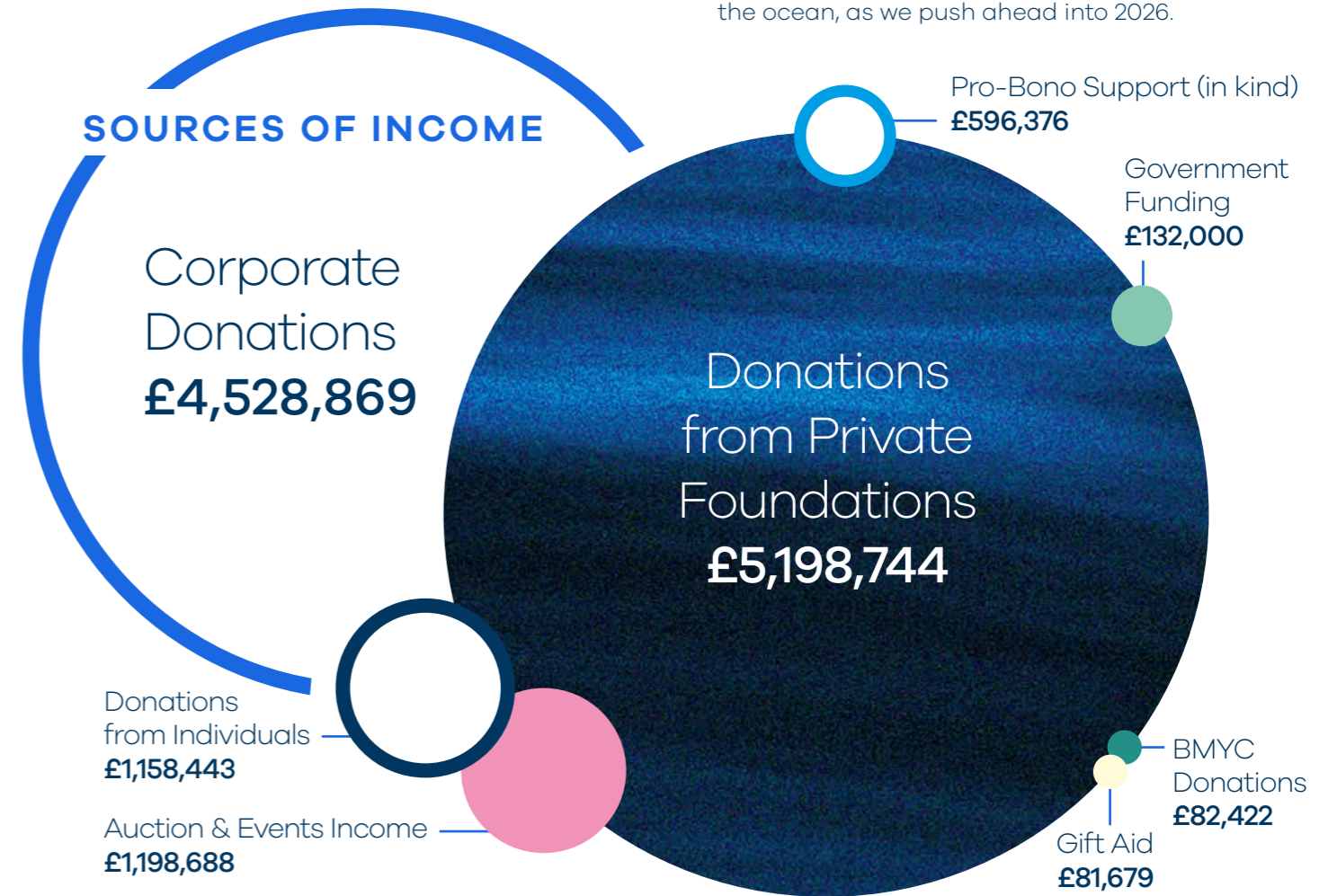
## FUNDS DISTRIBUTED



## 'FREE' RESERVES



## SOURCES OF INCOME



## OUR SIZE







**BLUE  
MARINE**

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