



**BLUE  
MARINE**



**2025 IMPACT REPORT**



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# 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.

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.

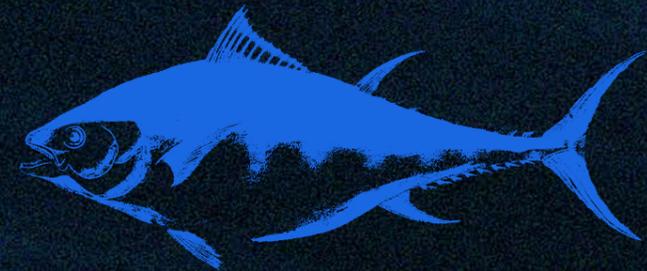
Our impact in 2025:

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.

# How we measure impact

At Blue Marine, effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are central to ensuring evidence-based decision making, continuous learning and improvement.

We employ a rigorous monitoring and evaluation process, managed by our in-house Impact team. We have developed a bespoke impact measurement software, to design M&E plans for all our projects,

mapping each project to our organisational impact indicators.

**Our system enables Blue Marine and project partners to proactively plan their theories of change, track impact data and assess progress - helping to evaluate our approach and chosen conservation intervention.**

Blue Marine has developed a range of organisational impact indicators aligned to our strategic pillars that we assess our projects against. Our projects are hugely variable in scope, reflected in the use of different indicators by different projects. By adopting this flexible approach within a broader framework, we allow for the unique nature of our projects and their challenges to shine through, while ensuring that our efforts and impacts remain laser-focused on our strategic goals.

This process helps Blue Marine understand key barriers to success, flag potential challenges, early, as well as aiding in effective fund distribution and sourcing. M&E plays a vital role in project governance: it informs internal decision-making through the project review committee, prevents mission drift and feeds project-level impact directly to the board.

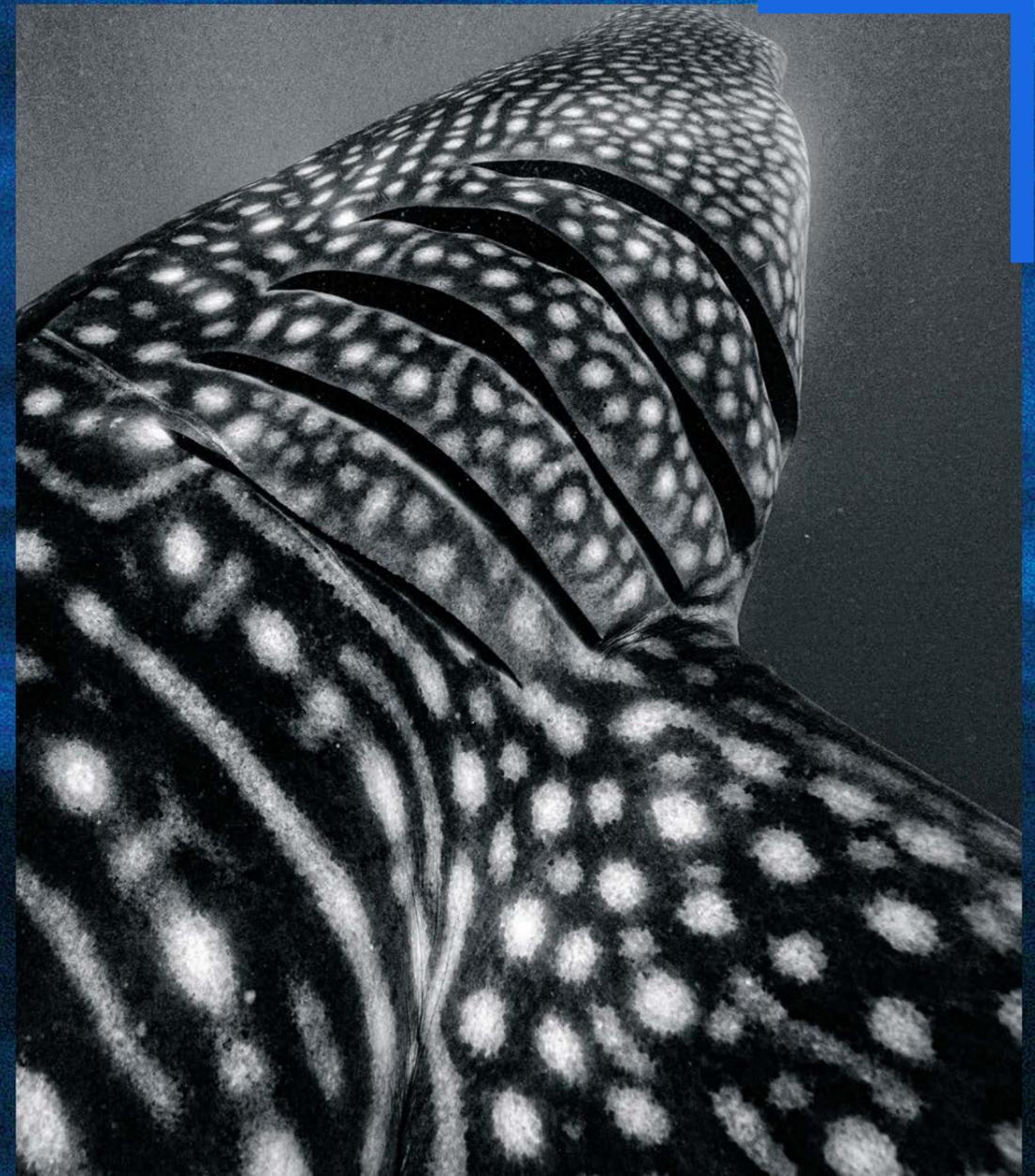


Photo George Duffield, Sea of Cortez

## Learning & improvement

Learning and improvement are fundamental to ensure that we remain an effective conservation organisation, and we prioritise regular knowledge exchange across our partner networks to develop a culture of learning. We support our partners in the development of impact measurement strategies, seamlessly integrating M&E data collection with project and grant management cycles. This ensures that our partners grow and learn alongside us, that impactful approaches are shared across our partner networks and successful conservation interventions can be replicated globally. Through this, we hope to unlock the bottleneck of much-needed ocean finance for our partners, functioning as a conservation catalyst.



### 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

# Our Projects

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

2025 IMPACT



● 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

# Project stories

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



Left Conch dive survey. Photo Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Environment Fund.

# 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.

# 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



2025 IMPACT



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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.

# Prime Minister backs fisher-led Amorgos MPA

Two major conservation milestones were achieved 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.

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



At a meeting on the island moderated by Blue Marine's Angela Lazou Dean, the Prime Minister announced a plan to replicate the Amorgos model in a nationwide network of MPAs.

2025 IMPACT

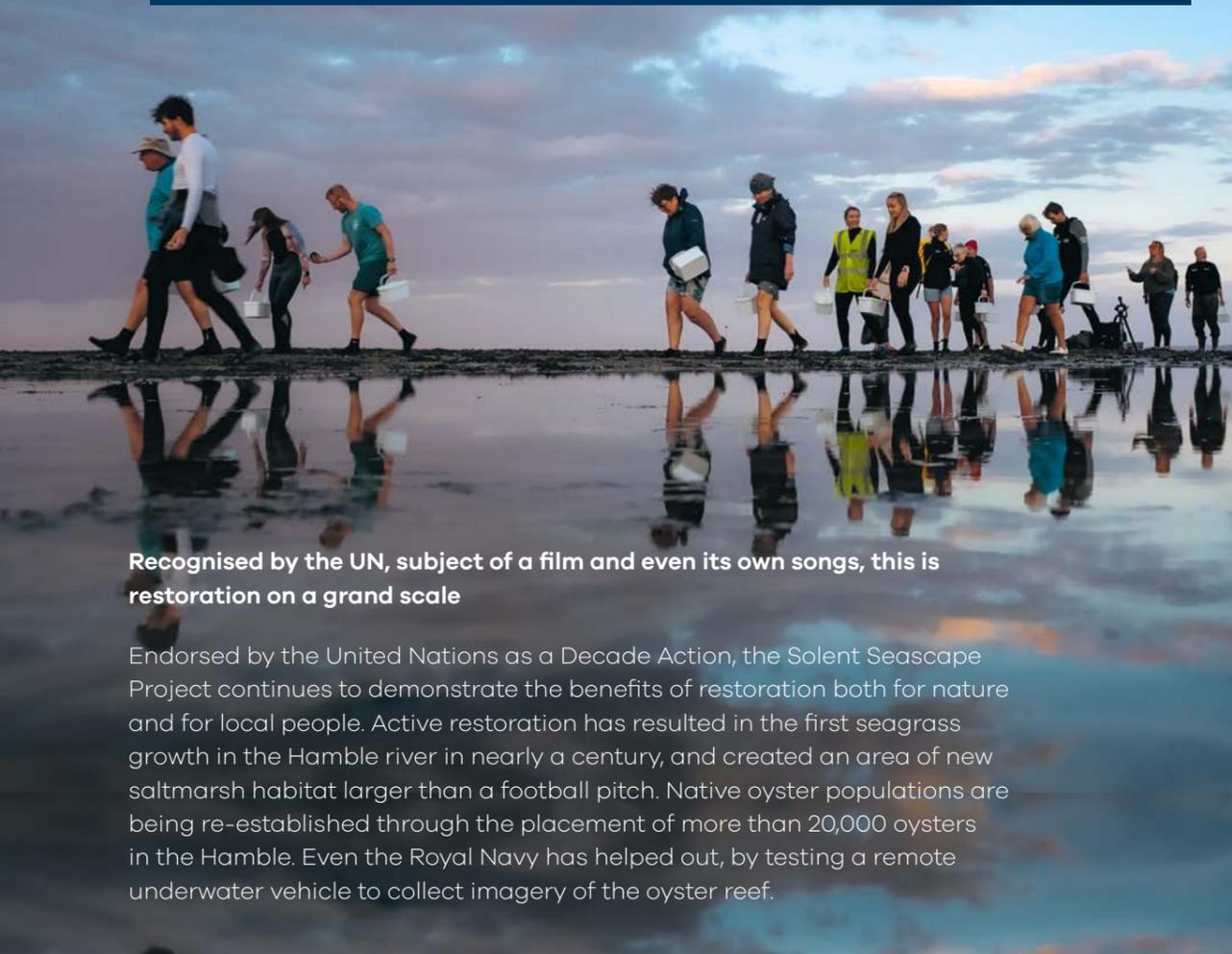


The power of the Amorgos community-led model was recognised at a meeting on the island, moderated by Blue Marine's Angela Lazou Dean, where the Prime Minister announced his intention to replicate the Amorgos approach and establish 10 additional fishing protected areas. These measures would advance Greece's 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.

# 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.

2025 IMPACT



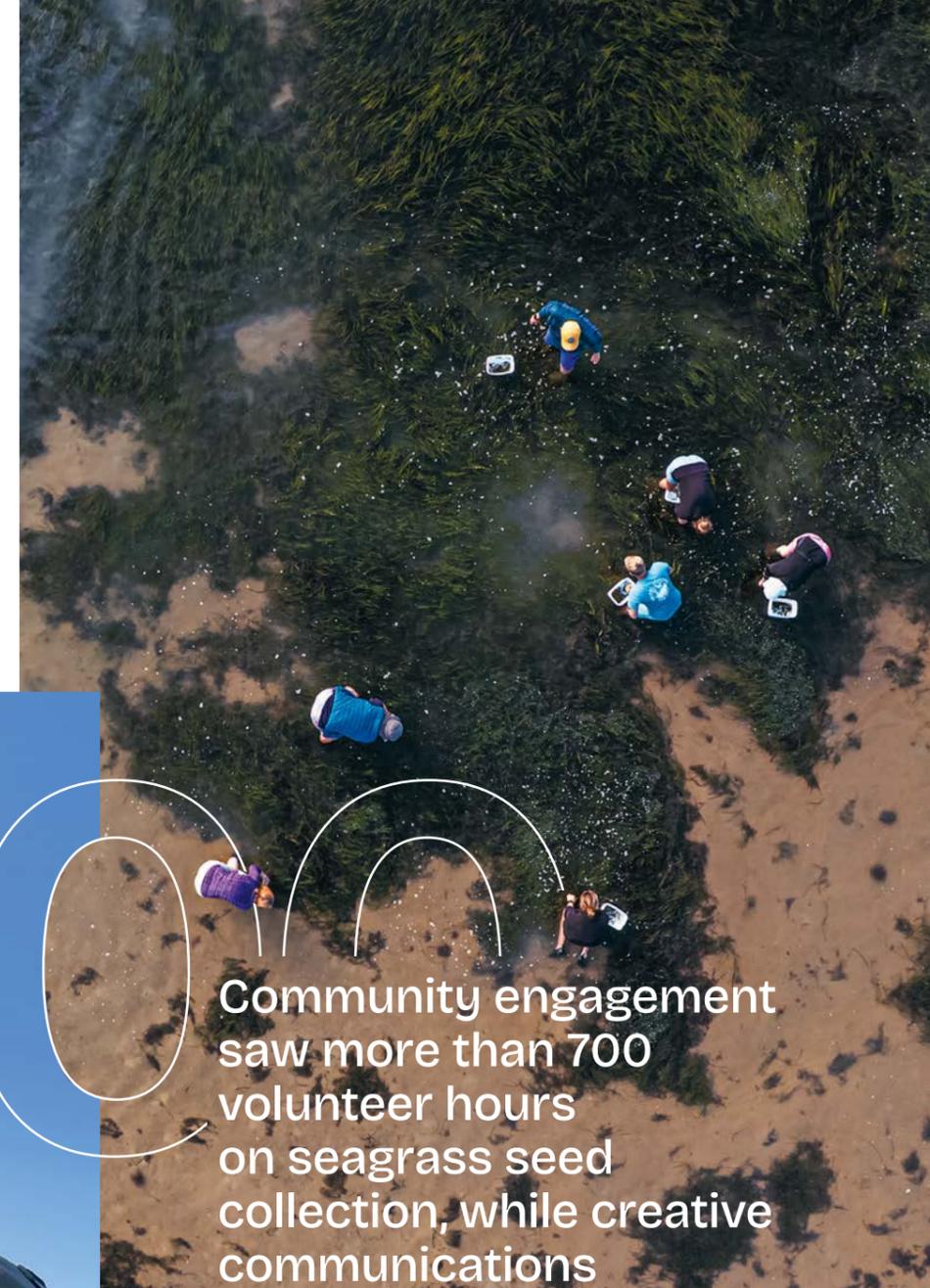
Left Volunteers collecting seagrass seed **Photo** Matt Jarvis.  
Below Matt Jarvis filming Seagrass **Photo** Louise MacCallum.  
Right Volunteers collecting seagrass **Photo** Matt Jarvis.



# 70

**Community engagement saw more than 700 volunteer hours on seagrass seed collection, while creative communications initiatives engage new audiences and raise awareness of the project**

Community engagement saw more than 700 volunteer hours on seagrass seed collection, while creative communications initiatives engage new audiences and raise awareness of the project. An artist-in-residence, Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Richard Walters, is 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.



# 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.

2025 IMPACT



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.

# 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

## TOTAL INCOME



## HOW ARE FUNDS SPENT AT BLUE MARINE?



## FUNDS DISTRIBUTED



## 'FREE' RESERVES

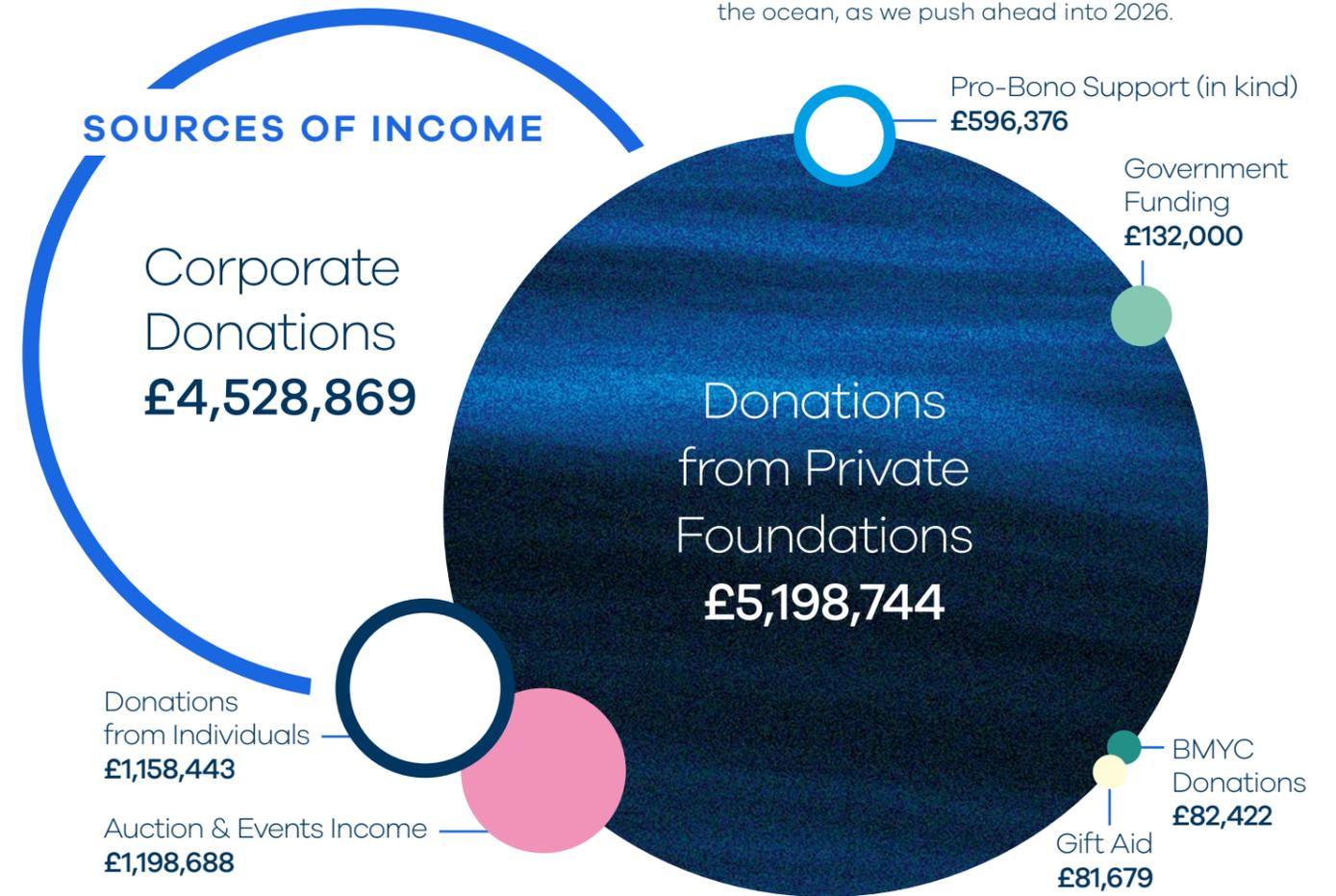


+19 per cent increase in charitable expenditure during the year. The coming financial year promises exciting new partnerships and further significant growth in funds deployed towards our charitable activities.

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.



## OUR SIZE







**BLUE  
MARINE**

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