

INTO THE

ACTION TO PROTECT OUR OCEAN

ISSUE 19 | MAY 2026



CHILE PROTECTS OVER
HALF OF ITS OCEAN

HISTORIC HIGH
SEAS TREATY

SONGS FROM
THE SOLENT

BLUE

Cover Photo:

Manta train, Hawaii
Ocean Image Bank,
Toby Matthews



WELCOME

This edition of the newsletter captures a moment of growing momentum for ocean protection. In a case brought by a coalition of organisations, including Blue Marine, a Dutch Court blocked unregulated bottom trawling in marine protected areas. We launched a report that reveals the real owners of the tuna fishing fleet in the Indian Ocean. Chile has moved one step closer to safeguarding its ocean. Jersey has also approved one of the most ambitious marine protection plans in the British Isles, safeguarding 21.7 per cent of its waters from damaging fishing practices. Our [2025 Annual Review](#) reflects a year of resilience, collaboration and measurable impact. There is also historic progress at the global level, with the High Seas Treaty now entering into force, while locally led action continues to thrive: from restoring habitats in the Solent through music and art, to unlocking the climate potential of blue carbon in South Africa's Algoa Bay. We also celebrate major commitments to protection in French Polynesia. Together, these stories show how people everywhere are stepping up for the ocean.

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

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Marlin in Baja
California, Mexico.

Photo: *Rory Moore*



Dutch Court blocks unregulated bottom trawling in marine protected areas

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Shrimp fishing gear

Photo: *Emilie Reuchlin*

A landmark court ruling in the Netherlands has delivered a major boost for ocean protection, with implications across Europe. On 11 May, the District Court of The Hague ruled that Dutch bottom trawlers can't operate in the Dogger Bank without permits.

The Dogger Bank is a habitat for marine species, including sharks, rays and corals, and it is an important feeding ground for migrating salmon. It has been repeatedly damaged by bottom trawling, a fishing method that drags heavy nets across the seabed, destroying habitats and disrupting the ocean's ability to store carbon.

The court found that allowing this activity without proper permits is unlawful. This is the first ruling of its kind in Europe and sets an important precedent, reinforcing that protected areas must be properly safeguarded.

The case was brought by Blue Marine, Doggerland Foundation, Ark Rewilding NL and ClientEarth. The group is now calling on governments across Europe and the UK to strengthen protections and prevent destructive fishing in marine protected areas. It builds on successful litigation in 2022 by Blue Marine when the UK closed its portion of the Dogger Bank to bottom trawlers.

Read more [here](#).

Europe's hidden tuna empire: Uncovering the true ownership of the Indian Ocean tuna fishing fleet

| Photo: Jess Rattle



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Our new report lifts the lid on one of the least visible drivers of industrial fishing: who really owns and profits from the world's fleets. Focusing on the Indian Ocean tuna industry, the research reveals how complex corporate structures can obscure responsibility.

More than one million tonnes of tropical tuna are caught in the Indian Ocean each year, with European fleets responsible for a significant share. Over the past decade, these fleets have caught around one third of all tropical tuna, achieved largely by reflagging vessels to Indian Ocean coastal states and exploiting their tuna quota.

The report finds that while more than 20 companies are listed as vessel owners, 90 per cent of these vessels are ultimately controlled by just seven European companies. By uncovering these hidden ownership patterns, Blue Marine is helping to expose a critical gap in fisheries governance. Without transparency, those responsible for overfishing can evade scrutiny, while pressure continues to build on already vulnerable ocean ecosystems.

Read more [here](#).

A Pivotal Moment for Ocean Protection

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The first months of 2026 have delivered major progress for ocean conservation.

In January, the High Seas Treaty entered into force, transforming how marine biodiversity is protected beyond national borders. Chile has taken a significant step towards large scale ocean protection, with President Gabriel Boric signing a decree to fully protect 360,000 square kilometres of waters around the Juan Fernández and Nazca-Desventuradas marine parks. Together, these developments mean global marine protection reached 10 per cent, an unprecedented milestone.

While this progress is encouraging, the challenge ahead remains

significant. Only a small proportion of the ocean is highly protected from destructive activities and accelerating action towards the global 30x30 target is critical.

Blue Marine is helping to turn ambition into lasting protection. In Brazil, Blue Marine-supported advocacy contributed to the creation of Albardão National Park, protecting key habitats for whales and endangered dolphins. Closer to home, sustained Blue Marine campaigning helped secure Jersey's new network of marine protected areas. With collaboration and political will, the promise of 30x30 remains within reach.

Read more [here](#).

Momentum Builds for Marine Protection in Chile

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Juan Fernández archipelago

Photo: Max Bello

President Gabriel Boric has signed a decree to protect 337,000 sq km of waters

Photo: Government of Chile

Chile has taken a significant step towards large scale ocean protection, with President Gabriel Boric signing a decree to fully protect 360,000 sq km of waters around the Juan Fernández and Nazca-Desventuradas marine parks. If fully implemented, the protected area will span 946,571 sq km, bringing Chile closer to protecting over 50 per cent of its exclusive economic zone and establishing one of the largest no take marine areas in the world.

This achievement has been driven by the community of the Juan Fernández archipelago, whose residents have sustainably managed their lobster fishery since the 19th century. The community proposed expanding marine protections to safeguard the extraordinary biodiversity of the

islands and surrounding waters. The archipelagos sit along an underwater mountain chain and are home to many endemic species, including the Juan Fernández fur seal, lobster and octopus.

Blue Marine Foundation worked alongside partners to support the community's efforts and help advance this landmark designation. Blue Marine is kindly supported by the Rituals 10% Profit Pledge and has collaborated with Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy, Island Conservation, Schmidt Ocean Institute and Fundación Patagonia Azul to support Organización Comunitaria Funcional Mar de Juan Fernández and the local community. We are now working closely with the new government to ensure this decree is implemented.

Read more [here](#).

Jersey nearly quadruples its marine protection

La Corbière
Lighthouse

Photo: Matt Jarvis

Jersey has approved one of the most ambitious marine protection plans in the British Isles, nearly quadrupling the area of its waters protected from damaging fishing practices. A new marine protected area network will safeguard 21.7 per cent of Jersey's seas from 1 September 2026, with a further 1.9 per cent to be protected from 2030. This means Jersey is well ahead of England, where only 11 per cent of waters currently have the same level of protection.

The protected areas include vital habitats such as kelp forests, seagrass meadows, biodiverse reefs and fragile maerl beds, one of the

rarest and most sensitive habitats in the region. Maerl beds in Jersey's waters can host up to 173 species within a single square metre, making them among the most biodiverse habitats in Europe.

Blue Marine has worked alongside partners, including the National Trust for Jersey, to support the development of the network. The new protections bring Jersey significantly closer to its commitment to protect 30 per cent of its waters by 2030 and position the island as a leader in ocean conservation across the British Isles.

Listen to the BBC Radio Jersey interview [here](#).

French Polynesia commits to ocean protection

French Polynesia has secured close to £11 million through the Te Moana Collective to support the implementation and long term management of its marine protected areas (MPAs). Blue Marine is a core member of the community-led collective, which builds on more than a decade of work in the country by philanthropic foundation Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy.

At the UN Ocean Conference last year, President Moetai Brotherson committed to 1,086 million sq km of highly or fully protected MPAs, an area twice the size of France. Of this, 900,000 sq km will be fully protected. He also aims to create a further 500,000 sq km of strict protection around the Austral and Marquesas islands.

Through the Te Moana Collective, Blue Marine is working with the government of French Polynesia and international and local partners. This includes supporting two roles within Te Ora Naho (the Federation of Environmental Protection Associations in French Polynesia) that have been seconded to the government to assist with the implementation of existing designations and to build consensus for further designations.

The partnership reflects Blue Marine's commitment to backing ambitious ocean leadership and ensuring that protection delivers real benefits for nature and coastal communities.

Teahatea
Fakarava, French
Polynesia Atoll
Beach

Photo: iStock



Songs from the Solent



The Solent Seascape Project has launched *Songs from the Solent*, a new EP by Grammy-nominated musician Richard Walters that shines a light on the Solent's threatened coastal habitats and the communities connected to them. →



Created during Walters' artist residency with the Solent Seascape Project, the album draws inspiration from local culture and from saltmarsh, seagrass meadows, oyster reefs and seabird sites that play a vital role in storing carbon, protecting shorelines and supporting marine life.

Released in January, the album blends music with field recordings from restoration sites and voices from Solent communities.

The project offers a new way for people to engage with the work of restoring this important seascape.

Members of the Solent community were also able to experience the music live, at a free performance by Richard at the historic Square Tower in Old Portsmouth on 11 February.

Songs from the Solent is part of the Solent Seascape Project, a five-year partnership led by Blue Marine to restore and reconnect key habitats across the area.

Read the full story [here](#).

- LISTEN ON SPOTIFY
- LISTEN ON APPLE MUSIC
- WATCH THE MUSIC VIDEO

Linocut artist Angela Harding created a map of the Solent, showing the locations that inspired each track.



Unlocking Blue Carbon in African mud

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Mapping blue carbon

Photo: Naomi Hart

Scientists working in South Africa's Algoa Bay are revealing one of the ocean's most overlooked climate assets — carbon stored in seabed mud. The research forms part of the Convex Seascape Survey, a five-year global programme led by Blue Marine.

While blue carbon is often linked to seagrass or mangroves, vast amounts are also locked away in muddy seabeds across continental shelves. Although these sediments store less carbon per unit area, their sheer scale makes them one of the planet's most important carbon stores. Disturbance from trawling or dredging risks releasing this carbon back into the atmosphere.

In Algoa Bay, scientists are mapping where carbon accumulates and examining how seabed animals such

"Our job is to understand where carbon is stored and how vulnerable it is. If we disturb these sediments, we risk undoing centuries of natural carbon storage," said Frederick Mokumo of Nelson Mandela University.

as worms and shellfish help bury and stabilise it over long timescales. By comparing areas influenced by rivers, shipping and offshore conditions, the team aims to identify carbon hotspots and guide protection.

Read the full story [here](#).





Annual Review

[READ FULL REVIEW](#)

The newly released 2025 Annual Review reflects a year defined by determination, collaboration and progress for the ocean. Despite a challenging political environment, Blue Marine continued to deliver practical solutions, earning the trust of 12 governments seeking support to meet their 30 x 30 commitments.

The year saw significant global breakthroughs. The High Seas Treaty secured the ratifications needed to enter into force in early 2026, creating for the first time a legal pathway to protect ocean areas beyond national borders. Public awareness also grew sharply with the release of OCEAN with David Attenborough, the global premiere was hosted by Blue Marine in May.

The film brought renewed attention to the impacts of destructive bottom trawling and the urgent need for ocean protection.

In 2025, Blue Marine helped place 446,620 sq km of ocean on the path to protection through MPA commitments, designations and fisheries closures. We delivered conservation outcomes in 29 countries alongside 266 global conservation partners and supported 13,750 stakeholders to shape ocean policy and drive community action.

Explore how these achievements were delivered and how sustained effort is helping to build lasting protection for the ocean.

Read the 2025 Annual Review [here](#).



THANK YOU
*for your
support!*

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Turtle at sunset,
Australia

Photo: *Ocean Image
Bank, Jordan Robins*

