

INTO THE

ACTION TO PROTECT OUR OCEAN

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MPA TECHNOLOGY
WORKSHOP

FIRST-EVER CONCH
CLOSED SEASON

POWER OF OCEAN
PHOTOGRAPHY

BLUE

Cover Photo:

Parrotfish
Çinzia Osele Bismarck



WELCOME

This month, we spotlight new research exposing the scale of illegal fish discards in UK waters and launch a report exploring how technology can strengthen marine protected areas. We also mark World Photography Day, share updates from pioneering carbon research in Bermuda and showcase how art and storytelling are helping people connect with the sea and inspire action for ocean recovery.

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

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California sea lion
playing with a starfish,
La Paz, Mexico
Photo: Ocean Image
Bank, Hannes
Klostermann

Illegal fish discards push UK fish stocks towards collapse

A new investigation has revealed the scale of fish waste in UK waters, with trawlers in some areas discarding up to six times more fish than they land despite the practice being illegal under UK and EU law. Researchers warn that this waste is driving the decline of already struggling fish populations and pushing some stocks towards collapse.

Discarding occurs when fishers throw unwanted fish back into the sea because they are too small, of low commercial value or would exceed quota limits. Most do not survive. Analysis found that discards outweigh landings for four of the UK's six plaice stocks, with 88% of plaice caught in the Irish Sea thrown back.

The findings add to growing concerns about UK fisheries. Recent scientific assessments have recommended major catch reductions and complete fishing bans to allow depleted stocks to recover.

Jonny Hughes, Blue Marine's Fisheries Policy Lead, said:

"The government has been ignoring the law it wrote a decade ago."

He added that restoring healthy fish populations will require sustainable quotas for target species and bycatch. Without reform, marine ecosystems, fishing communities and seafood supplies could face serious consequences.

Read more [here](#).

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Bottom trawling

Photo: iStock

New report highlights how technology can strengthen marine protected areas

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Humpback whale

Photo: George Duffield

A new report explores how conservation technology can accelerate progress towards protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030. Organised by Blue Marine and WILDLABS in Lima, Peru, the MPA Technology Workshop brought together more than 70 marine protected area (MPA) practitioners, technology providers, funders and experts to identify barriers and opportunities for using technology in ocean protection.

Participants agreed that while technologies such as remote sensing, acoustic monitoring and environmental DNA offer significant potential, adoption is often limited by funding constraints, lack of training, fragmented data systems and poor connections between technology developers and end users.

The report outlines a series of recommendations, including creating a central platform to help MPA managers discover and compare technology tools, developing best-practice guidance, investing in long-term capacity building, improving data standards and governance and securing funding that supports the full lifecycle of conservation technology projects.

A key message from the workshop was that technology alone is not enough. Effective ocean protection depends on ensuring that data is translated into management action, local communities are involved in decision-making, and strong partnerships are built across the conservation and technology sectors.

Read the full report [here](#).





Photo: Andy Mann

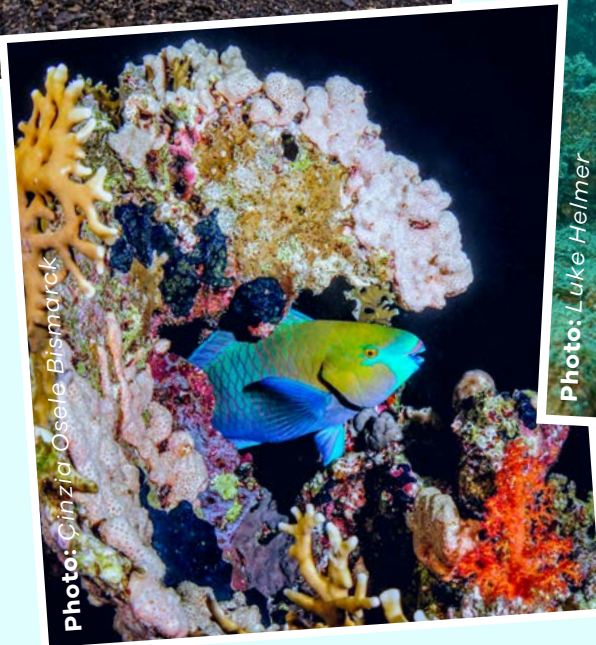


Photo: Cinzia Osele Bismarck



Photo: Luke Helmer



Photo: Alex Tattersal

Celebrating the power of ocean photography

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This World Photography Day, 19 August, we're celebrating the talented photographers who help bring the ocean's stories to life. Photography has the power to transport us beneath the waves, reveal the beauty and fragility of marine ecosystems, and inspire action to protect them.

At Blue Marine, we're fortunate to work with an incredible network of visual storytellers, including renowned ocean photographers Andy Mann, George Karbus and Francesca Page, whose images have helped shine a spotlight on the challenges facing our seas and the people working to restore them. Alongside these celebrated photographers, we collaborate with a diverse range of talented

professionals around the world who capture the ocean in all its complexity and wonder.

From documenting wildlife and marine habitats to showcasing coastal communities and conservation successes, their work helps connect audiences with places and issues they may never otherwise experience.

Visual storytelling remains one of the most powerful tools in conservation. A single image can spark curiosity, build empathy and motivate change. This World Photography Day, we thank all the photographers who help share the ocean's story and inspire people to protect it.

See the photographs [here](#).

St Vincent and the Grenadines introduces first-ever conch closed season

[READ MORE](#)[Conch surveys](#)**Photo:** SVGEF

St Vincent and the Grenadines has announced its first-ever closed season for queen conch, marking a major step towards protecting one of the country's most valuable marine resources. The annual closure, which runs from 1 September to 30 November, follows years of scientific research and collaboration aimed at restoring declining conch populations.

Blue Marine has played a key role in this achievement through its partnership with the St Vincent and the Grenadines Environment Fund (SVGEF), the Fisheries Division and local fishing communities. Since 2022, Blue Marine has supported extensive surveys of conch and

lobster stocks, gathering vital data to inform sustainable fisheries management and policy recommendations.

Recent surveys identified important juvenile conch habitats, helping to build the case for stronger protections. The new regulations, which were informed by recommendations from Blue Marine and SVGEF, will give conch populations time to recover and reproduce, helping to secure both marine biodiversity and local livelihoods for the future. It marks a significant milestone for sustainable fisheries management in the Caribbean.

Read the full article [here](#).

Could the Bermudan seabed play a crucial role in carbon storage?

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Photos: James Doughty, Burnt House Productions

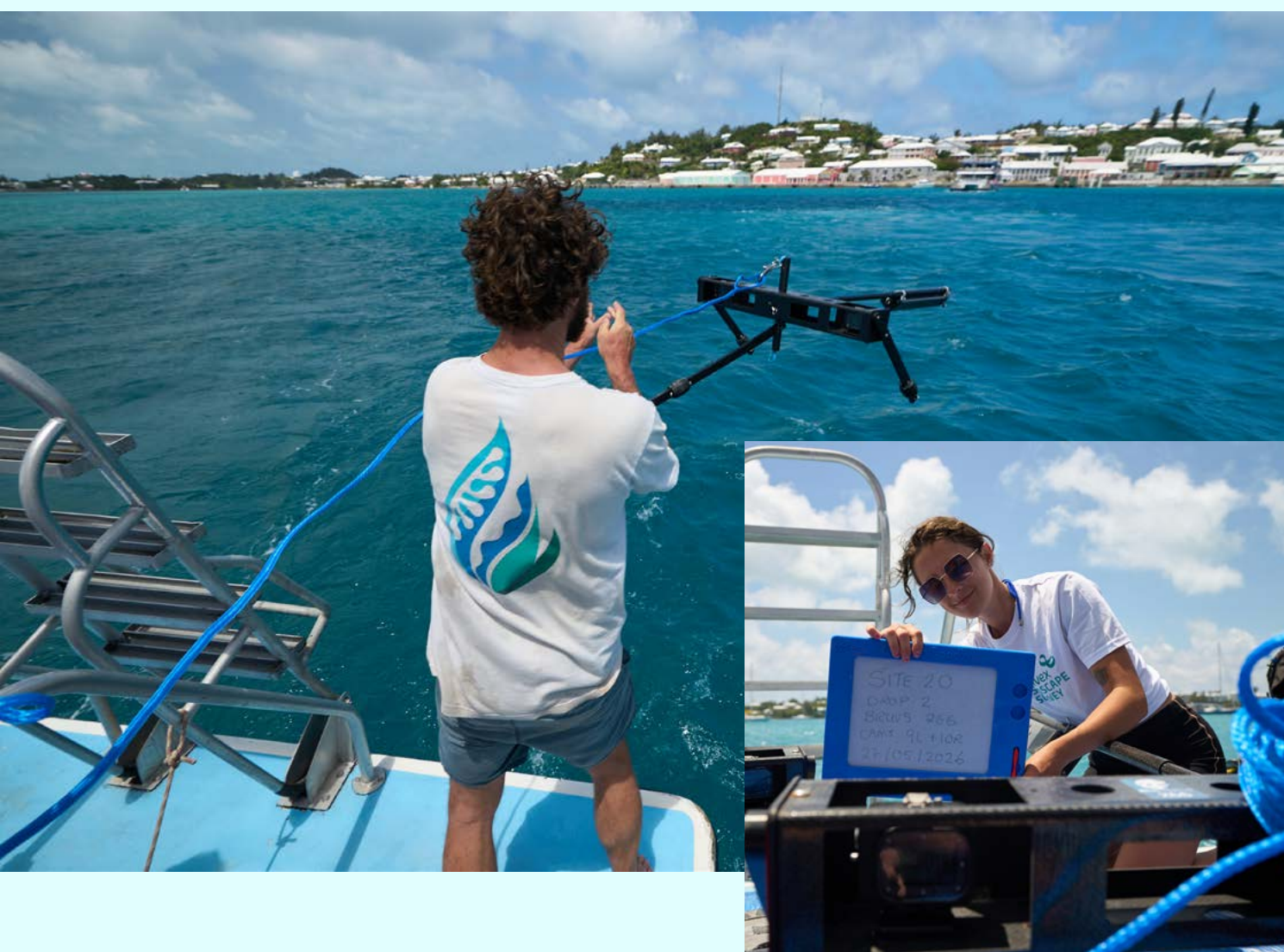
Three weeks of research, diving and sampling in Bermuda have marked one of the Convex Seascape Survey's most ambitious fieldwork expeditions to date. Tasked with tackling the big question of carbon moves through the ocean and is stored in the seabed, the team collected sediment cores from the seabed, surveyed marine life and habitats and gathered environmental DNA (eDNA) samples.

Bermuda is a particularly fascinating place to study carbon stored in the seabed, with its sediments coming from nearby habitats like seagrass, coral reefs and mangroves, land based sources in North Africa and

areas shaped by past human activity like dredging, providing a different setting to many of our other research sites.

While the fieldwork may be over, the science is only just beginning. Researchers are now processing samples, analysing footage and exploring the data collected during the expedition. The findings will help answer some of the biggest questions about the role of the seabed in the carbon cycle and how marine ecosystems influence carbon storage. Follow the Convex Seascape Survey on [social media](#) to see our discoveries unfold.

Read more [here](#).



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Artist in residence

Photo: Richard Walters
Solent Seascape Project

Following the success of *Songs from the Solent*, Grammy-nominated musician Richard Walters is continuing his Solent Seascape Artist Residency thanks to additional funding from the Endangered Landscapes & Seascapes Programme (ELSP), and further support through the Blue Marine Max Stenbeck Legacy Programme.

Richard has already joined marine biologist Theo Vickers in the water to gain inspiration for a new song that he hopes will incorporate underwater sound recordings captured using a hydrophone, bringing audiences even closer to the hidden world beneath the Solent's waves.

The residency will also see the visual of *Lanterns Part 1*, narrated by

Oscar-winning actor Jeremy Irons, come to life via an animation created by a graduate of Solent Seascape Project partner the University of Portsmouth.

Later this year, communities across the region will experience *Songs from the Solent* through a small tour of schools and community venues located near the places that inspired the music. Working in collaboration with Calshot Activities Centre, the project will deliver a lantern-making workshop for local children and families, with the creations used to decorate the tour stage.

Richard is also collaborating with Solent music groups on new arrangements, while mentoring artists commissioned through other ELSP. Read more [here](#).



THANK YOU
*for your
support!*

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

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Colourful marine life

Photo: iStock

