

CALL TO ACTION

for the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC 3)

The third United Nations Ocean Conference will be held in Nice from 9 to 13 June 2025.

The aim of this conference is to take stock of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal dedicated to the Ocean (SDG 14), and marks the halfway point in the United Nations Ocean Decade.

Considering:

- 66% of the marine environment has been 'severely altered' to date by human activities, in particular by the direct exploitation of organisms (mainly fishing) which has had the greatest relative impact, followed by habitat degradation and pollution, the effects of which are exacerbated by climate change;
- Nearly 33% of sharks and related species and more than a third of marine mammals are threatened with extinction;
- Coral reefs have lost 50% of their surface area worldwide and are threatened with extinction by 2050;
- 34% of marine fish stocks are exploited at biologically unsustainable levels;
- Seabird populations have declined by 70% over the last 50 years.

Recalling:

- Marine and coastal ecosystems are home to a unique biodiversity and play a vital role in regulating the climate;
- More than three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods;
- Healthy marine ecosystems help protect coastal regions from natural hazards, support food security, provide resources for research and pharmaceutical and medical treatments, and contribute to cultural and mental well-being.

Underlining:

- The importance of international cooperation and the mobilisation of all stakeholders in the fight against climate change and the erosion of biodiversity.

The IUCN French Committee and its members, experts, and partners, as well as members of other IUCN committees, recall the importance of ocean conservation and make the following recommendations for the UN Ocean Conference, encouraging States to make ambitious announcements in Nice in June 2025 so that UNOC 2025 results in a strong, action-oriented policy declaration.

STRENGTHENING MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

1. Protect 30% of the Ocean by 2030

We call for target 5 of SDG 14 to be aligned with target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework so that, by 2030, 30% of marine and coastal areas, in particular areas of high importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are adequately conserved and managed through the establishment of ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably managed protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. We call for the implementation of these Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to be carried out in accordance with IUCN guidelines and reiterate the incompatibility of environmentally damaging industrial activities with marine protected areas.

2. Increase levels of protection

We support increasing the levels of protection of marine protected areas in accordance with the international norms and standards of IUCN. In Europe and in France, this means implementing 10% of strict protection zones, in line with the definition published by the European Union in its biodiversity strategy and corresponding to IUCN categories I and II. On a national scale, these strict protection zones must be distributed equitably across all of France's coastlines and sea basins.

3. Increase the size of the network of marine protected areas on the high seas

We call for rapid ratification by at least 60 States to ensure the entry into force of the International Treaty for the Protection of the High Seas (BBNJ) adopted at the United Nations on 4 March 2023. UNOC 2025 must be an opportunity to announce the entry into force of

the treaty and the holding of the first BBNJ COP. The treaty must enable the establishment of a vast network of marine protected areas on the high seas; this is essential if we are to reach the target of conserving 30% of seas, given that the high seas account for 61% of the surface area of the Ocean but only 1.45% of it is currently protected. High seas marine protected areas must also meet IUCN's worldwide standards by excluding industrial activities that are harmful to the environment and by qualifying a significant proportion of them as IUCN categories I, II, and III.

We call for greater cooperation between the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), in order to jointly establish a strategy for planned use of the high seas that incorporates scientific data for the protection of ocean ecosystems and species.

4. Ensure effective management of marine protected areas

In addition to increasing their surface area and level of protection, we call for the necessary resources to be invested to ensure, and evaluate, the effective management of marine protected areas in order to achieve positive results for biodiversity. Effective management can be assessed and recognised according to the worldwide standard of the IUCN Green List of Protected Areas.

STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

5. Strengthen the restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems by implementing ambitious policies and investments

We call for 30% of the surface area of degraded marine ecosystems to be under restoration by 2030, in line with target 2 of the Global Biodiversity Framework. In Europe, it is therefore essential that national restoration plans, including the French National Restoration Plan, include ambitious actions for the conservation and restoration of marine ecosystems, including passive restoration measures particularly when placing certain areas under strict protection would be sufficient to allow the natural recovery of marine ecosystems and the natural wealth they contain. The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 also highlights the need for stronger action to restore degraded marine ecosystems, including carbon-rich ecosystems and important spawning and nursery areas for fish.

6. Implement nature-based solutions and apply the Paris Climate Accords

We call for the Paris Climate Accords to be respected and fully implemented in order to limit the impacts of climate change on the Ocean, such as ocean warming

and acidification which particularly affect tropical coral reefs, 10% of the world's surface area of which is located in French waters and which are threatened with disappearing completely by 2050.

We call for the development of nature-based solutions by applying IUCN global standards for combating climate change. Nature-based solutions must not only focus on the conservation and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems (salt marshes, mangroves, seagrass beds) which play an important role in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, but also associated habitats such as coral reefs.

7. Protect deep-sea and mesophotic marine ecosystems

We support the ban on deep sea mining, and in line with the recommendation adopted by IUCN in Marseille call for the adoption of a moratorium by the International Seabed Authority.

We support the expansion of knowledge and protection of ecosystems in the oceanic mesophotic zone. Located at depths between 30 and 200 metres, this zone is home to some of the least explored and protected ecosystems on our planet. The mesophotic zone must be better integrated into conservation policies, recognising its essential role in preserving biodiversity and the resilience of ocean ecosystems, and taking into account the ecological continuity between surface and deep-sea ecosystems.

8. Prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution from all sources, both terrestrial and maritime

We call for the rapid finalisation and implementation of the global treaty to end the global crisis of plastic pollution in marine environments, including setting ambitious targets for reducing plastic production; implementing clear, measurable actions that are already effective in the short term; and adopting a life-cycle approach to plastics. This includes preventing new pollution, in particular by banning single-use plastics, chemicals of concern, and hazardous polymers.

We reiterate the urgent need to mitigate the impacts of land-based pollution currently degrading coastal and marine environments, such as polluted wastewater and the various chemical pollutants used particularly in agriculture, which are some of the main sources of pressure on marine ecosystems.

STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTION OF MARINE SPECIES

9. Strengthen the protection of marine species and reduce the impact of fishing on marine biodiversity

We call for stronger measures to protect marine species such as marine mammals and sharks and rays, more than a third of which are threatened according to the IUCN

Red List of Threatened Species, in particular by reducing fishing by-catch. We call for the creation of strong protection zones for the most threatened species and the application of existing effective mitigation measures such as seasonal fishing closures, vessel speed reduction, and training fishers.

We reiterate the importance of sustainable fishing for biodiversity and local communities; and by contrast, the incompatibility of industrial fishing with the maintenance of well-functioning ecosystems, particularly in protected marine areas, which over-exploits living marine resources, pollutes, and uses destructive practices such as bottom trawling.

We call for better management of drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), used mainly for tuna fishing, which are a particularly environmentally damaging fishing method and whose use has increased considerably worldwide since 2012 both on the high seas and in Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs).

10. Effectively protect key areas for species

We call for greater international cooperation particularly through regional seas conventions to protect key areas that have already been identified, such as Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), Important Bird Areas (IBAs), Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) and Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs), as well as sectoral conservation measures such as the designation of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) for fisheries and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs).

ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE OCEAN

11. Promote a regenerative blue economy

We call for the adoption of a definition of regenerative blue economy that clearly integrates the challenges of preserving and restoring marine ecosystems and the well-being of populations. The regenerative blue economy is an economic model that combines the regeneration and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems with sustainable, low-carbon economic activities and equitable prosperity serving people and the planet, now and in the future. UNOC 2025 is an important step towards promoting a regenerative blue economy that guarantees the preservation and good health of marine ecosystems.

12. Increasing scientific cooperation and education in the Ocean sector

We affirm the importance of science, which has shown that conserving biodiversity is essential for a healthy Ocean and its crucial role as a climate regulator. We support the development of scientific knowledge in the

areas of biodiversity and climate in order to gain a better understanding of how marine ecosystems function, assess the impact of current changes, establish trend scenarios, and propose science-based actions. In particular, we call for improved knowledge of rocky shore benthic coastal species and habitats.

As the Ocean is a common good, we call for education and awareness-raising campaigns on the marine environment to be intensified, to engage everyone in its protection.

13. Mobilising funding for actions in favour of the Ocean

We call for increased public and private funding for ocean research, conservation, and restoration; and for the removal of subsidies harmful to marine biodiversity in line with targets 18 and 19 of the Global Biodiversity Framework. In particular, we call for the elimination of subsidies that contribute to overfishing as stipulated by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement on fisheries subsidies adopted in 2022. UNOC 2025 must enable this agreement to come into force by obtaining the support of 2/3 of the 164 WTO members through the submission of their instruments of approval of the agreement.

SIGNATORIES

of the Call to Action for the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC 3)

French signatories

A Rocha France

Alliance pour la préservation des forêts

Association des Naturalistes de la Vallée du Loing

Association Française des Parcs Zoologiques

Beauval Nature

Bioparc Conservation

Centre International de Droit Comparé de l'Environnement

Coral guardian - france

Ecomaires

Fédération des Conservatoires d'espaces naturels

Fédération française d'études et de sports sous-marins

Fondation Tour du Valat

Fondation Yves Rocher

France Nature Environnement

Humanité et Biodiversité

IFAW France (Fonds international pour la protection des animaux)

Institut de Recherche pour le Développement

Institut Océanographique Paul Ricard

Jane Goodall Institute France

Jeunes Ambassadeurs pour l'Environnement

Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux

Miraceti

Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle

Noé

Océanopolis

Partenariat Français pour l'Eau

Plateforme Océan & Climat

Rastoma France

Réserves Naturelles de France

Respect Ocean

SMILO (Small Islands Organisation)

Surfrider Foundation Europe

Te Mana O Te Moana

Under the Pole

Ville de Marseille

Ville de Paris

SIGNATORIES

of the Call to Action for the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC 3)

International signatories

ALBANIA

Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania

Urban Research Institute

BELGIUM

Regions4 Sustainable Development

ULB-Coopération

BENIN

Eco-Bénin

BURUNDI

Association Burundaise pour la protection de
la Nature

GERMANY

BUND Naturschutz

Deutscher Naturschutzring

GREECE

Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature

HAITI

Fondation pour la Protection de la
Biodiversité Marine

ITALY

Legambiente Nazionale APS

We are here Venice ETS

LUXEMBOURG

natur&ëmwelt asbl

MADAGASCAR

Fondation Tany Meva

MOROCCO

Association marocaine pour l'écotourisme et
la protection de la nature

Association marocaine protection de
l'environnement et le climat

Association Ribat Al Fath pour le
Développement Durable

Groupe de Recherche pour la Protection des
Oiseaux au Maroc

Observatoire pour la Protection de
l'Environnement et des Monuments
Historiques

Réseau Association Khnifiss

Réseau des associations de la réserve de
biosphère arganeraie

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MAURITANIA

BACoMaB Trust Fund

MONACO

Centre Scientifique de Monaco

MONTENEGRO

Center for Protection and Research of Birds
du Montenegro

NEDERLAND

Reptile Amfibieën Vissen Onderzoek
Nederland

The Ocean Cleanup

NIGERIA

Nigerian Environmental Study Action Team

PALESTINE

Jenin Beekeepers Cooperative Association

SENEGAL

Association Pour le Développement de
Nguendar et villages environnants

Association Sénégalaise des Amis de la
Nature

Ecologie Universelle

Nature-Communautés-Développement

SEYCHELLES

Island Biodiversity & Conservation Centre

SWITZERLAND

Swiss Cetacean Society

TOGO

Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement

TUNISIA

Association pour la Protection de
l'Environnement et le développement
durable de Bizerte APEDDUB

Association Tunisienne de Taxonomie

UNITED KINGDOM

British and Irish Association of Zoos and
Aquariums

People's Trust for Endangered Species

The Wildlife Trusts