



Biodiversity is life



Biodiversity is our life

Marine and Coastal Biodiversity

Oceans cover 70% of our planet and represent over 95% of the biosphere. Marine and coastal habitats include coral reefs, mangrove forests, sea grass beds, estuaries, hydrothermal vents, seamounts and soft sediments on the ocean floor deep below the surface.

More than just a valuable source of food, the ocean is one of the largest natural reservoirs of carbon. It stores about over 15 times more CO₂ than the terrestrial biosphere and soils, and plays a significant role in climate moderation.

Deep-seabed habitats host between 500,000 and 10 million species. Deep-sea life is essential to life on Earth because of its crucial role in global biogeochemical cycles, including nutrient regeneration and oxygen.

This tremendous wealth of biodiversity and ecosystem services is not infinite. Today, human activities are greatly threatening the seas and coasts through overfishing, destructive fishing practices, pollution and waste disposal, agricultural runoff, invasive alien species, and habitat destruction. Global climate change will make it worse. Sea levels will rise, water temperature will increase, oceans will acidify, and there will be more storms and natural disasters.

Oceans are seriously under-protected, with only about 0.8% of the oceans and 6% of territorial seas being in protected areas.

Countries that adopted the Convention on Biological Diversity are addressing various challenges to the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity. Through the ecosystem approach, they focus on the proper management of seas and coasts, coral reefs and deep sea biodiversity, protected areas, mariculture and invasive alien species.



Convention on
Biological Diversity



Fast Facts

- ▶ About 80% of world fish stocks, for which assessment information is available, are fully exploited or overexploited and thus require effective and precautionary management
- ▶ Oceans contain a vast diversity of habitats and spectacular seascapes, hosting 32 of the 34 phyla of the planet, of which around 13 are exclusively or mostly marine
- ▶ Genetic resources in the oceans and coasts are of great interest for commercial use
- ▶ Globally, the oceans have accumulated up to one third of the total CO₂ emissions from burning fossil fuels, land use change and cement production within the last 250 years
- ▶ Recent scientific results highlighted that higher biodiversity can enhance the functioning and efficiency of deep-sea ecosystems
- ▶ The sustainability of our biosphere significantly relies on the goods and services provided by deep-sea ecosystems
- ▶ Pressures on coastal and marine biodiversity will continue to increase, as 50% of the world's population will live along coasts by 2015, putting unsustainable pressures on coastal resources.

Learn More

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) ▶ legal.icsf.net

Biodiversity Conservation Network ▶ www.bcnet.org

Bioprospecting Information Resource ▶ www.bioprospector.org

Coastal Wiki ▶ www.encora.eu/coastalwiki

Fisheries and Aquaculture Department ▶ www.fao.org/fi/statist/statist.asp

International Maritime Organization ▶ www.imo.org

The Nature Conservancy—Freshwater Conservation
▶ www.nature.org/initiatives/freshwater

Ocean Classroom Foundation ▶ www.oceanclassroom.org

Pacific Regional Environment Programme ▶ www.sprep.org

The World Ocean Observatory ▶ www.thew2o.net

International Coral Reef Initiative ▶ www.icriforum.org

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ▶ www.unclos.com

More ▶ www.cbd.int/marine/websites.shtml

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