

Global Ocean Legacy



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World-scale marine reserves—places where no fishing or other extractive activity is allowed—protect our global marine heritage for future generations and celebrate our shared ocean legacy.

Although 71 percent of the planet's surface is water, remarkably little of the marine environment is protected. Unrelenting pressure from industrial fishing and other extractive activities threatens life in the world's oceans. Habitat loss, pollution and overfishing have led to the global depletion of fish and other marine life, and a downward spiral of productivity in the world's oceans.

Marine reserves—places where no fishing or other extractive activity is allowed—are one way to address the continued loss of our living marine resources and to protect our global marine heritage. However, most of the

reserves created to date, as well as those being proposed, are relatively small in size and designed primarily to provide local benefits. Few nations have examined the potential for placing off-limits large, ecologically significant expanses of sufficient size to protect entire ocean systems. Even in Australia's Great Barrier Reef, one of the world's most treasured ecosystems, only 33 percent is closed to fishing. In most countries, the land area protected in parks far exceeds the area fully protected by marine reserves, and most maritime nations have few or no marine reserves.

Global Ocean Legacy originated as a continuation of work done by the Pew

Environment Group in 2005 and 2006 to establish a fully protected marine reserve covering 360,000 square kilometers in the northwestern Hawaiian Islands—the largest, permanent “no-take” marine reserve in the world.

Inspired by this success, a collaboration has been formed with Lyda Hill, the Oak Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Robertson Foundation and the Sandler Foundation to protect some of the world's largest and most spectacular marine habitats.