



# HIGH SEAS

Potential and  
challenges



High Seas International Conference

**This brochure is produced by Nausicaá,  
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**In collaboration with the French Agency  
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**AGENCE FRANÇAISE  
POUR LA BIODIVERSITÉ**  
ÉTABLISSEMENT PUBLIC DE L'ÉTAT

**Following the 1<sup>st</sup> International  
Conference on the high seas  
held in Nausicaa in June 2018**

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The World Ocean Network

# PREFACE

Imagine a world inhabited by hundreds of thousands of unknown species, driven by currents of gigantic power, where we find sunken mountains, canyons several kilometers deep, submerged volcanoes or even rocky chimneys spewing water at 400°C. This world is the high seas.

The high seas, which cover nearly 50% of the globe's surface, are less well mapped than the surface of the moon! Yet they are essential for human societies. We have long believed that this immense space was invulnerable, a bottomless pit, inexhaustible, without seeing that our activities had an impact on its biodiversity and fragile ecosystems.

Improving protection and management of the high seas is a big challenge of the 21st century. At the United Nations in 2018, the international community decided to open negotiations on the protection of biodiversity in marine areas beyond the national jurisdictions of the countries around it.

It is in this context that the first High Seas International Conference were organised at Nausicaá. These three days brought together diplomats, intergovernmental bodies and stakeholders representing the community, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the academic world. They exchanged points of view on the issues related to the governance of the high seas, the blue economy, as well as on the legal and institutional issues to come in

terms of marine resources and the protection of its biodiversity. Particular emphasis was placed on raising awareness and mobilizing civil society.

Why in Nausicaá? Because this place is more than an aquarium. Nausicaá explores the links between humankind and the ocean. Nausicaá welcomes several hundred thousand visitors each year, bringing a unique opportunity to deliver a message to them: the preservation of the high seas is everyone's business.

Nausicaá's new space "Journey on the high seas" invites visitors to discover the last unexplored territories of the planet. Thanks to an immersive voyage, the public follows in the footsteps of explorers who set out to discover the mysteries of the open seas. Nausicaá inspires visitors, encouraging us to change our behavior and take action.

The ocean community, and organizations in contact with the general public such as aquariums in particular, have a responsibility to raise awareness on these important issues for our future.

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## INTRODUCTION

The high seas lie beyond national jurisdiction and are therefore a shared responsibility. Despite having been traversed by mariners for centuries, the richness of their biodiversity, vital for the future of human society, is largely unknown to us.

The mid-ocean ridge cuts across the high seas' abyssal plains, reaching up as high as the Alps. Oceanic trenches have slopes steeper than the Grand Canyon. The Mariana Trench is over 2500 kilometres in length and could contain all 8850 metres of Mount Everest. Humankind has only ever ventured there on two occasions: in 1960 and in 2012, when Titanic director James Cameron reached 11,000 metres in depth on board the submersible Deepsea Challenger.

It is pitch black and the pressure levels are the equivalent of one tonne weighing on each square centimetre. And yet, the Mariana Trench can sustain life. Numerous species populate the water column and some extreme ecosystems have been discovered, especially around hydrothermal

vents where the temperature can reach up to 400 degrees.

The high seas also keep the planetary balance in check. We depend on it to regulate the climate and the water cycle. We carry out a whole host of activities there that support our development and our economy such as fishing, transport and communications through underwater cables. The possibilities for exploration, innovation and research are immense.

At present, we have around 250,000 marine species on record. The IUCN estimates that there are 500,000 to 100 million species populating the ocean depths. Their ability to adapt is testament to the high seas' immense biological diversity. Deep-sea fishing is an essential source of protein for humans. And the number of patents stemming from marine genetic resources is growing substantially. These genetic resources are used in chemistry and result in the creation of new medical compounds.

The high seas may appear far away to us, and inaccessible. However, the impact of human activities is on the rise. Overfishing, pollution (especially micro plastics) and climate change are endangering fragile balances and ecosystems. The air and oceans know no boundaries and even land-based activities can have consequences on the high seas. An ocean in poor health poses a direct threat to human society.


In 2018, the United Nations decided to launch negotiations to improve governance of the high seas. One objective for all of the world's countries: reaching an agreement on preserving their biodiversity and using it sustainably.

During the first High Seas International Conference held in Nausicaá, scientists, fishing industry representatives, political decision-makers and journalists compared their viewpoints, shared their latest discoveries and worked towards potential solutions.


The general public has an increasingly important role to play, as citizen and consumer. The protection of marine biodiversity concerns each and every one of us. Civil society must contribute to the debate and Nausicaá has a unique opportunity to raise awareness and educate as many people as possible about the challenges and potential of the high seas.

So, a question: how can the high seas be managed sustainably, and how can everyone get involved?





# VOYAGE INTO THE UNKNOWN



“Not much is known about the high seas. Less is currently known about the high seas than the moon. Significant efforts need to be made to get to know it better and improve our understanding of what it truly means for humanity.”

**Christophe Lefebvre**

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)



## AN IMMENSE UNIVERSE

Most people across the planet do not see the high seas as a concern. However, they play a crucial role for humanity. They contribute to the water cycle,

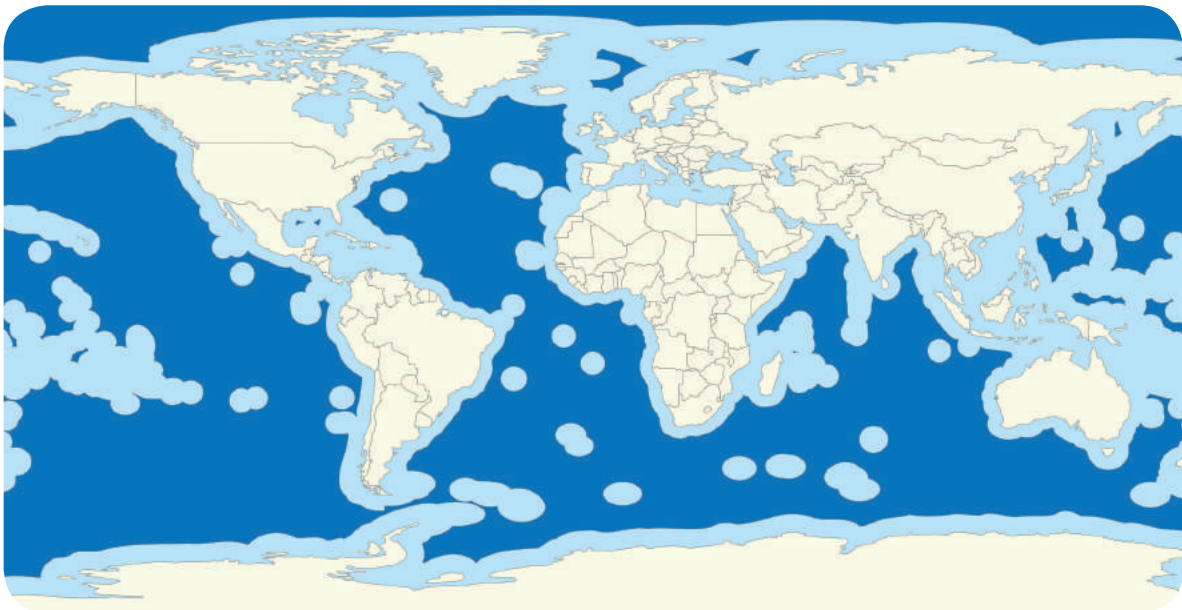
climate regulation, exchange of gas with the atmosphere and maintaining life on Earth, and are a rich resource for humankind.

## WHAT ARE THE HIGH SEAS?

The high seas are the maritime areas that lie beyond national jurisdiction. They are therefore not managed by one single state but are a shared international responsibility.

The seabed is characterised by abyssal plains cut across by oceanic ridges, large trenches and underwater mountains. Their morphology is no less diverse than that of the land surface.

The high seas cover 50% of the surface of the globe and 90% of the volume of the oceans.



■ High seas

■ Exclusive economic zones





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## THE PLANET'S LARGEST ECOSYSTEM KEEPS NATURAL BALANCES IN CHECK

Without the ocean, life could not be sustained. Life began in the ocean and the high seas are home to an exceptional range of biodiversity. The ocean also provides vital services by regulating the world's climate: it is at the root of the water cycle and hosts plankton that produce oxygen. Everything is interlinked: the ocean, the atmosphere and landmass.

The ocean absorb some of the CO<sub>2</sub> present in the atmosphere. A quarter of the carbon dioxide that stems from human activities is absorbed and

redistributed into the water column, pulled along by ocean currents. Phytoplankton contributes heavily to CO<sub>2</sub> absorption. The carbon is stored and deposited at the bottom of the ocean, accumulating among the sediment.

The ocean produces about 50% of the oxygen we breathe and it stores the excess energy caused by global warming.

Keeping high seas healthy is vital for human society.

*Interview***GETTING TO KNOW  
THE HIGH SEAS****Romain Troublé**

Executive Director of Tara Expeditions Foundation

**Tell us about the Tara Foundation.**

The Tara Foundation has been working with the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and international research institutes for 15 years now on microscopic marine ecosystems, which cannot be seen underwater with the naked eye: plankton, bacteria and viruses.

It is crucial to understand what is there, make inventories and understand how the system works; how these organisms can provide so many services every day.

Every other breath we take is thanks to the oceans. CO2 is captured by the ocean thanks to these ecosystems. They also provide food for fish. It is an extremely important ecosystem for the planet and for mankind. Life began in this ecosystem, and has been evolving ever since.

What Tara and the scientists involved with the CNRS do is to understand this and predict what will happen in the future with climate change and the global impact that humans might have on the ocean planet.

The Tara Foundation produces science, it promotes science, it brings scientists on board a boat, named Tara, but it also shares information, produces educational programmes and regularly speaks at the UN.


**What is the Tara Foundation working on?**

Tara is constantly at sea. At the time of writing (June 2018), Tara is at sea in the North Pacific. We see plastic waste float by from time to time but especially when lowering nets into the water and hauling up the contents.


Under the microscope we see a huge amount of micro plastics that appear to be interacting with marine life, with this microfauna and micro-organisms.

This poses a major challenge; we cannot clean up this plastic. It will end up sinking to the bottom of the sea and washing up on beaches.





# LEGAL FRAMEWORK: PRESENT, BUT INCOMPLETE



“Little by little we have to adopt a new approach based on the international community sharing responsibility for the state of the oceans.”

**Serge Ségura**

French Ambassador for the Oceans





## TOWARDS BETTER GOVERNANCE OF THE HIGH SEAS

The high seas are at the confluence of environmental, social and economic concerns.

Currently, there is a lack of cross-sector coordination at global level as well as between regional conventions.

Paradoxically, the high seas don't belong to anyone but are everyone's responsibility.

On 24 December 2017, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution opening up negotiations in order to develop a legally-binding international instrument covering conservation and the sustainable use of marine diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

### **These negotiations have four objectives:**

- Improve understanding of the impact of our activities on the environment;
- Improve management and protection of vulnerable areas;
- Share the benefits of genetic resources in an equitable manner; and
- Develop training and skills.



## WHERE DO WE CURRENTLY STAND?

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea sets out the principles governing the "Area". The Area and its resources are thus the "common heritage of mankind".

Through several conventions, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) strives to prevent marine pollution and helps countries in their preparations and attempts to tackle pollution caused by maritime traffic.

The United Nations Organisation for Food and Agriculture (FAO) sets international policies for fishing together with partners such as the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs).

The International Seabed Authority (ISA) governs use of the seabed.

Finally, the preservation of biodiversity is governed by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). With the notable exception of CITES, these regulations are not binding. Nevertheless, States use them in an advisory capacity.



*Interview***KEEPING COMMON INTERESTS IN MIND****Serge Ségura**

French Ambassador for the Oceans

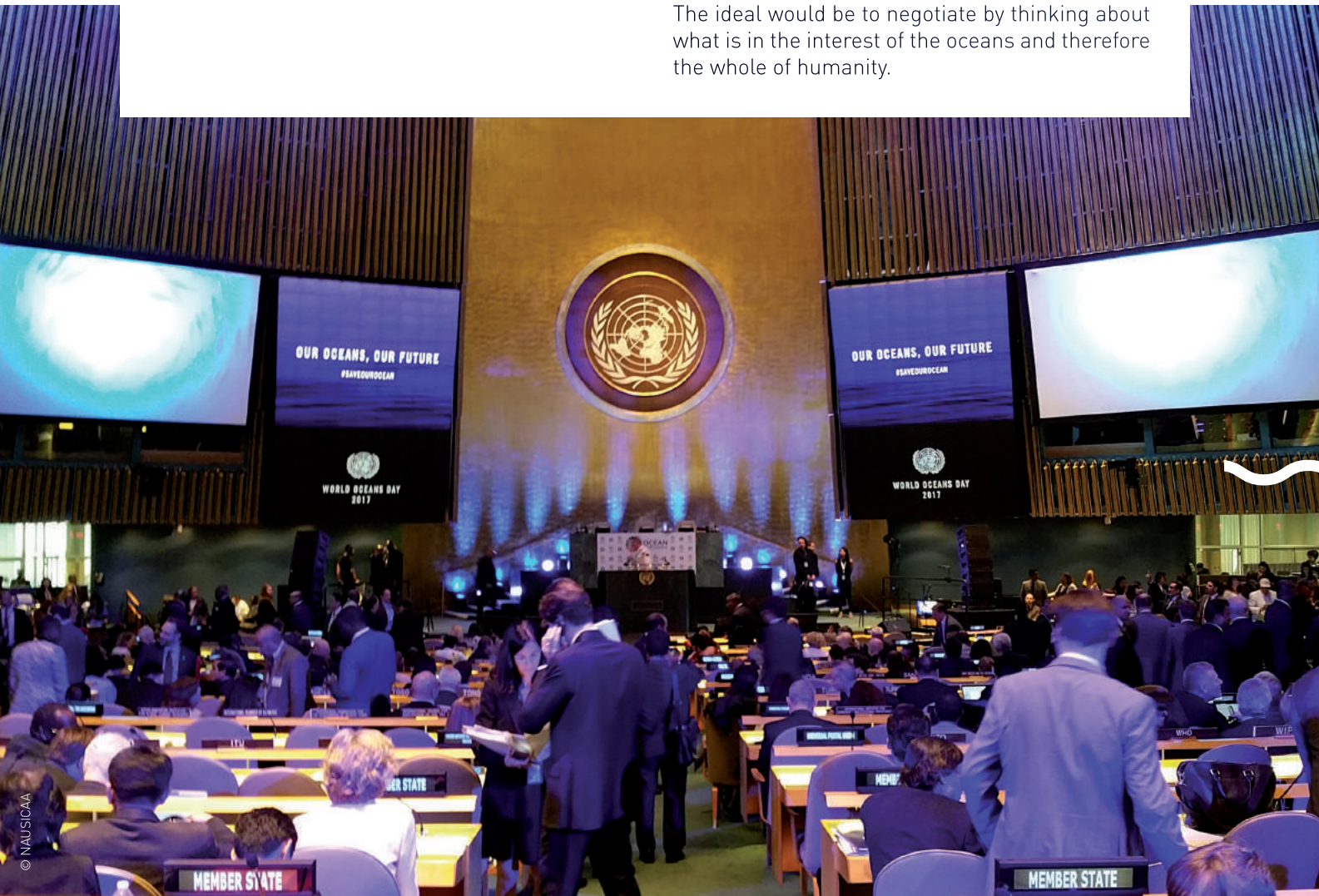
**What are the threats facing our oceans?**

Essentially they relate to human activity. Humans have always used the oceans from the moment they first found the courage to set sail on them to use them for fishing, for example. Today, with human population on the rise, with the discoveries being made by scientists about the oceans' riches and resources, there is unquestionably a race for human presence which has rather dramatic consequences on their ecological state and on biodiversity too.

**How are international negotiations organised?**

Traditionally, States negotiate in their own interests. When we negotiate on the oceans, some of the matters fall within the competence of the European Union, therefore we are also negotiating within the European framework and it is the European Union that represents the twenty-eight Member States at the United Nations. But gradually we should move towards a new approach based on the international community sharing responsibility for the state of the oceans. From there, we see that State can no longer negotiate by considering its own interests in isolation.

The ideal would be to negotiate by thinking about what is in the interest of the oceans and therefore the whole of humanity.





# IMPORTANCE OF HIGH SEAS FOR HUMAN ACTIVITIES



“They are potentially an extraordinary source of wealth for the future of humanity. This is because on the high seas we find new molecules, new bacteria, new resources and so they are of extraordinary importance. What we need is a system to be put in place that allows them to be used sustainably, ethically and equitably.”

**Philippe Vallette**

General Manager of Nausicaá – French National Sea Centre



## AN INCREASE IN HUMAN ACTIVITY

By 2030, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) predicts that profits generated at sea will be higher than those generated on land.

The high seas are used for fishing. 90% of the products of international trade are transported across the high seas. Underwater cables are laid there and our telephone and internet communications pass through them.

Engineers are developing technologies to use the incredible power of waves and currents so as to access a renewable and clean source of energy.

Several companies are prospecting amid the great depths hoping to find minerals and rare earth elements that are essential for our technologies.

Finally, an inventory is being drawn up of its biodiversity so as to discover new molecules upon which the medicines and products of the future will be based.

## THE MARITIME ECONOMY IN NUMBERS

5%

5%  
of global GDP

1<sup>ST</sup>

Primary source  
of protein for  
3 billion people

200  
MILLION

Over 200 million  
jobs

90%

Transporting 90%  
of global trade







## BETTER ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF OUR ACTIVITIES

In order to better understand, evaluate and frame the impact of human activities, scientific missions are covering the oceans throughout the world, studying the ecosystems and their interactions.

The data compiled by these scientific missions allow us to determine ways of avoiding, mitigating and controlling damage to the environment with a view to managing living resources more effectively.

Mining activities on the high seas are growing exponentially and oil companies are plumbing ever-greater depths for oil, sometimes reaching deeper than 3500 metres.

Along with the development of these activities come new risks. This is why the negotiations will also focus on the introduction of internationally-recognised impact assessments for activities on the high seas.

In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Member States are obliged to evaluate the activities that fall within their jurisdiction. Article 206 States that, "When States have reasonable grounds for believing that planned activities under their jurisdiction or control may cause substantial pollution of or significant and harmful changes to the marine environment, they shall, as far as practicable,

assess the potential effects of such activities on the marine environment."

The London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes stresses the importance of taking "preventative measures (...) when there is reason to believe that wastes or other matter introduced into the marine environment are likely to cause harm even when there is no conclusive evidence to prove a causal relation between inputs and their effects."

Several regional approaches have also been taken. Article 8 of the Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, on the protection of the environment, requires human activities to first undergo a preliminary assessment according to their level of impact.

The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (informally called the Espoo) requires cross-border parties to evaluate the impact on the environment of certain activities from the beginning of the planning process.

# MANAGING LIVING RESOURCES

Growing demographics and the increase in revenue is exacerbating the pressure on the oceans and fishing resources.

The FAO, the United Nations Organisation for Food and Agriculture, predicts that 9 billion people will need to be fed in 2050, and food production will have to rise by 70% in 30 years.

*Interview*

## IMPROVING CONTROLS ON FISHING

**Ivan Lopez**

International Coalition of Fisheries Associations  
About Seafood (ICFA)



### What is ICFA working on?

We are taking part in the debate a great deal and contributing with our experience in the domain of fishing. We agree with the conservation objectives and to that end our simplest but strongest proposal is to remain within the areas that are already being fished and to never venture into other areas without supervision or prior scientific approval.

The most interesting projects are mainly based on technologies aimed at controlling fishing, on a voluntary basis, naturally. At the moment, the largest projects we are working on are projects aimed at improving fishing gear in the United States and Canada. This would improve fishing, but also improve the relationship between nets and the sea, as well with the seabed.

### What are your proposals for limiting overfishing?

The fishing industry often believes that the market is the only way of putting all of these policies into practice on our seas.

Why do we think this? International legislation works very well but there is no real “police” in charge of overseeing what is going to be done and what has been decided and so the only way of doing that, especially as Europeans with the largest fisheries markets in the world, is to stand firm and sometimes close off the markets to unauthorised products.

One example was when we banned the “cutting” of shark fins in Europe; this is a good thing and they have to be secured when they are brought to shore to ensure there is a shark and a fin, but on the other hand, the non-European fleets who do not do this are still allowed to sell their products on our markets and that simply isn't fair.





## SHARING THE ADVANTAGES THAT COME FROM GENETIC RESOURCES

Genetic resources are attracting growing interest and bioprospecting activities are on the rise, due to recent technological progress in observing and sampling the oceans.

At present, 90% of the patents that come from marine genetic resources are held by 10 countries, and 70% of the patents by 3 countries. The challenge will be putting in place a mechanism that guarantees access to marine genetic resources on the high seas as well as the fair and equitable sharing of the advantages associated with their use.



### WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?


Genetic resources are used in the agri-food, chemistry, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics industries.

The number of patents that come from marine genetic resources is growing by 12% per year, whereas we have only been prospecting for them for 20 years.

Over 18,000 new products have marine origins, with over 8,000 associated patents.

According to Ifremer, the rate of molecules of interest is 500 times higher for marine species than for terrestrial species. The loss of marine biodiversity poses a direct threat to genetic resources.

This is why States and those in the private sector using these resources need to take part in conservation and the sustainable use of marine biota.





# PROTECTION AND SHARING

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“Scientists state that by protecting the high seas, we have better chances of preventing the deterioration of the ocean.”

**Hiroko Muraki Gottlieb**

Senior Ocean Governance Advisor of Global Marine and Polar Programme,  
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)



## RESTRICTING ACTIVITIES AND TACKLING POLLUTION

Certain marine areas need to be protected, according to the level of environmental vulnerability, sometimes to help with stock replenishment, but also to help to better manage human activity that could endanger ecosystems that are deemed to be too fragile.

The new instrument plans to define the spaces within which human activities could be restricted and efforts to tackle pollution could be stepped up.

The Convention on Biological Diversity recommends that 10% of coastal and marine areas be protected between now and 2020.

One of the challenges is to improve the coordination among the management bodies of protected marine areas, to take into account migratory species in particular.

### *Interview*

## IMPROVING MANAGEMENT OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

### **Purificació Canals**

Team leader for the EU Transatlantic Marine Protected Areas Network Project, Chair of MedPAN



### **Tell us about the transatlantic cooperation project?**

The transatlantic cooperation project on marine protected areas is a European Union project that aims to bring the MPA managers together. These managers work on different marine protected areas spanning the whole of the Atlantic Ocean and they aim to promote technical exchanges.

### **What do the management bodies discuss?**

The aim of the discussions is to make marine protected areas management more efficient. In this context, we have selected three different subjects.

One of the subjects is coastal resilience, to see how marine protected areas are facing resilience challenge and how they contribute to the resilience of adjacent territories.

The second subject is based on a migratory species: the humpback whale. How can we exchange between different marine protected areas across the Atlantic with the same individuals and the same humpback whale populations, which migrate from north to south an east to west, regarding the management of those sites?

Finally, the third example of cooperation is through the networks of managers that already exist, in particular the regional networks like the Mediterranean, West Africa, the Caribbean and North America, as well as two national networks: the French Agency for Biodiversity (AFB), representing France and the 'Biodiversidad' foundation in the case of Spain.



## SOME EXAMPLES OF PROTECTION AT SEA

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Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are defined as areas at sea and their aim is to protect nature in the long term. They reconcile the objectives of protection and sustainable economic development. More often than not, multiple human activities such as tourism and fishing take place there.

Various initiatives are being established by international organisations and scientists to identify, report, manage and protect areas of ecological interest on the high seas.

Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) thus adopted a series of scientific criteria making it possible to identify ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, known as "EBSA criteria". The identification criteria take into account the rarity of species, their vulnerability and fragility and even the biological diversity of the area in question. They aim to inform parties and international organisations on potential management measures.

The International Maritime Organization defines particularly sensitive sea areas (PSSAs) which meet ecological criteria, socio-economic criteria as well as to scientific and educational criteria. Strict measures for controlling maritime traffic may be adopted, especially in the field of discharging wastewater.

Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) are defined by scientists as "discrete portions of habitat, important to marine mammal species that have the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation".

Regional seas conventions have action plans in place to preserve the marine environment in several regions of the world, covering a large range of subjects from pollution from ships or coastlines through to the conservation of species and marine ecosystems. OSPAR (North-East Atlantic) and CCALMR (Antarctic) are the first conventions to designate protected areas on the high seas.



*Interview*

# A RANGE OF TOOLS FOR PROTECTION

**Christophe Lefebvre**

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)


**What tools can be put in place to manage marine protected areas?**

There are different types of tools that can be used to manage the sea. Firstly, it must be ensured that professionals, who make use of the sea, fishermen in particular, understand the role they have to play in establishing marine protected areas. Their role in managing marine protected areas starts at the point at which they realise that it is not only vital to reconstitute depleted fish stocks but also to protect biodiversity.

This is why we often speak of governance in sea management policies, because governance means bringing together different stakeholders

to find a consensus about the best management method to choose.

There are different levels of protection which can be adapted according to what is at stake. If the stakes are of an economic nature, then the approach will have to be much more geared towards the type of management tools for reconstituting fish stocks. If there is extraordinary biodiversity, then clearly we need to move towards very strict and regulated protection measures and therefore obviously a very different notion of protection.

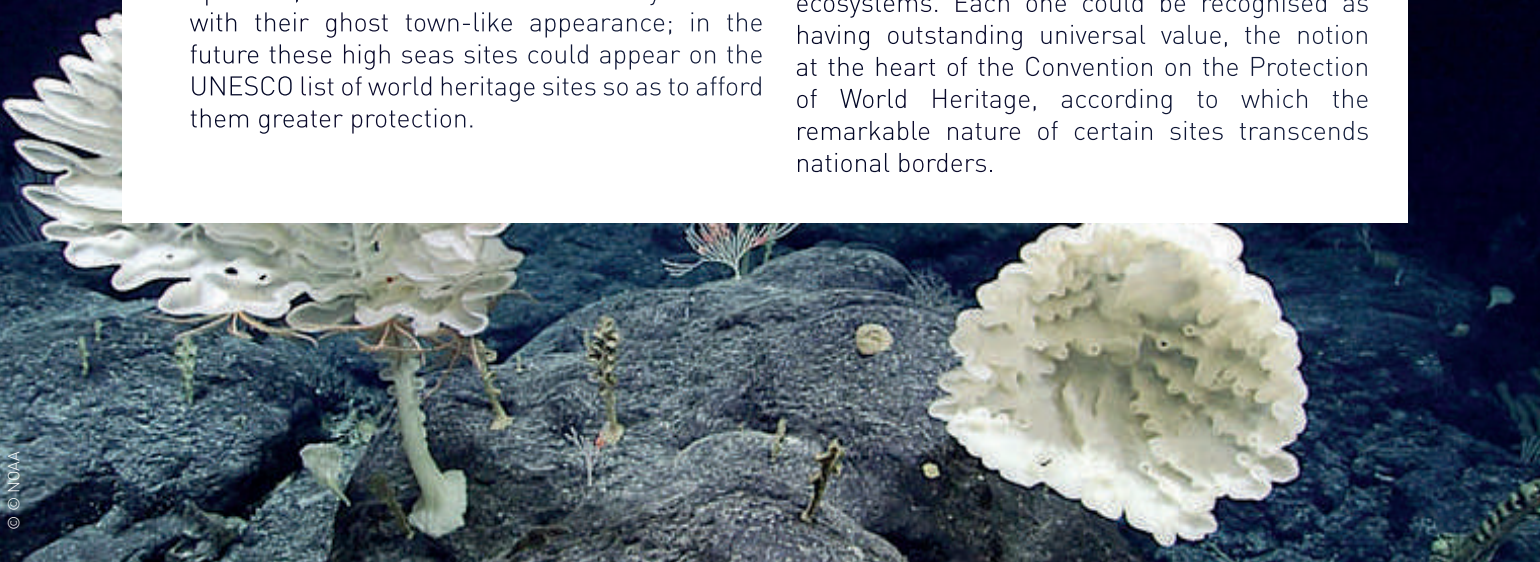


## PROTECTING EXCEPTIONAL SITES ON THE HIGH SEAS

Deep sea corals, floating algae forests on the open sea, underwater volcanoes or rocky seabeds with their ghost town-like appearance; in the future these high seas sites could appear on the UNESCO list of world heritage sites so as to afford them greater protection.

Up to now, only States are able to suggest sites for inclusion on the list. As we know, the high seas are not subject to the national jurisdiction of any one state. And yet they are exposed to threats such as pollution, the deterioration of the deep ocean and overfishing. The UNESCO Convention could therefore be adapted so as to include exceptional sites on the high seas.

Five sites have been identified by UNESCO. They illustrate the exceptional nature of the high seas' ecosystems. Each one could be recognised as having outstanding universal value, the notion at the heart of the Convention on the Protection of World Heritage, according to which the remarkable nature of certain sites transcends national borders.





# Interview

## HIGH SEAS AND UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

**Robbert Casier**

Marine World Heritage Programme, UNESCO



### How many marine sites are on the UNESCO list?

There are currently 49 marine sites on UNESCO's marine heritage list, which includes two sites in France, for example, the Gulf of Porto: Calanche of Piana, Gulf of Girolata, Scandola Reserve in Corsica and the Lagoons of New Caledonia.

### What is the difference between world heritage marine sites and marine protected areas?

World Heritage sites are recognized for their Outstanding Universal Value – places that are so unique and exceptional that their protection should be a shared and common responsibility of us all. A central difference between marine protected areas and marine World Heritage sites is the international oversight that comes with monitoring, evaluation and reporting obligations for the latter. To ensure the characteristics that make up a site's World Heritage status will endure all sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List are subject to systematic

monitoring and evaluation cycles embedded in the official procedures of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Along with the recognition and inscription of an area on the List, the State of Conservation process

is a key value added to the protection of marine protected areas that are globally unique.

World Heritage marine managers share similar conservation challenges and simultaneously hold a wealth of information about good and best practices in managing World Heritage sites. Bringing these success stories together, in ways that make them suitable for replication in other marine areas, is a central part of the work of the World Heritage Marine Programme.

### More information:

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/marine-programme/>



## SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY

Improving the management of the high seas, which falls under international responsibility, requires States to have access to the same knowledge and technology that will allow them to protect and sustainably manage the biodiversity of the high seas.

Capacity building also allows States to develop their expertise and act independently.

It is aimed at States wishing to:

- Implement and respect the future agreement;
- Participate in global and regional cooperation;
- Develop national legislation, public policies and institutional arrangements for the new agreement;
- Undertake scientific marine research and take part in joint research projects;
- Protect marine areas;
- Support national and local efforts towards a healthy ocean and sustainable economy.





# ALL CITIZENS OF THE HIGH SEAS



“We still have a long way to go in terms of public awareness. It is important to know that this concerns us all; we need the support of everyone if we want to ensure a healthy, productive ocean that continues to provide food in the future, as well as playing its major role in climate regulation, of course.”

**Gabriele Goettsche-Wanli**

Director, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea,  
United Nations Office of Legal Affairs



## TAKING ACTION

The protection of the high seas concerns all of us, whether we work with the sea or not. Every citizen can contribute. But still, to take action, we need to be informed. For a long time, the focus of issues concerning marine life was the coast. But it is essential today to talk about the high seas, a world still so far from the concerns of the citizens and yet so important for the planet.

By getting informed and think about the issues, citizens have the opportunity to make choices and take action. Mobilising the general public will help influence policy, take action on global warming and the benefit equitably from the opportunities offered by the ocean and preserve it for future generations.



## Interview

# THE MAIN ISSUE FOR THE HIGH SEAS IS THAT OF KNOWLEDGE

**Catherine Chabaud**  
Navigator and journalist



### What role can consumers play to address the deteriorating state of the oceans?

As consumers, citizens have a pivotal role when it comes to the future of the ocean, its management and the health of marine and coastal ecosystems, that they don't even know about. They can avoid dropping litter, for example. By sorting waste, they can help avoid waste going in the wrong bin, not being recycled and ending up in the sea, as is currently often the case.

There is a real challenge in reducing the impact of climate change on our oceans. The ocean serves to regulate the climate. We must implement public policies to respond to climate issues, and include the ocean, too.

People could opt for an organic sunscreen rather than the usual chemical-laden cream. They could stop dropping litter on the beach. When eating

fish, they could choose "responsibly sourced" fish, following the advice of Mr.Goodfish and choosing to eat local, seasonal species of fish. It is not always easy to do and that's why Mr.Goodfish's recommendations are so good and so relevant.

Citizens have a much more important role to play than they think, even when they live up in the mountains.

The impact on the ocean starts up at mountain summits and extends right down to the high seas. There is the catchment basin notion which means we are all concerned by the future of the oceans, even mountain dwellers.

### How can we raise awareness about these issues among the public at large?

First I think we need to help people think about what they want, what they care about and dream about. There are many ways do this: documentaries, feature films, and so on.

I raise awareness in my own way. Today, I feel I want to share my personal conviction that the ocean is a common good.

That is going to be the cause I will champion over the next few years, because if tomorrow the ocean

is to be recognised as the common heritage of mankind, then that needs to happen at the level of the United Nations.

I will play my role as an evangelist, to go and convince citizens that this concept is highly relevant as well as calling upon heads of state, negotiators, business leaders, and others.



# VOYAGE EN HAUTE MER

## JOURNEY ON THE HIGH SEAS



## THE 1<sup>ST</sup> HIGH SEAS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AT NAUSICAA

Nausicaá, the French National Sea Centre, organised the 1<sup>st</sup> High Seas International Conferences with a view to raising public awareness and mobilising civil society about the challenges and promise held by the high seas. The High Seas International Conferences, the first of their kind, were held between 26 and 28 June 2018. Nausicaá aims to organise such meetings on a regular basis.

The 1<sup>st</sup> conference was organised jointly with the French Biodiversity Agency (AFB), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI), the United Nations Global Ocean Forum, the United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), the World Ocean Network and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

*Interview***AQUARIUMS:  
A PLACE FOR DISCUSSION  
ABOUT THE HIGH SEAS****Philippe Vallette**

General Manager of Nausicaa – National Sea Centre

**Tell us about Nausicaà and the reason for organizing the 1<sup>st</sup> High Seas International Conferences**

In 2018, Nausicaá opened an extension that takes the high seas as its topic. Nausicaá is more than an aquarium. Nausicaá is interested in the links between humans and the ocean. And this is precisely the topic into which we are trying to breathe new life.

The idea is to organise this event regularly here at Nausicaá, linked to the negotiations taking place at the United Nations on the governance of the high seas. Therefore all of this is very closely linked. Nausicaá has a role in tourism and economic development and a role as an educator and stakeholder.

**What were the initial outcomes of these 1<sup>st</sup> conferences?**

Firstly, it was a very international conference with participants hailing from a great many countries. And then we saw participants' genuine enthusiasm to come to Nausicaá to take part and finally prepare for the discussions taking place in New York. Many challenges were put on the table, from a biodiversity point of view as well as the question of how the high seas could be used sustainably.

The discussions were extremely enthusiastic and conclusive. Just like in the corridors of the United Nations, we saw people having discussions and starting to come up with projects as well as agreeing on the subjects to be tackled.

All in all, it was really very interesting, with great potential for the next edition.



## Interview

# WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE OCEANS!

**Prof. David Johnson**

Coordinator, Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI)



### What will you take from these 1<sup>st</sup> conferences?

The conference brought together some key individuals who will be directly involved in the negotiating process taking place now and over the next few years. There were leaders who chose to take some messages home with them. Plastics are a prime example. People are now much more aware of the impact that plastic has on the marine environment. The fact is that plastics are everywhere and it all starts with the plastics suppliers who need to start looking for possible alternatives.

These 1st High Seas International Conferences allowed us to have more in-depth discussions and to stress just how important it is to raise public awareness, via the media, about the problems facing our oceans and why people should care.

They should feel concerned about the high seas but also the areas under national jurisdiction because I think that the public are not as aware of

ocean issues as they are on other subjects. While there are many problems in the world causing concern, it is important to spare a thought for the oceans too.

A recent study showed that Sustainable Development Goal number 14, which is the specific goal relating to the oceans, is the least taken into account and this shows that we still have a long way to go.

It is important for everyone to know that we are all in the same boat and that we need everyone on board if we want to ensure we have healthy and productive oceans in the future, so that they can guarantee our food security and keep playing their essential role in the climate cycle.





## PARTNERS



### COMMON OCEANS

[www.fao.org/in-action/commonoceans/en](http://www.fao.org/in-action/commonoceans/en)

The Common Oceans programme has implemented a capacity-building project with the Global Environment Facility and the Global Ocean Forum.



### GOBI

[www.gobi.org](http://www.gobi.org)

The Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative is an international programme that brings together scientific knowledge to preserve marine biodiversity.



### FAO

[www.fao.org/home/en](http://www.fao.org/home/en)

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is the United Nations' specialised agency that leads international efforts to eliminate hunger. It deals with issues related to agriculture and fisheries.



### GOF

<https://globaloceanforum.com/>

The Global Ocean Forum is an international, independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting good ocean governance, sustainable development for coastal and island populations, and healthy marine ecosystems.



### IUCN

[www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a global non-governmental organisation dedicated to the conservation of nature. It brings together States, NGOs, experts and scientists.



### TARA EXPEDITIONS

<https://oceans.taraexpeditions.org/en/>

The Tara Expeditions Foundation, a registered public organisation, implements scientific expeditions to monitor the evolution of the ocean, raises awareness among young people and takes part in negotiations on the governance of the Ocean at the national and international levels, notably through its status as UN observer.



### FRENCH MINISTRY FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

[www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en)

The Ministry represents the ocean at international level with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development.



### ICFA

[www.aboutseafood.com](http://www.aboutseafood.com)

ICFA (International Coalition of Fisheries Associations) is an American non-profit educational organisation working on the consumption and sustainable exploitation of seafood products.



### TRANSATLANTIC MPA NETWORK

<https://transatlanticmpanetwork.eu>

The European Union has set up this initiative to promote cooperation between managers of marine protected areas in the countries and territories around the Atlantic Ocean.



### UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/about/>

Established in 1992, the WHC coordinates UNESCO's activities related to World Heritage.



### DIVISION FOR OCEAN AFFAIRS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA, UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

[www.un.org/depts/los/](http://www.un.org/depts/los/)

This United Nations Office provides States and intergovernmental organisations with legal and technical services. It ensures substantive services to the General Assembly on the law of the sea and maritime affairs.



### APPEAL FOR THE OCEAN, COMMON GOOD OF HUMANITY

<https://oceanascommon.org/>

Campaign run by the French Institute of the Sea and Catherine Chabaud.



### WORLD OCEAN NETWORK

[www.worldoceannetwork.org](http://www.worldoceannetwork.org)

World Ocean Network is an association whose goal is to raise public awareness, encourage it to adopt new environmentally friendly behaviors and promote the transition towards a Blue Society.



**Nausicaá, National Sea Centre, Boulogne-sur-Mer:** more than an aquarium, Nausicaá is a recreational, educational, scientific discovery centre for the marine environment, with a central focus on the relationship between humankind and the sea. Its mission is to support people's discovery and love of the sea, as an element of our lives and source of wealth today and in the future. As catalyst and promoter of the Blue Society, Nausicaá offers a new vision of sustainable solutions for humanity that come from the ocean.

**The French Agency for Biodiversity (AFB):** as a public entity of the Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, the AFB supports the implementation of public policy in the fields of knowledge, preservation, management and restoration of the biodiversity of terrestrial, aquatic and marine environments. It also aims to reach the public to engage citizens for biodiversity.



The high seas lie beyond national jurisdictions. They represent 65% of the ocean's surface and cover almost half the planet. We are all responsible for the high seas. To manage it sustainably and equitably, we need appropriate international governance. Negotiations are underway at the United Nations on an agreement that would allow for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity on the high seas.

The immense ecosystem of the high seas is essential to our planet's ecological balance. The climate, the water cycle and the composition of the atmosphere are all dependent on the ocean. The high seas also provide essential resources in terms of food and minerals. They represent great opportunities for the future. We are all affected by the decisions that will be made to preserve it so that we can continue to benefit from this vital natural environment.

This booklet is the result of exchanges between diplomats, scientists, representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the media and science centre professionals on the importance of public awareness and engagement.



[www.nausicaa.fr](http://www.nausicaa.fr)



[www.afbiodiversite.fr](http://www.afbiodiversite.fr)