



MISSION **BLUE**™  
SYLVIA EARLE ALLIANCE



# HOPE SPOTS



## IMPACT REPORT

2017

## Impact Report August 2017

by Dr. Sylvia Earle

Halfway across the Pacific Ocean, on Midway Island, Sylvia Earle sat, admiring a very special bird named “Wisdom.” Wisdom, a Laysan albatross, got her name from scientists who have been keeping an eye on her for many decades.

Banded in the 1950s and reckoned to be 61 years old at the time of their meeting in January 2012, she was learning to fly at about the same time that Dr. Earle, as a fledgling marine biologist, was learning to dive.

Since then, both have witnessed a seismic shift in the nature of the ocean—a greater change, perhaps, than in all of human history. Once thought to be too big to fail, the ocean is now clearly being harmed, both by what people have been putting into it and by what we have been taking out, especially since the mid-20th century.

**Trouble for the ocean means trouble for all of life on Earth, birds and humans very much included.**

### **And the pace of this trouble is picking up.**

The human population has more than doubled since the 1950s, and while people are living longer and generally better than ever before, this apparent prosperity has come at a cost.

On the land, natural systems and the diverse forms of life they contain have declined precipitously. In the sea, about half of the coral reefs, kelp forests, and sea-grass meadows have disappeared along with 90 percent of many kinds of fish, squid, and other ocean wildlife.

**While 12% of the land around the world is now conserved through arrangements such as national parks, only 5% of the ocean has any protection at all.**

But the good news is, there are so many things that we can do and an increasingly informed public is primed and ready to take more action. Mission Blue received over 400 expressions of interest in the first few years of the project.

Progress on this front through established institutions and legislation can be a slow process—and according to recent studies is often ineffective.

History has shown that without local support, management of protected areas is rarely successful in the long term.

This approach enables communities to engage in meaningful marine conservation.

The Hope Spots initiative, created by Mission Blue founder Dr. Sylvia Earle when she won the TED prize in 2009, is a ground-up approach that channels and magnifies the public’s growing appetite to create and support more marine protected areas (MPA’s) around the world.

## Impact 2014-2016

In collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Hope Spot initiative features a science-based framework so any community in the world can nominate their special part of the ocean for global recognition and, thus, enhanced pressure for conservation.

Nominations are reviewed and approved by the Hope Spots Council, an international team of ocean experts hand selected by Dr. Sylvia Earle.

Taken together, Hope Spots and the communities that support them, i.e. Hope Spot Champions, are working in concert to form the seeds of tomorrow's healthy ocean.

### Hope Spot Initiative— A One-of-a-kind Approach

Mission Blue ignites support for ocean conservation in all Hope Spots through a global communication campaign, on-the-ground expeditions, fiscal support of NGO's working locally and direct government advocacy. Our near-term goal is to reach the Aichi Target 11 and United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal of protecting at least 10% of the ocean by 2020.

The Hope Spot initiative's metric of success is either the creation of new MPA's or improved management/enforcement in existing ones.

As a program that is both a strategic tool for governments and an inspirational rallying point for communities, the Hope Spot initiative is a one-of-a-kind approach that is already showing real promise for broad engagement and progress.

Since its inception, Mission Blue's Hope Spot initiative has contributed to real action on the ground in the service of ocean conservation. Hope Spots of all sizes are now found in every part of the world's ocean, in both coastal waters and the high seas.

With 13 Hope Spots originally announced in 2014, Hope Spots have grown to a current total of 86, covering an approximate area of 48,195,000 square kilometers.

#### **Impact**

Mission Blue drives impact by working with local champions, Hope Spot council members and the public to build global support for the creation and strengthening of marine protected areas.

#### **Engagement**

Mission Blue supports our partners and Hope Spot champions to engage with local and regional governments towards creating and/or extending legal protection. This is done by using the advocating and networking strengths of the Council and staff, as well as helping local champions reach a global audience of many millions, rather than a few hundred.

#### **Education**

Education is another tool Mission Blue uses to push a global marine conservation agenda. Our partners are involved in ecotourism, awareness raising in local communities, scientific research and community conservation development projects. Also, through global information campaigns and on-the-ground expeditions, Mission Blue generates over 50 million impressions per month on digital and traditional outreach channels with the message that Hope Spots need more support and protection.





Children from the community of Cabo Pulmo enjoy the undersea world with Dr. Sylvia Earle, 2016. Snorkeling equipment donated by Scuba Pro\_©Kip Evans



Dr. Sylvia Earle and Dr. Jorge Cortés Núñez of University of Costa Rica explore the deep waters of Cocos Island, 2015\_©Kip Evans

### Specific examples of how we have already contributed to ocean protection

- Council members and partner organisations were instrumental in achieving MPA status and extensions to Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound Hope Spot off Canada, and Malpelo Island MPA Hope Spot off Columbia's coast.
- In Micronesia one of the council members was influential in the creation of a new law protecting about 10% of their territorial waters from industrial activities.
- Mission Blue is supporting local champions in a bid for UNESCO status for the Vakita Bay Hope Spot in the Mediterranean.
- Council members and partners are working to get official MPA recognition of Neptune's Arm in Quirimbas Hope Spot (Western Indian Ocean).
- Mission Blue and IUCN partners are directly supporting the Sargasso Sea Commission (North Atlantic).
- Mission Blue advises and supports community action in the Coastal Southeast Florida Hope Spot (Atlantic Ocean).
- Dr. Earle is lending support to the creation of an Arctic Ocean Marine sanctuary.
- Council members were key advisors in creating the Ross sea MPA (Southern Ocean).

### Premier Initiatives

- Launch multimedia adventures through HopeSpots on the new Google Earth.
- Produce an IndieGogo campaign for \$50,000 with a matching corporate partner for a \$100,000 dollar total impact towards MissionBlue Expeditions;
- Auction a "Dive With Sylvia" campaign with a goal of raising \$15,000;
- Land exposure for Sylvia Earle and HopeSpots on a major networks like NPR, BBC, CNN or CBS;
- Further leverage the ascendant power of video: design and launch a crowd-sourced youth-focused video campaign; aggressively use Facebook live; edit more short vignettes for social media from Expeditions content; delve in to VR/360 video;
- Spearhead the creation of a "Communications HopeSpot Welcome Packet" and process for incoming partners;
- Embrace GIS technology and story mapping as a powerful narrative device to further raise awareness of HopeSpots and the stories that emanate from them.

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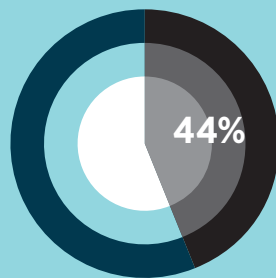
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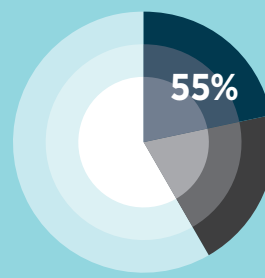
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## HOPE SPOT DESIGNATION



Over 44% (48 million km<sup>2</sup>)  
of the global ocean is under  
Hope Spot designation.



Of these 44% (48 million km<sup>2</sup>)  
we are active in 55% (26 million km<sup>2</sup>)  
Hope Spots since designation.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



198 partners—  
+26% since 2016



Over 514,000,000 social  
media interactions in 2016  
+40% since 2015



5th highest ranking for  
Conservation Organisations

## 2017-2019 Strategic Direction

In 2009, Dr. Sylvia Earle launched “Mission Blue” to implement her TED wish:

I wish you would use all means at your disposal — films, the web, expeditions, new submarines, a campaign! — to ignite public support for a network of global marine protected areas, Hope Spots large enough to save and restore the ocean, the blue heart of the planet.

### Overview

2014-2016 was an exciting period for Mission Blue and the Hope Spot initiative. After having received over 400 nominations and expressions of interest from the global public, a new system to nominate Hope Spots was publically launched in 2016 at the World Conservation Congress. A council was formed from a range of international marine conservation experts to review nominations for Hope Spots status. This new process resulted in a 40% increase in Hope Spots and a subsequent increase in activity towards greater marine conservation.

Mission Blue’s digital outreach reached an important milestone. In 2016, we registered a total of 515 million impressions (approximately 43 million a month) across our online channels — a 42% increase over 2015.

If we continue on this track, we can expect to hit 1 billion impressions before the end of 2017.

This progress is indicative of a growing community who wants to share Dr. Earle’s message and see positive change for the ocean and all of its wildlife.

Mission Blue is also witnessing a global validation for Hope Spots. Over the past few years Mission Blue’s partnerships have grown to over 200 respected ocean conservation groups and like-minded organizations ranging from large multinationals to scientific teams doing important research.

Expeditions continue to be a major feature of Mission Blue. Over the past two years, we have led or participated in Hope Spot expeditions to the Gulf of California, Revillagigedo Islands, Cocos Island, Cashes Ledge, Central American thermal dome, and the Balearic Islands.

By conducting expeditions to Hope Spots and documenting what we find, we generate awareness, foster meaningful partnerships, and build community support for both species and habitat protection.

In future years, we hope to offer inspiration and guidance to ever larger areas of the globe.



## Goals and Expected Outcomes for the Next 3 Years:

### Increase Number of Hope Spots

- In partnership with IUCN, Mission Blue will launch new Hope Spots at a key event in 2017: IMPAC4, the International Marine Protected Areas Conference in Chile.
- Over the next few years more Hope Spots will be created and launched at major marine conservation events to increase visibility among academics, conservation professionals and the public. In addition, Mission Blue plans to use these occasions to engage regional and local groups in the Hope Spots vision.

### Achieve Tangible Action

- Mission Blue will use the current foundations to build a more structured approach to achieving tangible conservation action in Hope Spots.
- The council continues to find partners, develop networks in both governmental and non-governmental society and advocate for Hope Spots where needed.

### Embrace New Technologies

- A new technological platform is being developed to implement, map, manage and communicate about Hope Spots.
- In partnership with Esri, Hope Spot partners and communities will be able to take full advantage of cutting edge technologies for everything from sharing science, to storytelling, to interactive mapping and data management. This new technology also provides the public a platform for direct engagement, where they can either nominate new Hope Spot, or use social media and other tools to express support.

### Partnerships

- As more Hope Spots are designated, there will be an increase in new partners. This growing network of Hope Spot partners, collectively, will be more powerful in shaping policy.

### Expeditions

- During the next three years, we plan to execute larger expeditions that will allow us an opportunity to explore deeper with submersibles and to increase our impact at each Hope Spot location.
- Our 2018 goals include expeditions to the Arctic, Palau, and Malpelo, Columbia. During these expeditions, we will bring attention to climate change, illegal fishing threats and the need for shark migration corridors.
- In 2019 and 2020, we will continue our work in the Eastern Pacific Seascape with an expedition to the Galapagos Islands, then move south to Chile and finally South Georgia Island off the Antarctic Peninsula. Each of these expeditions will include a comprehensive media and communications strategy to document the expedition. Just like other expeditions in the past, these materials will be shared with our partners, sponsors and through our social media channels.





Scientists deploy an underwater acoustic receiver to track sharks, Revillagigedo Archipelago expedition, 2017\_©KipEvans

## Communications

- Mission Blue's communication strategy not only educates the public on critical ocean conservation issues, but also shares specific wins and threats that exist in the Hope Spots. Through sustained outreach on all major digital channels, Mission Blue is also soliciting further Hope Spot nominations from the public at large to create a network effect of communities around the world who use Mission Blue's vast communications network to further their ocean conservation causes.
- In the coming years, Mission Blue will continue to launch new Hope Spots while evolving the strategy to coincide these announcements with major international/regional ocean conferences, so as to increase visibility for Hope Spots and continue to ratchet up the pressure on policymakers to put ocean conservation action on the agenda.

## Hope Spots Council

- The investment in the expertise of a council of internationally recognized marine experts has proven to be a significant asset, including the development of the assessment process involved in designating and supporting Hope Spots. We will continue to cultivate the role of the council in order to benefit from its full potential. Part of this means that the council will provide knowledge, advice, contacts and mentoring to Hope Spot champions as needed. The champions will also be able to benefit from field visits from council members and staff in some cases, as funds allow.



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