



PRESS RELEASE

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Mission Blue, ProtectedSeas Release Map of Ocean “Hope Spots”

*Information on these critically important ocean places now
freely available on ProtectedSeas Navigator*

The ProtectedSeas Navigator, a free interactive map of current marine life protections and their boundaries, recently added Hope Spots — special places that are scientifically identified as critical to the health of the ocean. These Hope Spots have been identified by well-known marine biologist Sylvia Earle, and her environmental organization Mission Blue.

This new partnership between Mission Blue and ProtectedSeas links the most comprehensive database of marine conservation measures in place with the identification of critical areas in need of protection. The Hope Spots Map provides an in-depth description for all 140 of the special ocean places identified by Mission Blue. The partnership will be discussed in greater detail during the [virtual side event](#) at the UN Ocean Conference on June 29 at 5pm Lisbon, 9am Pacific.

ProtectedSeas Director Virgil Zetterlind stated:

“We are thrilled to partner with Sylvia Earle and her incredible team at Mission Blue. Her team is providing a valuable service by identifying areas in need of protection. We are sharing the last seven years of intense data collection work with our colleagues in marine conservation to aid in the dissemination and analysis of global marine protected areas. By making this information widely available online, ProtectedSeas supports improved awareness of the regulatory measures of these special places so critical to ocean health.”

Mission Blue’s Sylvia Earle stated:

"No one can understand ocean protection without first understanding existing ocean regulations. Having good data on existing fishing regulations will help Mission Blue in the push to raise the conservation profile of its Hope Spots.”

The Navigator database includes regulation summaries, boundaries, allowed human activities, and Level of Fishing protection assessments for over 20,000 marine protected areas (MPAs) in more than 109 countries and territories, including the United States.

For each protected area, Navigator includes a synopsis of key regulations, allowed status of specific fishing and other human activities, and a standardized level of fishing protection score. All information is available in English and in each country's official language. The ProtectedSeas team anticipates completing global coverage in 2022.

After approximately seven years in development, ProtectedSeas is proud to offer this tool as a free, open-source platform to aid marine spatial planning and assessments. A wide audience, including MPA managers, resource protection staff, policy makers, scientists, the conservation community, and the public can access ocean conservation regulations and protection metrics at <https://mpa.protectedseas.net>. Through a NOAA public-private partnership, Navigator helps inform the U.S. MPA inventory, which in turn informs the U.S. Protected Areas Database (PADUS) and the upcoming 30x30 America the Beautiful Stewardship Atlas. International Navigator data is also cross referenced to areas in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's World Database on Protected Areas (IUCN WDPAs) for those conducting global assessments.

Many factors impact the effectiveness of MPAs to protect marine life, including size, location, habitat representation, ecological connectivity, and, importantly, the degree to which extractive marine activities are restricted or prohibited.

To see the existing legal protections for over 80% of the world's MPAs visit <https://mpa.protectedseas.net>.

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About ProtectedSeas: Protected Seas is the curator of a growing and open dataset of boundaries and regulations for marine protected areas (MPAs) and marine managed areas (MMAs) globally.

ProtectedSeas is in a formal partnership under a Memorandum of Agreement with the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Protected Area Center as a partner in the development of this program.

Learn more at: <https://protectedseas.net/mpa-mapping>

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