

Ocean

IMPACT REPORT 2026

The Nature Conservancy





Front cover: Feather duster worms off Grand Cayman © Lisa Dilling/TNC Photo Contest 2022. **This page:** Gas flame nudibranch, False Bay, Cape Peninsula, South Africa © Peet J van Eeden/TNC Photo Contest 2022.

Dear Ocean friends,

The ocean news this year has been sobering. We are tracking toward a historic "super" El Nino; many scientists are expecting it to be one of the strongest ever recorded. This El Nino is occurring on top of a record-breaking marine heat wave that will cause widespread coral bleaching. In addition, more than one-third of marine fish stocks are overfished, and marine ecosystems are approaching or surpassing critical tipping points.

Current headlines make it easy to focus only on what is being lost. This report focuses on what we are doing about it.

As I look across this year's work, one thing stands out: many of our most important advances began with people who know their places best. Fishers, First Nations and local communities helped to shape how waters are protected and managed. Scientists and practitioners turned research and observation into practical tools. Their leadership runs through this report.

Together, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and our partners helped:

- Support the designation of more than 1.35 million hectares of new marine protection in Indonesia's Banda Sea and Canada's Great Bear Sea.
- Launch Gabon Infini, which aims to mobilize up to USD 200 million and strengthen protection and management across more than 6 million hectares of ocean.
- Release USD 500,000 for rapid reef assessment and repair through the first payouts from TNC's coral reef insurance policy in Hawai'i.
- Advance the Belize Blue Bonds for Ocean Conservation project through implementation of the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan, supporting improved management of marine protected areas, stronger economic resilience for coastal communities and more sustainable fisheries, including electronic monitoring across the country's high-seas industrial fleet.
- Launch the Our Reefs, Our Future campaign and welcome new governments to the High-Level Climate-Resilient Coral Reefs Commitment, bringing the coalition to 24 signatories committed to protecting and effectively managing reefs most likely to survive and recover from climate change.
- Invest USD 1.82 million through Blue Carbon+ to support 11 partners across eight countries developing business models for coastal ecosystems and local livelihoods.

The threats are real, but our work shows a path forward. Our responsibility extends beyond protecting the ocean today. It means honoring those who have cared for it for generations and ensuring those yet to come inherit a thriving, abundant and wild ocean.

Meeting that responsibility will take all of us.

Thank you for helping make it possible.

With gratitude,

Elizabeth McLeod

Dr. Lizzie McLeod
Global Ocean Director

Our goals *for* 2030

TNC has been partnering with communities to create a world where people and nature thrive since 1951. Today, we're facing the most complex challenges of our lives, and we have years, not decades, to address the interconnected climate and biodiversity crises. Together, we find a way to overcome barriers to progress, so we can achieve our biggest, most ambitious goals yet.

4B

Conserve 4 billion hectares of ocean—10% of the ocean; the size of Canada, China, the US and Brazil combined.

650M

Conserve 650 million hectares of lands, such as forests and grasslands—an area twice the size of India.

1M + 30M

Conserve 1 million kilometers of river systems and 30 million hectares of lakes and wetlands—enough river length alone to stretch across the globe 25 times.

100M

Help 100 million people at severe risk of climate-related emergencies such as floods, fires and drought.

3B

Avoid or sequester 3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions (CO_2e) annually—the same as taking 650 million cars off the road every year.

45M

Support the leadership of 45 million people from local and Indigenous communities whose well-being and livelihoods depend on healthy ocean, freshwater and lands.

How we will achieve our ocean goal

30%

Support durable marine protected areas and effective management to help protect 30% of the world's ocean.

17M

Restore and manage 17 million hectares of mangroves, tidal marshes and seagrasses, storing 142 million tons of CO_2.

30 + 200

Improve fisheries management for at least 30 countries and 200 species.

3.2B

Support the design and operation of at least **20 durable electronic monitoring programs** covering 3.2 billion hectares of ocean.

400M

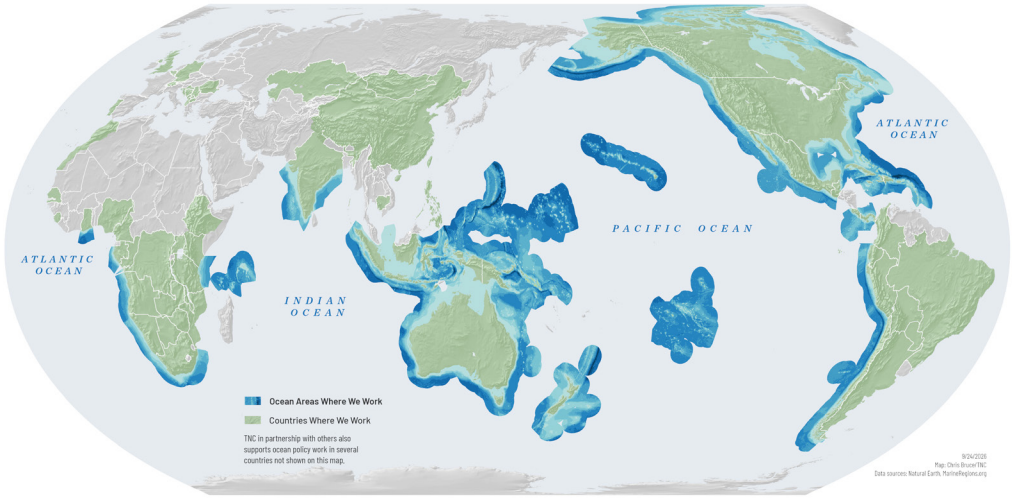
Improve aquaculture management across 400 million hectares.

100M

Help protect 100 million people at severe risk from climate-related emergencies.

Places where TNC's work touches down

For over 50 years of ocean conservation work, TNC has collaborated with local and Indigenous leaders, governments and businesses to conserve **over 960 million hectares of ocean**.



Stories *we celebrate*



4 In Indonesia's Banda Sea, local knowledge shapes a 684,000-hectare marine protected area

6 Financing long-term protection in the Great Bear Sea and Gabon



12 How 25 years at Palmyra are shaping conservation across the Pacific





15 Solving the mystery of the vanishing sunflower sea star could help restore California's kelp forests

17 First U.S. reef insurance policy delivers USD 500,000 for recovery

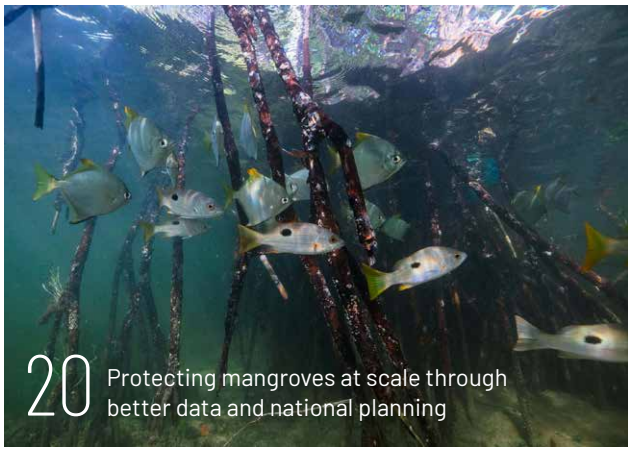


18 Belize Blue Bonds project supports action in coastal communities and at sea





11 Sea cucumber farming supports seagrass restoration from Vanuatu to Zanzibar



20 Protecting mangroves at scale through better data and national planning

14 Scaling aquaculture to meet growing food demand with less impact on nature



9 AI at sea speeds up fisheries monitoring from months to hours





21 Shellfish reef restoration gains momentum along Australia's southern coast



In Indonesia's Banda Sea, local knowledge shapes a 684,000-hectare marine protected area

In the heart of Indonesia's Banda Sea, the small islands of Teon, Nila and Serua (TNS) rise sharply from the water. Towering volcanic peaks dominate the landscape, while coral reefs and coastal waters sustain communities on these remote islands.

In September 2026, Indonesia formally designated nearly 684,000 hectares of waters surrounding these islands as a marine protected area (MPA). Roughly 10 times the size of Singapore, the MPA protects an extraordinary seascape and moves Indonesia closer to its goal of protecting 30% of its marine area by 2045. Its scale is significant, but so is the knowledge that shaped its design. ▶

For generations, local communities have governed marine resources through "sasi," which regulates when, where and how particular resources may be harvested. Decisions about "buka" (openings) and "tutup" (closures) draw on long observation of ocean conditions and species reproductive cycles and recovery, as well as knowledge of spawning grounds and seasonal gathering sites. Built through continuous observation, this knowledge can reveal patterns that periodic scientific surveys may miss.

Since 2024, Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara (YKAN), TNC's partner in Indonesia, has worked with the Maluku Provincial Government, Pattimura University and local leaders and communities to design the TNS MPA. Together, they assessed reef health, governance systems and community needs to inform its design.

Through public consultations, local communities identified three priorities: continued access to the resources that sustain them, a meaningful role in setting zones and rules and tangible benefits in the short term, not only years in the future. Rather than replacing sasi, the new MPA incorporates it into its design. Following consultations, approximately 688 hectares were allocated as a sasi zone, allowing the protected area to build on a system communities already trust. Community members will continue to play a central role in managing the area, from joining patrol groups and monitoring habitats to improving catch reporting and helping oversee sasi zones.







Previous page: Underwater in the area of the Maluku Islands, Triton Bay, West Papua, Indonesia © Jeff Yonover.
This page from top l-r: The YKAN team and fishers from Mesa Village are mapping fishing grounds and assessing water conditions around Teon Island, Central Maluku Regency, Maluku © Adia Puja/YKAN; aerial view of Mesa Village, Teon Island, Central Maluku Regency, Maluku Province, where coastal communities depend on marine resources for their livelihoods © Adia Puja/YKAN; fish caught by local fishers on Serua Island, Central Maluku © IGN Paul/YKAN; aerial image of Laughing Bird Caye, Belize © Steve Schill/TNC.

> "This is not about taking away what belongs to the community. It is about how the sea is protected, organized and managed.
>
> Henni Sainlya, a priestess at Rumdai Church on Nila Island

TNC and Tiffany & Co. reach USD 2.5 million milestone to protect our ocean

Two years after its launch, Tiffany & Co.'s *Love For Our Oceans* initiative has generated more than USD 2.5 million in support of TNC's global ocean conservation work. Across places such as Indonesia, Micronesia and Belize, that support is helping protect and restore coral reefs, coastal waters and marine habitats that people and wildlife rely on every day. Through December 2028, Tiffany & Co. will contribute USD 150 from each limited-edition T Smile by Tiffany cord bracelet sold to further this work. Together, we are helping build a future where ocean ecosystems are more resilient, coastal communities are better protected and the beauty of the ocean can thrive for generations to come.





Financing long-term protection in the Great Bear Sea and Gabon

From Canada's Great Bear Sea to Gabon's Atlantic coast, lasting ocean protection depends on strong local leadership and sustained funding. This includes long-term support for management, monitoring and enforcement, as well as sustainable livelihoods in coastal communities. Enduring Earth's Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiatives bring governments, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and funders together around a shared conservation and community development plan, backed by financing for long-term implementation.

Recent milestones show how this model can advance large-scale ocean protection while reflecting local priorities and stewardship. ▶

Great Bear Sea, Canada

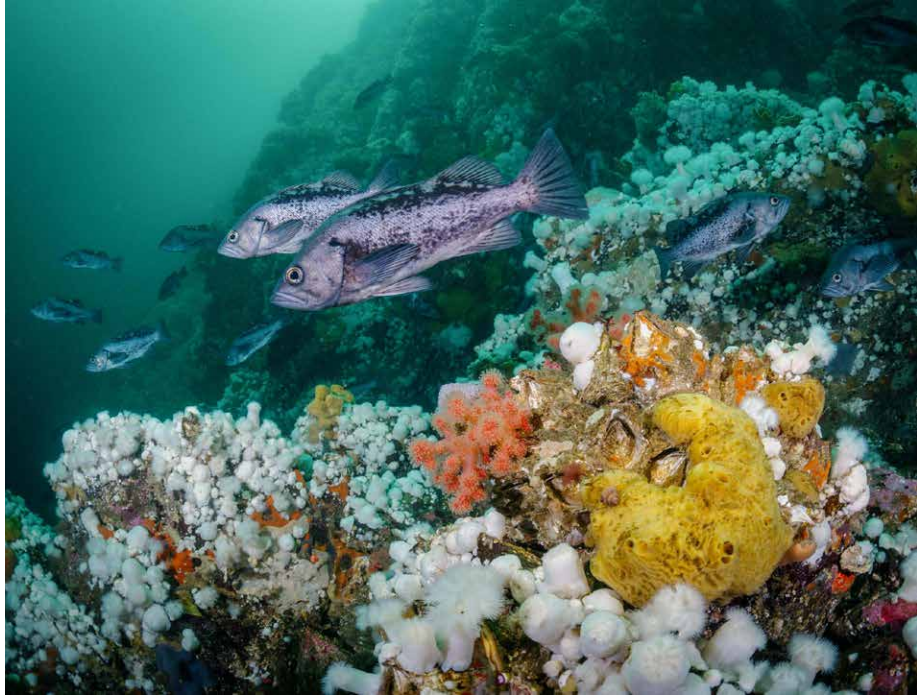
New agreement advances First Nations-led marine protection

Along the Great Bear Sea in British Columbia, vibrant estuaries, kelp forests, fjords and coral and sponge reefs support salmon, herring, whales and coastal communities. For First Nations that have stewarded these waters for millennia, ocean health is closely tied to culture, food security and sustainable economies.

Launched in 2024, the First Nations-led Great Bear Sea PFP secured CAD 335 million in new investment to establish and manage Canada's first MPA Network, support marine stewardship and Indigenous Guardian programs and grow community-led economic development. Over 20 years, it is projected to create more than 3,000 jobs and 200 businesses across the region.

In May 2026, six coastal First Nations joined Canada and British Columbia in establishing Mia-yaltwa Ha'lidzogm hoon, a protected area spanning approximately 670,000 hectares. The Nations also declared the same waters an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area, recognizing their leadership in its long-term stewardship.







Previous page: Green anemones (*Anthopleura xanthogrammica*) in reef shallows at God's Pocket Marine Provincial Park, off of Hurst Island near Canada's Vancouver Island. **This page from top l–r:** A totem pole representing a Nuxalk transformer hero who brought the sputc (eulachon) to the Nuxalk, on the banks of the Bella Coola River, BC; a school of black rockfish (*Sebastes melanops*) along the colorful reef at God's Pocket Marine Provincial Park; a Nuxalk Guardian Watchman who works to help monitor and manage the waters around Bella Coola, BC. All photos © Kiliii Yuyan.





Gabon, Africa

New PFP aims to mobilize up to USD 200 million for transformative community and conservation outcomes

Along Gabon's Atlantic coast, juvenile fish shelter among mangrove roots and thousands of sea turtles come ashore to nest. Gabon supports the world's largest nesting population of leatherback turtles, accounting for as much as 30% of the species' global population. Its beaches also host one of the Atlantic's largest olive ridley sea turtle rookeries. Farther offshore, humpback whales pass through Gabon's waters each year on their way to breeding and calving grounds.

Gabon is now pairing plans to expand and strengthen ocean protection with the long-term financing needed to carry them out. In August 2026, the Government of Gabon, TNC, Enduring Earth and partners formally launched Gabon Infini. The PFP aims to mobilize up to USD 200 million from multiple funding sources for community and conservation investments on land and water during the next decade.

The PFP includes plans to protect an additional 677,000 hectares of ocean and improve management across 5.4 million hectares already protected, advancing Gabon's commitment to protect 30% of its land, freshwater and ocean by 2030.

This latest effort builds on Gabon's 2023 Nature Bonds project, expected to generate USD 163 million for ocean conservation over 15 years.



Clockwise from top left: Marthe Mapangou, Deputy ES ANPN on a nature walk with her children © Roshni Lodhia; mangroves in the coastal lagoon of Loango National Park © Roshni Lodhia; a group of olive ridley sea turtles © Jeffrey Munoz/TNC Photo Contest 2019.

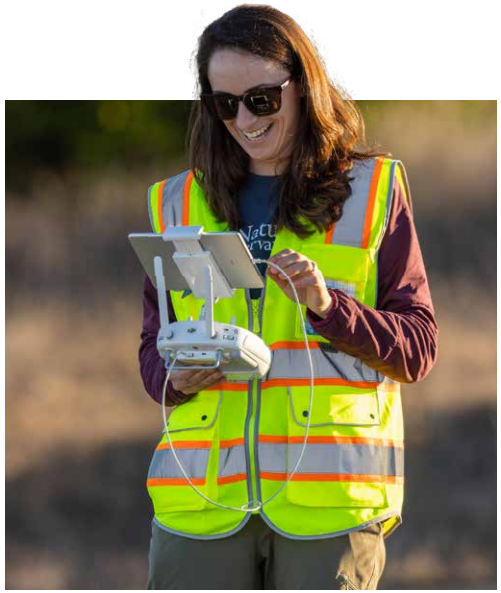
AI at sea speeds up fisheries monitoring from months to hours

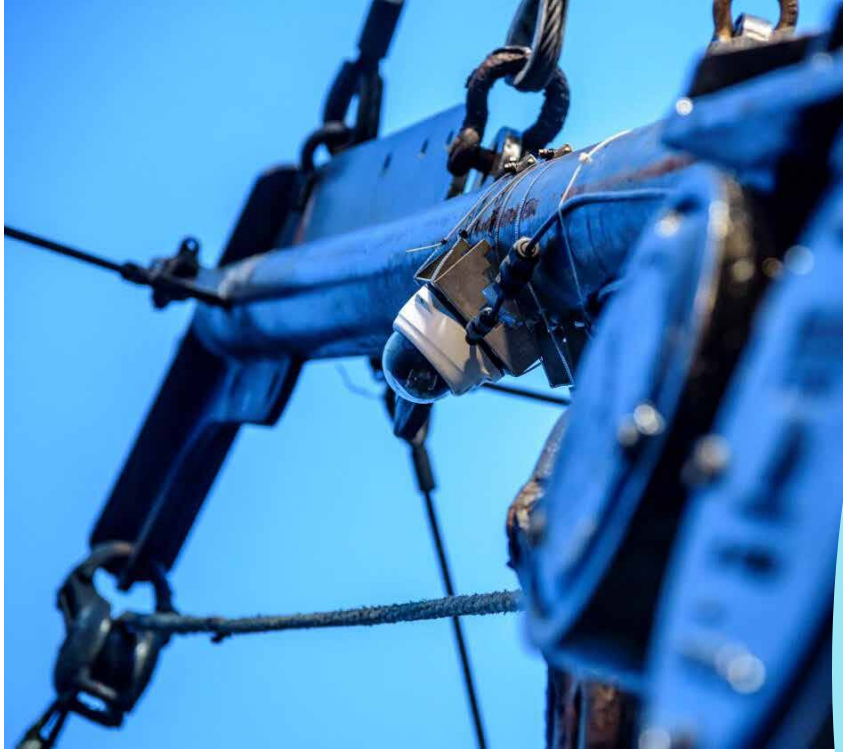


Fishing vessels with electronic monitoring can generate hundreds of hours of video footage on a single trip. Reviewing it can take months. By the time managers receive verified information, the seafood may already have entered the supply chain, leaving little opportunity to address problems or enforce regulations.

Vienna Saccomanno, a senior scientist with TNC's Large-Scale Fisheries Program, is leading an initiative to close that gap with artificial intelligence. With billions of people relying on seafood and more than one-third of assessed marine fish stocks overfished, faster access to reliable data could help improve fisheries management. "I'm a mother, and I want my son and his generation to live in a world with abundant and sustainable seafood for all," she says.

Saccomanno led TNC's effort to accelerate fisheries monitoring with AI. Working with Tryolabs, TNC developed a system that analyzes video using computer vision models on a small computer aboard each vessel. Known as edge computing, the approach processes data where it is collected, allowing it to work even when internet access is limited. ▶





Instead of routinely transmitting large video files by satellite or relying on remote data centers for cloud-based AI processing, vessels can send AI predictions (or "insights") on fishing activity and associated video clips for rapid verification by managers. This delivers information faster while reducing the amount of data transmitted and processed, which can lower energy use and the system's carbon footprint.

Tested aboard a longline fishing vessel in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, the AI-powered system analyzed electronic monitoring footage at sea and delivered catch reports to shore within hours. During the pilot, retained fish counts were within 6% of expert reviewer assessments, and the system detected some catch events that had been missed in the original ground-truth dataset. While rare species and released fish remained more challenging to identify, the system was intentionally designed with a human reviewer in the loop to rapidly verify AI predictions, combining machine efficiency with expert oversight to ensure accurate and trusted reporting. Receiving reports within hours rather than months could allow managers to identify potentially harmful practices while vessels are still at sea and target inspections where they are needed most. Verified records can also help enforce fishing limits and reduce harm to sharks, sea turtles, seabirds and other vulnerable species.

Making the system publicly available is a key part of the strategy. In 2026, TNC and Tryolabs released the complete system as open-source software so fisheries managers and technology providers can adapt it rather than build their own. In collaboration with The Patrick J. McGovern Foundation and the Bezos Earth Fund, TNC is scaling the technology across the Western and Central Pacific, bringing the technology to the heart of the world's industrial tuna fishery and preparing it for wider use.

Previous page l–r: Luen Thai fishing vessel at sea in Palau © Jonne Roriz; tuna identification using Edge AI technology © TNC.
This page l–r: Vienna Saccomanno pilots a drone during fieldwork © Ralph Pace; onboard cameras, GPS and sensors help verify fishing activity and support more sustainable fisheries © David Hills Photography; a school of skipjack tuna © David Itano.

African nations announce major electronic monitoring and tuna transparency commitments

In June 2026, five African nations took major steps toward more transparent and accountable fisheries management. Kenya, Seychelles and Gabon announced time-bound commitments to achieve 100% electronic monitoring (EM) coverage in their fisheries, while South Africa and Tanzania committed to expanding their EM programs. Using onboard cameras, GPS and sensors, EM helps improve data collection, strengthen oversight and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Together, these commitments demonstrate growing African leadership in modernizing fisheries management and advancing sustainable ocean stewardship across the region.

Sea cucumber farming supports seagrass restoration from Vanuatu to Zanzibar

On a quiet beach in Vanuatu, farmers, conservation practitioners and entrepreneurs from three regions gathered around one unlikely shared interest: the sea cucumber.

As they feed along the seafloor, sea cucumbers recycle nutrients and improve sediment health. Their presence helps seagrass regenerate about 33% faster, and in return, the animals grow larger in healthy seagrass beds. It is a mutually beneficial relationship with the potential to support coastal protection, biodiversity, carbon storage and local livelihoods.

The Blue Carbon+ program brought partners together to share what they are learning about responsible sea cucumber production. In Vanuatu, Aore Aquaculture has developed a cost-effective hatchery and works with local communities to sustainably grow and harvest mature sea cucumbers in a seagrass-positive way. Founder Derek French puts the goal simply: "Fatter, happier sea cucumbers."

In Zanzibar, Asili Company is building regenerative, community co-owned ranching. In Western Australia, Tidal Moon is exploring how sea cucumbers can restore damaged seagrass in Shark Bay.

The exchange is part of a larger effort to develop business models that can attract private investment for conservation. To date, BC+ has invested USD 1.82 million in 11 partners across eight countries, prioritizing business models for saltwater agriculture, seagrass-positive sea cucumber production, mangrove-integrated mud crab and mangrove-positive shrimp.



L-r: Sandfish (sea cucumbers) are typically harvested by women. Here, four women from Pere gather sandfish from the seagrass meadows; detail of measuring tape stretched through seagrass in a protected area. Both images © Justine E. Hausheer/TNC.



How 25 years at Palmyra are shaping conservation across the Pacific

Palmyra Atoll lies 1,000 miles south of Hawai'i. Its 15,000 acres of coral reefs teem with sharks, giant clams and schools of fish. Few people will ever set foot there. Yet more than 25 years of research and conservation at Palmyra are benefiting islands and reefs far beyond its shores.

Since TNC purchased Palmyra in 2000, the atoll has become a living model for understanding how islands, atolls and reefs can recover from the impacts of climate change. TNC, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and research partners use its protected lands and waters to investigate island restoration, coral resilience, seabird recovery, fisheries management and marine protection. More than 250 scientific studies have emerged from this work. ▶

Scientists developed the world's first coral reef digital twin (a digital replica of the reef) at Palmyra, allowing managers to test how reefs may respond to warmer waters and shifting currents, simulate coral spawning and weigh potential management actions before taking them. The tools, partnerships and innovations pioneered at Palmyra are now helping scientists and reef managers in Hawai'i, Belize, Palau and the Marshall Islands make more informed, cost-effective decisions.

Palmyra is also showing how a single intervention can trigger a cascade of conservation gains. Research has shown that seabirds are critical to coral reef health, carrying nutrients from the open ocean to land, where rainfall then washes them into nearby reefs. Building on that finding, TNC and partners began restoring the native forest that seabirds prefer and using decoys and recorded calls to attract species that historically nested at Palmyra. TNC is now sharing methods and lessons learned from this work with partners across the Pacific, including at Tetiaroa Atoll in French Polynesia, to help restore seabird populations and bolster coral reef resilience.

In surrounding waters, TNC partners with the commercial purse seine fishing industry to intercept drifting fish aggregating devices (dFAD) used by industrial tuna fleets before they wash onto and damage coral reefs. Designed to move with ocean currents, these devices can become marine debris when they get stranded on reefs. In 2026, the team intercepted its 100th dFAD, keeping more than 20,000 feet of synthetic debris off Palmyra's reefs. This coral reef conservation initiative has now been applied in the Cook Islands, with plans to expand further across the Pacific.









Our Reefs, Our Future expands support for coral reef protection

Launched in June 2026, Our Reefs, Our Future is a global campaign led by TNC, the Wildlife Conservation Society and the World Wildlife Fund to protect and effectively manage climate-resilient coral reefs. The campaign connects science, policy and international cooperation to protect reefs most likely to survive and recover from climate change. At its heart is the High-Level Climate-Resilient Coral Reefs Commitment, through which governments pledge to prioritize these reefs in national plans, reduce local threats and support community-led stewardship. This year, Kenya, Comoros, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, the United Kingdom, the Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia and Tonga joined the Commitment, bringing the coalition to 24 signatories.



Previous page: Underwater waves on reef at Palmyra © TNC/Kydd Pollock. **This page from top l-r:** Aerial of Palmyra Atoll © Dr. Joe Pollock/TNC; a red-clawed fiddler crab waves his oversized claws (chelipeds) high in the air and taps them on the ground to attract females © Kydd Pollock; a red-footed booby flies over black-tipped reef sharks in Palmyra's western lagoon © Kydd Pollock; a vibrant school of bluestripe snappers cruises over thriving coral reefs at Palmyra Atoll © Dr. Joe Pollock/TNC; fish and coral in the Western Pacific coastal waters surrounding Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia © Emre Turak.



Scaling aquaculture to meet growing food demand with less impact on nature

No human activity has altered our planet more than food production. It drives 80% of habitat loss, uses 70% of our fresh water and generates roughly a third of greenhouse gas emissions. With the global population projected to reach 9.8 billion by 2050, we urgently need to produce more food while restoring nature.

Farmed bivalves, such as clams, oysters, mussels and scallops, and seaweed, are among our best nature-positive options. They require almost no inputs to grow and, when managed well, can improve water quality, bolster biodiversity and strengthen climate resilience. More than a decade ago, TNC launched its Global Aquaculture Program, focused on Restorative Aquaculture. That work built the scientific foundation for regenerative production and established TNC as a global leader in the field.

This approach is being applied in key geographies across the world. Puerto Rico is one of the newest targets, where TNC is helping lay the groundwork for a local oyster aquaculture industry. Since 2024, we have supported infrastructure development for fishing villages in Culebra and Boquerón and a proof-of-concept hatchery in La Parguera, while connecting fishers, government and practitioners from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands with established farms and identifying the policy changes needed for responsible growth.



TNC's strategy has since expanded to fed species like finfish and shrimp, which account for about 75% of global aquaculture output and have historically contributed to habitat degradation, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. It's possible to substantially reduce these impacts, and as production grows to meet rising demand, getting it right matters more than ever.

Through the Smart Siting initiative, we use spatial planning, policy engagement and decision-support tools to guide development toward the right locations, avoiding habitat loss and user conflicts while delivering ecological and social benefits. By 2027, these tools will improve management of more than 50 million hectares of ocean and fresh water. Our Sustainable Supply Chains initiative complements this, working across the value chain through industry collaboration, investment and market incentives to cut emissions and ease pressure on ecosystems.

L–r: TNC partnered with local governments in Kenya to provide training on sustainable and effective seaweed farming practices © Hannah Packman; improving aquafeed sourcing is a more recent priority for the global aquaculture program © Jonathan MacKay.

Solving the mystery of the vanishing sunflower sea star could help restore California's kelp forests

One of the Pacific's most mesmerizing predators, the sunflower sea star, is now nearly extinct in the wild from Baja California to Washington. Among the world's largest sea stars, it suffered from a marine wildlife epidemic called sea star wasting disease, which swept the coast starting in 2013. Without this key predator, purple urchin populations exploded and devoured vast areas of kelp forests, and since 2013, 96% of the kelp along California's North Coast has vanished. Now TNC and partners are working to recover marine ecosystems by bringing these sea stars back and restoring kelp forests.

In 2025, our collective efforts to recover the sunflower sea star reached a major milestone. A TNC-supported study pinpointed the culprit: a strain of the bacterium *Vibrio pectenicida*. This groundbreaking discovery was instrumental in directing our next ▶







steps on the path to species recovery. TNC is now supporting research on probiotics and bacteria-fighting viruses called phages that could kill the pathogen and testing whether some sea stars carry heritable resistance to the disease. With these efforts, scientists could return disease-resistant sea stars to the wild, giving them a real chance to survive and help recover kelp forests.

Sunflower sea star recovery is also part of our transformational approach to marine restoration through the Pacific Coast Ocean Restoration (PCOR) Initiative. Launched in October 2024 with an inaugural USD 18 million investment from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, PCOR unites more than 20 partners to deliver transformative impact for rocky reef ecosystems and coastal communities through the recovery of critical habitats and associated species, starting with white abalone, sunflower sea star and kelp forests, while also piloting an innovative workforce development program. To support sunflower sea star recovery, PCOR is establishing a breeding program by upgrading infrastructure and labor capacity across three California facilities and producing an outplanting assessment to advance species recovery. In the future, our vision is to help return this apex predator back to the wild and ensure it can thrive and help restore balance to kelp forest ecosystems.

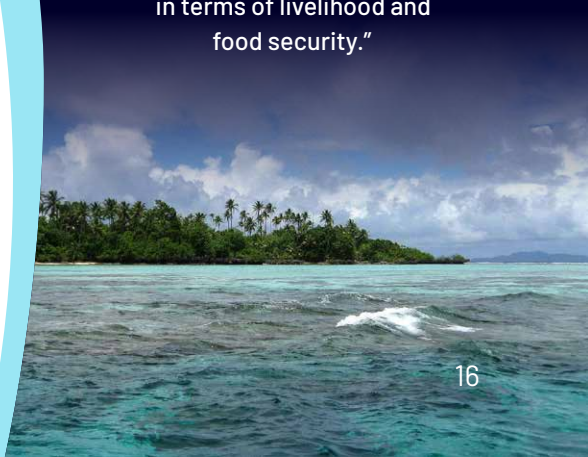
The benefits of PCOR's transformational approach to marine restoration reach beyond nature. A recent study estimated that every USD 1 invested in PCOR generates USD 1.87 in additional economic activity. This demonstrates that restoring nature at scale strengthens the economy, supporting resilient coastal communities, skilled jobs and thriving marine ecosystems for decades to come.

Previous page and this page top right: Sunflower sea stars are being bred in facilities around the world to rebuild populations and do critical research for eventual outplanting back into the ocean, including three PCOR partner facilities in California © Ralph Pace. **This page l–r:** Underwater view off Anacapa Island of a kelp (*Macrocystis*) forest, Channel Islands National Park, California © Ian Shive; research assistant Fiona Curliss cleans and preps fresh tubs for growing sunflower sea stars at different life stages © Morgan Heim; the coast of Manus Island, Papua New Guinea © Louise Goggin.

In Papua New Guinea, new fishing grounds give reefs room to recover

For communities along the south coast of Manus Province, Papua New Guinea, protecting reefs cannot come at the expense of feeding families. Fish aggregating devices (FADs) help make both possible. Anchored in open water beyond the reefs, FADs attract tuna and other fish, giving local fishers an alternative to vulnerable reef fishing grounds. TNC, with support from Agence Française de Développement, has helped install seven FADs across Pere and six other communities. Local committees manage them and enforce rules against spearfishing, netting and harvesting small fish.

"Now, with the FADs, we're relieving pressure on our reefs and fishing areas, and the fish are starting to grow and replenish," says Pere fisherman Samol Polum. "It's improved our lives in the village, in terms of livelihood and food security."



First U.S. reef insurance policy delivers USD 500,000 for recovery

In August 2026, Hurricane Lala became the first storm to trigger TNC's coral reef insurance policy in Hawai'i, releasing a USD 200,000 payout for rapid reef damage assessment and repair. Weeks later, Hurricane Lowell triggered a second payout of USD 300,000.

The policy was the first of its kind in the United States when TNC purchased it in 2022. It is designed to release funding quickly after qualifying hurricanes or severe tropical storms, helping responders assess damage, remove debris and begin repairs within days rather than months.

Before the policy, Hawai'i did not yet have a coordinated statewide system for rapid reef restoration response. TNC helped bring partners together to form what became the Hawai'i Emergency Reef Restoration (HERR) Network. Today, the HERR Network connects practitioners, community organizations, researchers, cultural stewards and government agencies across the main Hawaiian Islands, strengthening how the state prepares for and responds to major disturbances.





From top l–r: TNC Mikayla Barnwell at Makako Bay © Liquid Cosmos Divers; fish swim in Ka'ūpūlehu, Hawai'i Island © Bryce Groark; aerial view of a coral reef that diminishes wave energy, protecting the Waimānalo, O'ahu community © Twain Newhart; branching tube sponges in Parque Nacional del Este, Dominican Republic © Jeff Yonover.

Scaling coral restoration in the Dominican Republic

In 2026, the Dominican Republic launched the expanded Center for Marine Innovation in Punta Cana. The center is one of two advanced coral production and research facilities forming a new Marine Innovation Hub. Led by TNC, Fundación Puntacana and FUNDEMAR, the hub will test and scale tools that can help restore reefs faster and more efficiently, from AI-enabled coral production to disease diagnostics. The work builds on a national coral restoration program now active at 109 sites, creating a model that could advance reef recovery across the Caribbean.





Belize Blue Bonds project supports action in coastal communities and at sea



"A new generation is coming, and we need to have a sustainable fishing ground for our community, this community, to be alive," says Carlos Arevalo, chairman of the Chunox Fishermen Association in northern Belize.

Arevalo has spent his life fishing around Turneffe Atoll. His son, Amisai, has represented the fishers of Chunox in national discussions about the future of Belize's ocean. Their involvement shows how the Belize Blue Bonds for Ocean Conservation project is reaching fishers and coastal communities. ▶







Launched in 2021 with help from TNC and partners, the project enabled Belize to buy back a quarter of its national debt at a 45% discount. The savings were dedicated to marine conservation and are expected to provide approximately USD 180 million over 20 years.

A grant of USD 40,000 from the independent Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future is helping the Chunox association strengthen local leadership, support economic resilience and advocate for effective management of marine protected areas. Members also contributed to the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan, bringing local knowledge into decisions that expanded biodiversity protection zones to 25% of Belize's ocean, with a goal of reaching 30% by November 2026.

In Chunox, progress is also measured by who helps shape decisions. "The voices of the fishers are being heard," Amisai says. "Because of the Blue Bonds agreement, now I see park managers, organizations who come more to the community and involve us in what happens in the management of the ocean."

Farther offshore, the same commitment to transparency extends to industrial fishing, where Belize is advancing its goal of electronic monitoring across all its industrial vessels. As a signatory to the Tuna Transparency Pledge, Belize has partnered with Satlink to deploy cameras, sensors and positioning technology aboard tuna vessels. The systems document fishing activity, identify species, estimate catches and record where fishing occurs—giving Belize's fisheries authorities consistent data to verify compliance and trace seafood through the supply chain. Because Belize's high-seas industrial fleet operates internationally, the systems are being installed across several countries, with regional partners supporting deployment and local training.

Across Belize, funding from the Blue Bonds project has also supported improved management of 14 marine protected areas with stronger monitoring and enforcement, manatee rehabilitation and the outplanting of more than 17,000 coral fragments with the purpose of establishing resilient coral reefs.

Previous page: A mighty tarpon leaps from the water to escape the closing net in Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. It's one of the species that is released back into the water by fishers. **This page from top l–r:** Carlos Arevalo and Amisai Arevalo (pictured in center) and community members; a remora is returned to the sea; colorful boats. All images © Sarah Adhya/TNC. **Right:** TNC is working with fishers in Palau to sustainably manage the Pacific tuna fishery © Jonne Roriz.

Improving fisheries management in a rapidly changing ocean

Warming waters are reshaping where and how fish live and grow. If science and management systems don't adapt, fisheries risk becoming less sustainable, putting marine wildlife, ecosystems and the communities that depend on them at risk.

TNC is uniquely positioned to lead progress toward resilient fisheries and healthy oceans by working across geographic, political and institutional boundaries. In the United States and Canada, we have catalyzed a region-wide adaptive-management approach that integrates environmental information into decision-making and promotes responsive cross-geography coordination. These efforts are driving tangible management changes that strengthen the resilience of key species and ensure fisheries remain sustainable.

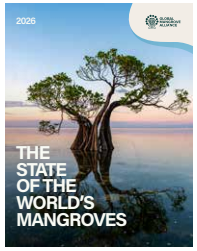






Protecting mangroves at scale through better data and national planning

Along tropical coastlines, the tangled roots of mangrove forests shelter young fish, filter water and protect communities from erosion, flooding and storms. They also store carbon at rates up to four times higher than many land-based forests. Yet pollution, overuse, coastal development and climate change continue to degrade these vital ecosystems.



In September 2026, the *State of the World's Mangroves* report, developed with contributions from more than 100 partners in more than 30 countries, brought together the latest understanding of mangrove conservation and restoration. Through the Global Mangrove Alliance (GMA), TNC and partners are turning this growing body of knowledge into action, backed by new monitoring data.

One of the GMA's core tools, Global Mangrove Watch 4.1, released in July 2026, estimates a net gain of 47,707 hectares in global mangrove cover during the past 40 years. But that global figure masks substantial losses in individual countries, and young mangroves cannot quickly replace the biodiversity and carbon stored in mature forests. The platform helps countries identify and respond to those changes faster with annual maps, monthly loss alerts and customizable monitoring areas.

Kenya shows how better knowledge can drive national action. In June 2026, the government launched a 10-year plan for mangroves, seagrass and other coastal wetlands. Developed with support from the GMA Kenya Chapter, TNC and other partners, the plan aims to restore at least 75% of degraded mangroves, mobilize USD 620 million and create up to 70,000 jobs by 2035.

L-r: A school of Round Moonies swim through *Rhizophora mucronata* mangrove roots, Mida Creek, Watamu, Kenya © Tim Calver; Fatma Athman picks propagules from the mangrove trees at the mangrove restoration site in Pate, Lamu, Kenya © Sarah Waiswa.

Shellfish reef restoration gains momentum along Australia's southern coast

In March 2025, a harmful algal bloom emerged off South Australia. Millions of marine animals died, seafood operations closed and coastal tourism suffered. The damage continues, but the crisis also renewed momentum for long-term recovery.

TNC worked with government, community and industry to support response and recovery. It advised the South Australian Government, provided evidence to state and federal Senate inquiries and met with communities to understand impacts and explain how shellfish reef restoration could contribute to a broader response. ▶



That work helped secure a South Australian Government commitment to partner with TNC to build a 16-hectare shellfish reef in the Gulf of St Vincent off Yorke Peninsula. This formed part of South Australia's Algal Bloom Summer Plan—a joint initiative by state and federal governments to combat the algal bloom crisis, protect marine ecosystems and support affected communities. About AUD 8.5 million has been secured for the reef restoration project, with construction planned from late 2027, subject to approvals.

Shellfish reefs once covered about one-third of Australia's southern coastline. Dredging and overharvesting destroyed more than 90%, leaving oyster larvae with nowhere to settle. The larvae are still there. What is missing is a place to land.

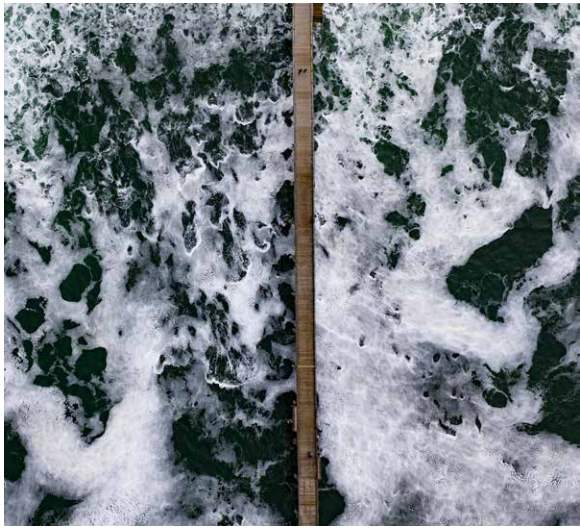
Restoration returns that foundation by placing limestone or recycled shell on the seafloor. Oysters settle and grow, forming living reefs that filter water, cycle nutrients and create nursery habitat for marine life. While shellfish reefs alone cannot prevent harmful algal blooms, they can rebuild biodiversity, improve water clarity and strengthen coastal ecosystems against future disturbances.

During the past decade, Reef Builder and related efforts have restored 63.2 hectares across 30 locations, delivered 23 reefs, seeded more than 30 million native oysters and mussels and created 425 direct jobs. Together, these efforts constitute Australia's largest coordinated marine restoration effort. In 2025, Reef Builder became Australia's first United Nations World Restoration Flagship.

The Yorke Peninsula reef carries this model forward. TNC aims to restore 300 hectares by 2030 and improve management across 1,000 hectares by 2035, turning projects into a national restoration program.









Previous page: A TNC diver monitors a restored shellfish reef in Victoria's Port Phillip Bay. **This page from top l-r:** Construction of a Dromana Shellfish Reef in Port Phillip Bay by TNC and partners; the thick foam of the algal bloom at Port Noarlunga in South Australia; a TNC diver monitors a reef restored by TNC and partners at Glenelg in South Australia; dead fish line the beach at Port Noarlunga in South Australia as the algal bloom rages. All images © Jarrod Boord and Streamline Media.

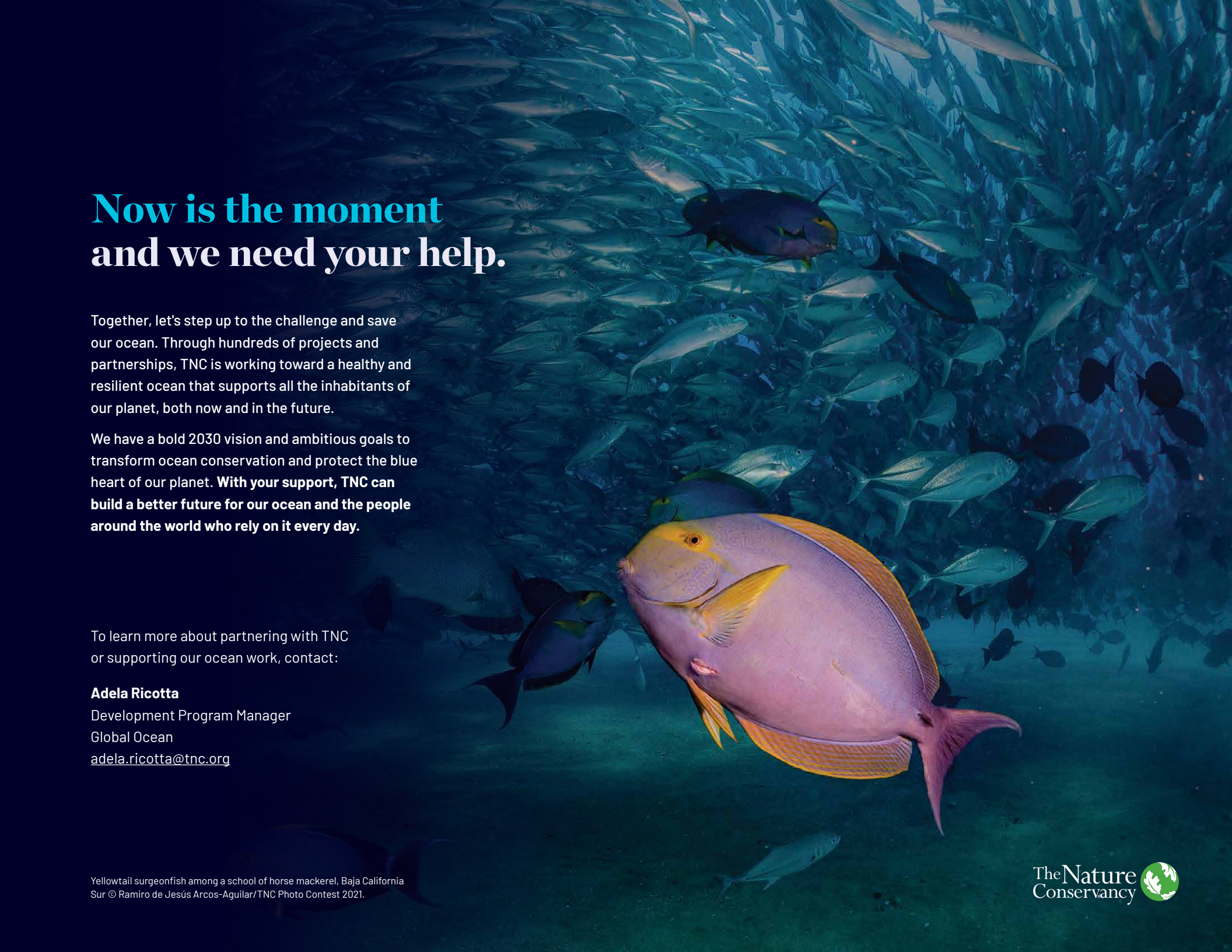
Now is the moment and we need your help.

Together, let's step up to the challenge and save our ocean. Through hundreds of projects and partnerships, TNC is working toward a healthy and resilient ocean that supports all the inhabitants of our planet, both now and in the future.

We have a bold 2030 vision and ambitious goals to transform ocean conservation and protect the blue heart of our planet. **With your support, TNC can build a better future for our ocean and the people around the world who rely on it every day.**

To learn more about partnering with TNC or supporting our ocean work, contact:

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Yellowtail surgeonfish among a school of horse mackerel, Baja California Sur © Ramiro de Jesús Arcos-Aguilar/TNC Photo Contest 2021.

The Nature Conservancy