FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL’S MARINE INITIATIVE

Innovative conservation since 1903

Credit: Juan Pablo Moreiras/FFI

www.fauna-flora.org
Marine ecosystems are among the most productive on earth, contributing to the livelihoods and well-being of millions of people, sustaining local and national economies, and supporting great reservoirs of biodiversity. They also play a critical role in the regulation of Earth’s climate, producing more than half of the oxygen in the atmosphere, and absorbing significant quantities of carbon from it.

Historically we believed that the vast oceans were infinitely able to provide for our needs and accommodate our waste. However, decades of neglect and over-exploitation are pushing marine ecosystems to their limit. Many marine areas and species are affected by several stressors simultaneously, amplifying the impacts.

- Overfishing and destructive fishing methods (such as some forms of bottom trawling, dredging and the use of explosives) physically alter and damage marine habitats, changing community structure and altering interactions between organisms. While some well-assessed fisheries in developed countries are moving toward sustainability, many of the world’s fish stocks have been reduced well below the levels needed to support sustainable fisheries and continue to decline.

- Coastal wetlands have been negatively impacted by land use change and urban development. Rates of mangrove forest loss are three to four times higher than overall global forest loss. Alongside losses, many remaining mangroves have been degraded through over-extraction of timber, overfishing, pollution and solid waste disposal.

- Human activities already threaten the majority of coral reefs in most regions, and the accelerating impacts of global climate stress are compounding these problems.

- Pollution from human activities enters the sea from urban, industrial and agricultural sources, reducing the health and function of marine species and ecosystems and posing a threat to human health via the food chain.

The unprecedented rate of change and the scale of the threats posed necessitate urgent and coordinated action, which builds on positive examples of policy and practice reform underway globally to aid marine ecosystem recovery.
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THE STORY SO FAR

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) was established over a century ago and was the world’s first international conservation organisation. FFI is renowned for innovative, landmark programmes, many of which have come to be regarded as benchmark examples of conservation practice. Today FFI’s work spans the globe, with over 140 projects in more than 40 countries, mostly in the developing world. FFI proudly stands up for biodiversity and aims to show just how relevant it is to everyone.

FFI has been working in marine conservation for more than a decade, and has built a network of strong partnerships around the world. Assessment of the threats and existing marine conservation efforts indicate clear opportunities for FFI to make a positive additional impact, through an increased focus on the marine environment.

Drawing on core strengths held across the organisation including community engagement, participatory governance, livelihood enhancement and diversification, and delivering protected area planning and management on the ground, we are now expanding our efforts to safeguard vulnerable marine ecosystems. Currently FFI mobilises around US$4.5 million a year for marine conservation through a diverse portfolio of projects.

“Decades of neglect and over-exploitation are pushing marine ecosystems to their limit. Many marine areas and species are affected by several stressors simultaneously, amplifying the impacts.”

OUR MISSION:
TO ACT TO CONSERVE THREATENED SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEMS WORLDWIDE, CHOOSING SOLUTIONS THAT ARE SUSTAINABLE, BASED ON SOUND SCIENCE AND TAKE ACCOUNT OF HUMAN NEEDS.

Credit: Phil McIntyre/www.johnmcintyre.com
OUR APPROACH

The following broad set of values guide and enable the delivery of our marine work:

**COLLABORATION:** We work in partnership with others to deliver conservation outcomes. Through lasting local collaborations we ensure that resources and capacity are effectively in place, and that local institutions go from strength to strength.

**LEADERSHIP:** We take time to understand the drivers, threats and needs in the sites where we work. Tackling old challenges with fresh approaches, our innovative solutions are adapted to local contexts to be sustainable and inspiring for others.

**LEARNING:** We keep a critical eye on ourselves, evaluating our impact and sharing lessons across our global network of sites to improve our capacity for marine conservation and the quality of our actions.

**VALUE:** FFI’s lean, entrepreneurial structure and style allow it to engage quickly and effectively on critical environmental issues; getting resources to where they are most needed for on-the-ground impact.

**SOCIAL EQUITY:** FFI’s focus is biodiversity: to secure a healthy future for our planet where people and nature coexist. We believe that conservation projects should not disadvantage those living closest to biodiversity, and (wherever possible) should contribute to improving well-being and social equity.

OUR FOCUS

FFI’s marine work focuses around three strategic objectives:

1. Safeguard species, habitats and livelihoods through effective protection and management of marine ecosystems.
2. Tackle wider-scale threats to species and habitats through improved policy and practice.
3. Support lasting change by strengthening the ability of local stakeholders to protect key marine environments and enhance their operations.

The strategies described within this document, and the particular ways in which FFI will address them, represent choices that we have made about our focus to ensure the greatest impact, and best fit to FFI’s principles and strengths.
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

OBJECTIVE 1:
Safeguard species, habitats and livelihoods through effective protection and management of marine ecosystems.

EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Marine protected areas (MPAs) come in many different forms, ranging from those that seek to increase ecological protection (such as marine reserves where resource extraction is prohibited) to others that aim to improve managed use and incorporate social protection (such as locally-managed marine areas). MPAs are recognised as one of the most pragmatic and effective means for responding to key threats to the marine environment; evidence suggests that appropriately placed and well-managed MPAs can restore the health of marine life inside their boundaries, and bring economic benefits within and beyond those boundaries.

Progress towards global MPA targets has been slow, and there is an urgent need to increase the area of ocean under active protection. In parallel FFI believes that effort must be focused on resolving the known limitations of many existing MPAs in terms of their governance, funding security, community development programmes, infrastructure and maintenance, and communication - in order that these can become effective.

Through a suite of projects at local and sub-national scales FFI will showcase approaches for the effective design and implementation of MPAs; demonstrating how these can be applied both in areas close to population centres where the reliance on marine ecosystem services is high, and in more remote locations of high biodiversity importance.

Our projects pay particular attention to enhancing the role of local stakeholders in the governance of MPAs, crafting solutions that respect their rights and take account of interests, and that increase opportunities for their equitable participation in decision-making, and sharing of benefits that might accrue from MPAs.

Our priority actions:

• Support the development of locally appropriate and accountable governance of MPAs, establishing clear rights, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, and building capacity to deliver against these.
• Facilitate agreement of management objectives and regulations for MPAs and design responsive strategies to deliver on these.
• Establish capacity for improved surveillance and enforcement of MPA regulations in domestic waters, and incentivise compliance, including testing new approaches to conflict management.
• Establish monitoring and evaluation procedures to document and quantify impacts of MPAs for people and ecosystems (positive and negative) to inform future decision-making.
• Support livelihood enhancement and diversification and broaden local economic opportunities for coastal communities impacted by MPAs.
• Develop innovative strategies and new private-public partnerships to mobilise finance for the long-term implementation of MPAs and other management measures.
SUSTAINABLE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

Small-scale fisheries are an important but under-rated source of employment, food security and income, particularly in developing countries and rural areas. Nearly 90% of the world’s full-time or part-time fishers (around 120 million) are estimated to derive their livelihood from the small-scale sector. This figure is likely to be far higher when considering the often informal roles played by women and youth in fisheries. If not well managed, small-scale fisheries can contribute significantly to the declining health of marine ecosystems through overfishing and habitat damage. However innovative reform within this sector also presents opportunities for improvements in both fishery yield and conservation.

FFI believes that managing the negative impacts of small-scale fisheries is critical to both the health of marine ecosystems and the well-being of the people who depend on them, and that the key to success lies in crafting locally-appropriate solutions that foster improved stewardship by local stakeholders. FFI recognises that fishing is an integral part of the identity of many coastal communities, and we are committed to working equitably with women, men and youth involved in the fisheries sector.

Our priority actions:

• Demonstrate effective co-management approaches for sustainable small-scale fisheries, ensuring the full and active participation of indigenous people and local communities.

• Reinvigorate (where possible) traditional or local-cultural means for sustainable small-scale fisheries involving local governance and co-management.

• Integrate traditional and scientific knowledge to characterise local resource use, and involve local stakeholders in data gathering and analysis to inform decision making and the development of responsive management practices.

• Explore opportunities to incentivise sustainable fishing practices through customary law, area or catch allocations, and rights-based approaches that ease conflicts between industrial and small-scale fishers, including documenting how these different options can achieve biological, economic and social goals.

• Ensure that fishing pressure is reduced within our priority areas to sustainable levels, promoting (where appropriate) the implementation of strictly protected no-fishing-zones to restore critical habitats and spawning aggregations.

• Enhance capacity to enforce local fisheries management plans that reduce overexploitation, eliminate destructive methods, reduce by-catch and respond to illegal fishing threats.

SPECIES CONSERVATION

The oceans are known to support an incredible variety of life. More than 250,000 marine species were recorded as part of the global Census of Marine Life in 2010, with many more as yet undiscovered. Marine species provide important ecosystem goods and services to human societies (such as food, medicine). However, the extinction threat to marine species is rapidly increasing – particularly in areas with high population density (such as the Mediterranean, Caribbean) – and there is an urgent need to safeguard species before they are lost forever. As such, FFI maintains a focus on species conservation as a fundamental component of our integrated marine activities.

We carry out monitoring to find out how the species is faring, work with local communities to increase our mutual understanding of the different values (both economic and socio-cultural) that people attribute to the species locally and globally, and work with multiple stakeholders to raise awareness of, and motivation for, actions that contribute to its conservation. Often most importantly, we secure the species’ habitat, without which it cannot survive. Our teams don’t just work to protect charismatic species – we also raise the profile and knowledge of overlooked species.

FFI has an ambitious plan to boost marine species conservation and help reduce the dramatic decline of marine species. We will:

• Undertake research to increase knowledge of the distribution, status and life cycle patterns of threatened target species.

• Increase awareness and encourage wider local participation in and concern for species conservation.

• Reduce pressures exerted by direct fishery activity and incidental by-catch through improved fishing techniques, incentives for compliance, and law enforcement.

• Identify and safeguard critical habitats through improved coastal zone management and the establishment of protected areas.

• Help coastal communities to access the technical skills, inputs and other support they need to pursue livelihood strategies that reduce dependency on unsustainable and uneconomic practices that impact target species.

• Establish appropriate governance, enforcement, and monitoring approaches to reduce the illegal trade of threatened species.
OBJECTIVE 2:
Tackle wider-scale threats to species and habitats through improved policy and practice.

ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICE

Individual MPAs are vital, but alone they are not sufficient in either scale or effectiveness to achieve sustainable management of the oceans. New efforts are needed to manage the remaining 90% of ocean space not reflected in global MPA targets. There is a need for holistic and integrated approaches that address the connected nature of ecosystems and the cumulative impacts of human uses. The trend on land is towards broader partnerships between governments, businesses and interest groups – in particular harnessing the power of the private sector to act in innovative ways as stewards of the environment. As yet, there are few such examples for the seas.

Fisheries, aquaculture, cruise tourism, coastal development, agriculture and various industries using plastics all have serious impacts in coastal and marine areas where FFI is working to conserve biodiversity. In view of the growing evidence that sustainability makes good sense both for businesses and the environment, FFI will seek to work with forward thinking companies that are incorporating sustainability initiatives into the core of their operations; demonstrating the business case for good practice and new opportunities for sustainability. FFI’s efforts will build on more than 15 years’ experience in engaging corporate and business leaders.

Our priority actions:
- Develop and implement methodologies to assess and address the impacts of oil and gas sector operations on the marine environment and to improve marine stewardship by this sector.
- Examine and develop strategies to help businesses minimise their plastic pollution footprint on marine ecosystems.
- Pilot and test innovative approaches to reconfigure markets into a positive force for marine fisheries reform.

ADVOCATING FOR IMPROVED POLICY AND PRACTICE

Effective marine conservation depends on coherent and cohesive policy; however, such policy frameworks are often under-developed and fragmented. This influences the success of marine conservation initiatives (both domestically and beyond exclusive economic zones) and there is a clear need to promote the integration of sustainable management of the marine environment in all areas of decision making and in all economic sectors.

FFI will engage with key stakeholders in national government to raise the profile of critical marine conservation issues on the political agenda, and will collaborate with other organisations to bring about change and strengthen the ability of local NGOs and communities to advocate for improved marine policies. We will also support the work of other organisations at the forefront of marine issues, by lending our voice on marine policy issues.

Our priority actions:
- Support key research, partner empowerment, advocacy and outreach to reduce damaging bottom trawling fishing practices – in particular where these pose a threat to the viability of our site based interventions.
- Develop and articulate strong economic arguments for the protection of marine biodiversity, and promote these in discussions with decision makers.
- Encourage key sectors to integrate coastal land use, watershed planning and marine and coastal area management.
- Support national governments, institutions and agencies to strengthen fisheries policy, governance and regulatory mechanisms, and to apply ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management.
- Promote the protection of coastal blue carbon sinks, and raise awareness of the role of these habitats in mitigating further climate change.
OBJECTIVE 3:
Support lasting change by strengthening the ability of local stakeholders to protect key marine environments and enhance their operations.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL PARTNERS

Many of the highest biodiversity marine areas lie within developing countries that have limited technical, human and financial resources to contribute to their effective management. Despite this, the most effective and long-term solutions to safeguard species and habitats lie in local hands; strong and effective national and international institutions are the key to successful conservation.

FFI is committed to working with organisations that could have the greatest impact on marine conservation, and helping them to reach their full potential. We will support a diverse range of partners (government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and community based organisations) to access the technical and financial resources they need to take ownership of conservation action. This is a central tenet of FFI’s approach and forms a critical part of our marine work.

On the basis of needs assessments, we will offer targeted training and mentoring for our local partners in response to institutional (e.g. business planning, fundraising and HR) and technical needs (e.g. marine management strategies).

Our priority actions:

• Identify national gaps in the organisational framework for marine conservation, and support the establishment of new institutions (e.g. community based or locally-led institutions) to fill these.
• Establish and support alliances and partnerships for coordinated marine conservation action, and improve the capacity of these groups to predict and respond to external change.
• Facilitate direct investment in marine resource management institutions and MPA authorities.
THE TEAM

Our marine work is carried out by an experienced and dedicated team, working with a network of over 50 local partners through our regional programmes in Eurasia, Africa, Asia-Pacific and the Americas & Caribbean.

We will continue to build our own internal capacity for marine conservation, and encourage wider uptake of good practice as the programme develops, through training, learning from partners and exchange and mentoring across the global network.

This document was developed, agreed and approved through close collaboration between the key marine experts from across all the FFI teams and Senior Management.

“ASSESSMENT OF THE THREATS AND EXISTING MARINE CONSERVATION EFFORTS INDICATE CLEAR OPPORTUNITIES FOR FFI TO MAKE A POSITIVE ADDITIONAL IMPACT, THROUGH AN INCREASED FOCUS ON THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT.”
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Fauna & Flora International
United Kingdom
4th Floor, Jupiter House,
Station Road, Cambridge
CB1 2JD
United Kingdom
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 571000
Fax: +44 (0)1223 461481
Email: info@fauna-flora.org
Web: www.fauna-flora.org
Registered Charity Number 1011102
A Company Limited by Guarantee,
Registered in England Number 2677068

Fauna & Flora International
United States
1720 N Street, NW, Washington DC 20036, USA
Telephone: +1 (202) 375 7787
Email: ffius@fauna-flora.org
Web: www.fauna-flora-us.org
Registered 501 (c) (3) Non-profit organisation
EIN #04-2730954

Fauna & Flora International
Australia
8/201 A'beollow St, Sydney
NSW 2000, Australia
Telephone: +61 3 9416 5220
Email: ffiaustralia@fauna-flora.org
Web: www.fauna-flora.org.au
A public company limited by guarantee,
Registered Charitable Institution
ABN: 75 132 715 783

Fauna & Flora International
Singapore
34 Tanglin Road
Tanglin International Centre
#01-15, Tanglin Block,
Singapore 247672
Telephone: +65 (67) 36208
Email: ffisingapore@fauna-flora.org
Web: www.fauna-flora.org
A Public Company Limited by Guarantee,
& Registered Charity UEN 201133836K