

Ocean meeting raises over \$7 billion for marine protection

October 6 2017, by Raf Casert



This undated file photo provided by NOAA shows a humpback whale entangled in fishing line, ropes, buoys and anchors in the Pacific Ocean off Crescent City, Calif. Rescuers freed the badly tangled humpback whale Tuesday, July 18, 2017, after it had struggled for days against the weight of fishing lines, buoys and anchors dragging it to the ocean floor off California. An environmental group has sued California for allegedly not doing enough to keep Dungeness crab fishery gear from killing protected whales. The Center for Biological Diversity filed its lawsuit Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2017, in federal court in San Francisco. (Bryant Anderson/NOAA Fisheries MMHSRP Permit# 18786-01 via AP,File)

A global conference to better protect marine life has raised more than \$7 billion and won commitments to protect huge swathes of the Earth's oceans.

The European Union, which organized the Our Ocean conference in the Maltese capital of Valletta, its 28 member states and its EIB investment bank gave almost half those financial commitments, about \$3.4 billion.

Representatives from businesses, almost 100 countries and others pushed the total up to the unprecedented level.

The conference focused on funding and leading projects as varied as combating plastics pollution to countering illegal fishing and looking at the effects of climate change.

The Our Ocean [conference](#) has accumulated some 8.7 billion euros (\$10.2 billion) since it started in 2014 but the efforts in 2017 exceeded expectations.

"We are beginning to see leaders in government, civil society and the private sector standing up to be counted to make tangible commitments to conservation, which is most encouraging," said Demetres Karavellas, head of the delegation for the WWF wildlife group.

On top of the financial commitments, nations also promised to add new Marine Protected Areas spanning more than 2.5 million square kilometers, which the EU said translates to over half its territory.



In this Sept. 7, 2012 file photo, the research vessel Ocearch has set her anchor as the crew begins their search for great white sharks on the Atlantic Ocean, spending two to three weeks tagging sharks and collecting blood and tissue samples off the coast of Chatham, Mass. After tagging the sharks real-time satellite tracks the shark each time its dorsal fin breaks the surface, plotting its location on a map. Researchers in Massachusetts say great white sharks in the Atlantic Ocean are venturing offshore farther, with more frequency and at greater depths than previously known. The findings were published Sept. 29, 2017, in the scientific journal *Marine Ecology Progress Series*. (AP Photo/Stephan Savoia, File)

The efforts to better protect [marine life](#) came in in all shapes. Five top global insurance industry companies committed to refuse insurance to vessels internationally blacklisted for illegal or unregulated fishing.

"Today is a major breakthrough, with leading insurers committing to deny a financial lifeline to pirate-fishing vessels," said Lasse Gustavsson, the executive director of Oceana Europe.

The mission to protect marine life is urgent, said the Vatican, pointing to the rapid decay in important sites like the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

"We witness a marvelous marine world being transformed into an underwater cemetery, bereft of color and [life](#)," said Vatican Secretary of State Piero Cardinal Parolin.

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