



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY 2025

Harmony with nature and sustainable development



DEEP-OCEAN STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE

A message from the Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative for International Day for Biodiversity 2025

On this International Day for Biodiversity, we ask you to look deeper to the richness of life in the deep ocean. “True harmony with nature and sustainable development” cannot be achieved without consideration for this environment that provides 96% of all habitable space on Earth and 60% of the surface area of the ocean.

Escalating human activity is causing widespread biodiversity loss, compounded by the impacts of human-induced climate change. This global biodiversity crisis not only affects the ecosystems well-known to us on land and in shallow seas, but also extends into the rarely explored depths of our ocean. It’s estimated that we have discovered less than 15% of all biodiversity in the ocean. Most known marine species reside in shallow waters, yet it is the deep ocean (>200 m) that harbours the greatest diversity of life still to be discovered. We should no longer delay our stewardship of the deep ocean’s biodiversity.

Though vast and remote, the deep ocean is directly connected to the rest of our planet and supports the planet’s health. This hidden realm hosts a remarkable variety of habitats, from abyssal plains to seamounts, trenches to hydrothermal vents, each supporting distinct biological communities. This biodiversity plays a critical role in the global carbon cycle, by fixing, transferring and storing carbon from surface waters and forming the largest carbon reservoir on the planet. To sustain these processes, we must maintain the integrity of the productivity and diversity of life in the deep ocean.

Effective sustainable management of the deep ocean requires a holistic approach that integrates the best available knowledge from a wide range of sources. This includes consideration of “climate-smart” spatial management approaches that account for the 3D nature of our ocean. Capacity sharing is required to address scientific and knowledge inequities to achieve a transformative global impact.

Implementation of the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework cannot succeed without including the deep ocean. We propose that improved deep-ocean literacy can empower stakeholders to make bold decisions that ensure harmony with nature in one of the most important yet underappreciated ecosystems on our planet. We encourage you to include deep-ocean biodiversity in your actions for sustainable development this International Day for Biodiversity.

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