



GLOBAL LEADERS IN BUILDING EFFECTIVE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Effective marine protected areas (MPAs) and sustainable fisheries protect coral reefs, rejuvenate marine wildlife & habitats, provide jobs, and feed millions of people. In the past five years there has been a significant upsurge in support for the creation of new marine protected areas (MPAs), but the reality is that nearly 60% of MPAs around the world lack the necessary resources, training, and enforcement capacity to be successful. MPAs are one of the most important conservation tools we have and MPAs with strong enforcement capacity perform almost 3 times better than those without.

For 20 years, WildAid's Marine Program has helped local government and non-profit partners build successful and sustainable fisheries and marine protected areas (MPAs) through comprehensive marine protection. Instead of simply investing in patrol equipment or the latest tech, our program engages communities and helps authorities build more strategic operations that maximize the use of existing resources. We amplify regional leadership skills and compliance strategies, empowering our in-country partners and governments to create effective Marine Protection Systems (our model for developing a comprehensive compliance system).

In 2018, we launched our BLUEprint for MPA Success (a framework for scaling our model), which helped us to expand our program by 50% with new project sites in Gabon and coastal Ecuador. In 2019, we are launching partnerships in 8+ sites in the Bahamas, Chile, Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Tanzania, to continue our rapid growth trajectory.



The key to our scalability lies in leveraging the power of partnerships with in-country government and non-governmental organizations to create Regional Leadership Hubs. These hubs allow us to manage our

projects remotely, reach numerous project sites concurrently, and create peer support networks that secure the long-term sustainability of our work. In 2019-2020, we aim to conduct two Regional Leadership workshops to launch this initiative. Additionally, we will continue seeking new partnerships to help us maximize our reach.

We believe in the power of regional expansion as the future to scaling WildAid's marine program—leveraging small investments into disproportionately positive impact. Through the efforts described above, and together with our partners and supporters, we are protecting the world's oceans.

THE MARINE PROTECTION SYSTEM MODEL

There are five components necessary for a complete and successful Marine Protection System that will deter illegal activity and encourage compliance. The latest tools and technology are crucial to enforcement, but they must be complemented by compliance and deterrence measures, such as community engagement and transparency, to ensure a successful Marine Protection System. We provide measurable improvement across all five elements until sites can graduate our program as Regional Leaders, independently managing and sustaining their newly improved Marine Protection System.



- **Surveillance and Enforcement.** *Poachers will be found and caught.* Sites need surveillance systems (such as cameras and radar) patrol resources (such as boats) to find and apprehend poachers. We tailor each system design, based on local needs.
- **Policies and Consequences.** *Poaching has consequences.* We work with lawyers, judges and governments to strengthen laws and ensure meaningful penalties for illegal activities, as well as establish transparency measures for sharing management and enforcement information.
- **Training and Mentorship.** *Comprehensive Training is essential.* Staff must understand the system, their responsibilities within it, and how to operate and maintain tools. We provide training, mentorship, and professional development.
- **Community Engagement:** *Poaching hurts the whole community.* We integrate fishers, tourism operators, and local people in the protection of marine resources. We train rangers to educate their communities, design awareness campaigns to foster understanding and buy-in, and support community-based management strategies.
- **Consistent Funding.** *Protection requires consistent funding.* We develop long-term budgets that streamline operating costs, and create new revenue streams to ensure the protection system has long-term funding.

BLUEPRINT FOR MPA SUCCESS: MAKING THE PROMISE OF MPAS REAL

WildAid's 6-step 'Blueprint for MPA Success' will ultimately allow us to scale our work to protect hundreds of project sites to deter illegal fishing, foster compliance, and engage communities in marine protection. The BLUEprint has distinct goals and measurable indicators for improving the Marine Protection System at each step to ensure success before moving onto the next phase of the framework. By the end of the BLUEprint, our sites can act as Regional Leaders, exemplifying successful marine conservation throughout the region.



Before starting a new project, we engage in-country partners and ensure prospective project sites have the basic 'building blocks' necessary to establish a strong protection system. Instead of replacing them, we empower governments and communities to make marine compliance effective and affordable over the long term, tracking all aspects of progress to ensure measurable improvement as sites move onto the next phase of the BLUEprint. Some examples of our work include the following:

- Phase 6: In Galapagos there was once extensive illegal fishing, with an estimated 12,000 sharks being poached annually in 2009, and park rangers did not have the tools, skills or resources to do their job. With the implementation of our program, surveillance systems now monitor 100% of the park, all rangers are fully trained and certified, the community is engaged and active in marine conservation efforts, and successful prosecutions increased 84%. Galapagos now hosts the densest shark population in the world, and although fishing boats surround the Reserve, they fear to enter. The Galapagos National Park is now a Regional Leader, sponsoring training workshops within Ecuador where they provide mentorship to coastal project sites just beginning the BLUEprint, and regional international workshops to share best-practices in compliance and improve information-sharing across borders.
- Phase 4: In four coastal Ecuador MPAs, patrols were previously scarce and rangers lacked the tools and training to enforce their waters. Since we began working there three years ago, law

enforcement patrol hours increased 44%. Isla de la Plata, home to the largest oceanic manta population in the world, is now patrolled 24/7/365, violation rates have plummeted, and species have already begun to recover. Moreover, rangers actively engage in community outreach and are making strides in implementing co-management strategies.

- Phase 6: In the Misool Marine Reserve in Indonesia, our support over the last 10 years helped patrol hours to increase 800% and patrol vessel availability to improve 20%; the frequency of vessel inspections resulting in violations has decreased 50% while marine species biomass in the reserve has nearly tripled over a decade. There are 25x more sharks inside the reserve than in comparable areas outside the reserve. The local communities have also garnered benefits, with income earned by the community increasing 8-fold since 2013. Misool exemplifies the benefits of a complete and self-sustaining Marine Protection System and is now a Regional Leader.

PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION ARE KEY

We are actively expanding our program, working to protect the world's oceans and make the promise of MPAs real with our dedicated partners. Last year, we expanded our work to four new sites in Gabon, as well as growing in coastal Ecuador from five pilot sites to a country-wide project together with Conservation International and GEF. This year, we will further expand our work to project sites in the Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Tanzania, Chile, and Cuba.

Each site we support is part of a Regional Leadership Hub, where we bring together partners from sites that share common marine species, languages, cultures, and management styles. Each hub has its own curriculum, and meets once per year (at a minimum) to address challenges and successes in implementing their Marine Protection System. Regional Leadership Hubs allow us to manage each site remotely to maximize the financial efficiency and scalability of our program - getting us that much closer to fulfilling our goal of reaching 250 MPAs in 5 years. As an example, our trial Regional Leadership Workshop held in 2018 in the Galapagos allowed us to reach 7 countries and 30 MPAs concurrently.

In 2019-20, we will sponsor two Regional Leadership Workshops with our new project sites. These first workshops will unite partners from multiple MPAs with the aim of providing them with the tools, knowledge, and resources needed to implement their compliance and enforcement plans and introducing them to their regional peers as a support network. The events will have a curriculum, structured agenda, specific deliverables, site presentations, and incorporate free time to allow participants to build relationships and trust. We have hosted various peer exchanges over the years, which have fostered long term relationships between ministry level officials, as well as between MPA/ fishery managers and their staff. We anticipate that our Regional Leadership Hubs will produce similar results, leveraging the power of a networked regional approach to unite WildAid's various project sites.

WildAid is working to protect the world's oceans – using a replicable framework to systematically build the capacity of numerous on-the-ground partners cost-effectively and expand our marine program to new sites, allowing more MPAs to fulfill their potential and for ocean wildlife to recover and flourish. Please join us in our ambitious plans.

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