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## **New Free, User-Friendly Platform for Tracking Marine Biodiversity Protection is Now Available Online**

**Open-Source Tool from SkyTruth and Bloomberg Ocean Initiative Aims to Make Global “30x30” Conservation Goal More Accessible, Transparent, and Actionable**

*(April 15, 2024 - Athens, Greece)* - Today at the [Our Ocean Conference](#) a new digital platform was unveiled, making it easier for anyone to track progress on protecting the ocean’s biodiversity.

Built by [SkyTruth](#), a nonprofit conservation technology organization, with support from the [Bloomberg Ocean Initiative](#), the “[30x30 Progress Tracker](#)” is the first free, public, interactive platform designed for the general public to see -- at a glance -- how well the world is doing on enhancing ocean protection globally in line with the goal of protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030 (“30x30”). The platform can be used by civil society campaigns to track country-by-country progress, and by government agencies and policymakers to gain insights on 30x30 and compare countries' progress. The goal is to make information about 30x30 more accessible and transparent to everyone, including those in local communities who are directly impacted by this ambitious conservation effort.

In December 2022, over 190 countries adopted the 30x30 target under the landmark [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), marking the biggest conservation commitment the world has ever seen: to conserve at least 30% of the Earth’s land and water by 2030. But until now it has been very difficult to track the progress or effectiveness of this initiative, especially for non-expert audiences.

“As an organization that specializes in the democratization of data for conservation, we created the 30x30 Progress Tracker to give government agencies, advocacy organizations, and people who are directly impacted by the creation of protected areas an easy way to understand and communicate progress toward 30x30,” said **John Amos, CEO of SkyTruth**. “We aim to offer data as the foundation for broadening public participation and dialog, ensuring bottom-up pressure

on the world's governments to stem the tide of extinction while respecting the rights and knowledge of local communities and Indigenous groups.”

The ocean is at the front line of the climate crisis. It protects the planet from the worst impacts of climate change by absorbing 90% of the excess heat caused by emissions from human activity. But as global heating intensifies, the ocean is changing faster than it ever has, and its ability to regulate global climate and weather patterns is weakening. Wildlife populations have declined by [69%](#) globally in the last 50 years, and [90%](#) of big ocean fish have been lost in the last century. Science is clear that protecting and conserving at least 30% of the planet is critical to safeguarding the vital ecosystems we depend on for our health and livelihoods. Yet [today only](#) 15% of land, 15% of freshwater, and 8% of the ocean are protected.

“Access to free, reliable, and real-time data is critical to ensuring effective marine conservation and fighting climate change,” said **Melissa Wright, who leads the Bloomberg Ocean Initiative at Bloomberg Philanthropies**. “We are proud to support SkyTruth’s 30x30 Progress Tracker. Now governments, civil society, and local communities can drive progress towards the global 30x30 target, expand marine protected areas, and safeguard the health of our ocean.”

The tracker is not a replacement for the bevy of existing 30x30 data providers (e.g., World Database on Protected Areas, Marine Protection Atlas, ProtectedSeas Navigator), but rather an independent aggregator that is partnering with these providers to drive increased attention to the full ecosystem of tools. The Tracker will add more data as it becomes available, including socio-economic information and Indigenous territories. While the marine tracker is available now, SkyTruth plans to launch the terrestrial component at the COP16 United Nations Biodiversity Conference in October 2024.

“In the face of the planet’s alarming biodiversity loss, protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030 is one of the great callings of our times,” said **Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean**. “To succeed in this endeavor, we need the right tools. By bringing multiple sources of data together, the 30x30 Progress Tracker offers a new and powerful platform empowering practitioners and advocacy organizations around the world to identify and map contributions toward 30x30. I trust this democratization of data will not only help communicate conservation efforts but will also bring transparency and accountability to the task at hand.”

Meeting 30x30 requires governments to establish robust Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) or ‘other effective area-based conservation measures’ (OECMs). Last year's adoption of a new [High Seas Treaty](#) provides a mechanism to ensure that protections can also be implemented in the 60% of the ocean that lies beyond national waters.

The new platform not only enables users to see the location of currently protected and conserved areas but also allows them to overlay the location of key habitats and areas recommended by expert analysis as critical places for protecting marine biodiversity.

For example, the Mediterranean Sea, where the Our Ocean Conference is taking place, is a world biodiversity [hotspot](#) and harbors around [11%](#) of all marine species in less than [1%](#) of the global marine area. However, the Sea faces numerous pollution threats and is warming [20%](#)

[faster](#) than the global ocean average due to climate change. The 30x30 Progress Tracker allows users to quickly see both how much of the Sea is reported as protected versus the amount that is independently verified; as well as what key habitats fall within the conserved area to better understand whether the correct areas are being protected, and if there are others that should be considered.

“2030 is around the corner,” said Amos. “We need all hands on deck to make this a success. The time is now.”

#### **Other expert quotes on the 30x30 Progress Tracker:**

**Brian O'Donnell, Director, Campaign for Nature:** “The 30x30 Tracker is a fantastic tool to help governments, advocates, and scientists measure progress towards the essential target of protecting at least 30% of the world’s land and ocean by 2030. It is important to know the current state of progress so that we remain on pace to safeguard biodiversity while we still have the chance. Campaign for Nature looks forward to using it in our future campaigning efforts.”

**Rita El Zaghoul, Director of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People:** “As we work together in the implementation of the protection and conservation of at least 30% of the planet's land and 30% of the ocean by 2030, it is vital to have accessible resources, like the Skytruth 30x30 Progress Tracker, that provide the data to empower communities across the globe to make informed decisions to advance 30x30.”

**Tony Long, CEO, Global Fishing Watch:** “Transparency and technology play a vital role in achieving the ambitious goal of safeguarding 30 percent of the ocean by 2030. With only a handful of years remaining to reach this target, we must accelerate progress--and we must do it together. We have to gain a more comprehensive understanding of what has already been protected and what yet needs to be designated. SkyTruth's 30x30 Progress Tracker will be a valuable complement to our marine manager portal, which provides managers and researchers with open access to scientific data and analytical tools crucial for monitoring and protecting marine ecosystems.”

**Jacqueline Savitz, Chief Policy Officer, Oceana:** “Strong marine protected areas can increase ocean abundance and biodiversity within and well-beyond their boundaries. The 30x30 Progress Tracker will allow governments, journalists, NGOs, and researchers to track the data, monitor progress, and maintain accountability as we strive to truly protect 30% of our ocean ecosystems by 2030.”

#### **About SkyTruth**

SkyTruth is a conservation technology nonprofit that utilizes satellite imagery, machine learning, and big data to make hidden environmental problems visible, measurable, and actionable. SkyTruth envisions a world in which everyone enjoys a healthy environment and sustainable livelihood because transparency is the norm: polluters know they will be seen and caught, industries have cleaned up their practices, and governments are vigorously enforcing environmental protection. Learn more [here](#).

**About Bloomberg Ocean Initiative**

The Bloomberg Ocean Initiative is Bloomberg Philanthropies' effort to protect the world's ocean from climate change, overfishing, and pollution threats. Since 2014, Bloomberg Philanthropies has invested over \$366 million to restore and protect critical ocean ecosystems to support the global goal of protecting 30% of the world's ocean by 2030. The Bloomberg Ocean Initiative supports local and global partners in advocating for data-driven solutions, community involvement, and policy change that can help safeguard marine ecosystems, including coral reefs, and the billions of people who depend on them. To date, these efforts have helped pass over 100 new policies at the local and national level that have strengthened the protection of 10.8 million square miles of ocean – nearly three times the area of the United States. Learn more [here](#).