



**SAY NO  
TO LNG**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 26, 2024

## Oil and Gas Expansion Threatens Ocean Life in One of World's Most Biodiverse Marine Regions, Warns New Report

*Fossil fuel development in the Coral Triangle overlaps with environmentally-sensitive areas, threatening marine biodiversity and human livelihoods*

 *Press Release Available in: Bahasa*

**Cali, Colombia - COP 16 (26 October 2024)** — Oil and gas concessions and production areas in the Coral Triangle region overlap with tens of thousands of kilometers of marine protected areas, which include mangroves, coral reefs, and seagrass habitats, according to [new analysis](#) from Earth Insight, SkyTruth, CEED Philippines, and others, released today. The findings in [Coral Triangle at Risk: Fossil Fuel Threats and Impacts](#) were collected from satellite imagery and data analysis of the region. The report warns that fossil fuel expansion will increase tanker traffic and the risk of oil spills, with dire consequences for local populations and marine life. The Coral Triangle extends over 10 million square kilometers (4 million square miles), spanning seven countries including Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and the Solomon Islands.

**Downloadable images and graphics from the report can be found [here](#).** Watch the live stream or playback of the COP 16 press conference [here](#).

Known as the 'Amazon of the seas', the Coral Triangle is one of the most biodiverse marine regions in the world and the threat from oil and gas expansion is immense. The Coral Triangle contains more than 600 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) – **~16% of which overlap with oil & gas blocks** – a large majority of which are still in the exploration phase.

Additional key findings from this study include:

- 11% of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) and Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMA) in the Coral Triangle is overlapped by oil and gas blocks
- 24% of coral reefs, 22% of seagrass areas, and 37% of mangroves overlap with current or planned oil and gas blocks.
- There are more than 100 known offshore oil and gas blocks that are currently producing in the region covering over 120,000 km<sup>2</sup> of marine area – about 1% of the Coral Triangle.
- There are over 450 known blocks that are being explored for future oil and gas extraction covering an additional 1.6 million km<sup>2</sup>, an area larger than Indonesia.
- There are 80 MPAs in the Coral Triangle that are completely covered by oil & gas blocks - 55 of which are found in Malaysian waters. Additionally, 35 oil slicks appeared within MPA boundaries.
- Since 2020, 793 oil slicks have been visible in the Coral Triangle in satellite imagery - 98% were created by transiting vessels, which release untreated, oily wastewater in a process called bilge dumping, the other 2% can be attributed to oil infrastructure.

Between 2016 and 2022, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and other countries in Southeast Asia invested more than [\\$30 billion](#) in LNG. Methane gas, the main component of LNG, is a potent greenhouse

gas that has a warming potential about [80 times higher than carbon dioxide](#). Methane is known to enter the atmosphere from LNG-fueled ships when unburned fuel leaks from the engine or when [plumes are emitted at port](#) by tankers loading or unloading cargo. With more fossil fuel developments, tanker traffic in the region will also increase, the report warns. This will bring higher risks of oil spills, with dramatic consequences for marine ecosystems and coastal communities, which rely on a healthy ocean for food and income. The west part of the Coral Triangle is already one of the world's busiest marine routes.

The oil slick data was collected and analyzed using [Cerulean](#), a free, publicly available technology that uses AI and satellite imagery to track ocean oil pollution and its potential sources around the world.

**The report makes several recommendations to preserve biodiversity in the region including:**

- A moratorium on oil, gas, mining, and other industrial activities in the environmentally-sensitive areas within the Coral Triangle; leapfrogging the use of LNG as a transition fuel and instead developing renewable energy plans that allow for a true, clean, sustainable energy transition;
- Designating the Coral Triangle as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area, which needs special protection from shipping because of its ecological, socio-economic, and cultural significance and vulnerability to damage and impacts by maritime activities.

## Quotes and Interview Opportunities

**Gerry Arances, Executive Director, Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED) - Philippines**

“Fossil fuel expansion is destroying vibrant marine life and livelihoods in the Coral Triangle. If this is not stopped, a vast amount of environmentally sensitive regions, including 24% of the area's coral reefs, will suffer irrevocable damage. Communities across the Coral Triangle will not allow this to happen, especially when we have an abundant potential of renewables that we can instead tap for energy needs without destroying our coasts and seas.”

**Florencia Librizzi, Program Director, Earth Insight**

“The key message from our report is clear: expanding fossil fuel in the Coral Triangle is a dangerous course of action. Not only does it threaten one of the world's most biodiverse marine ecosystems. It also jeopardizes the future of millions of people who rely on a clean ocean. Safeguarding this vital natural network from the grips of fossil fuel exploitation is the only way of ensuring a livable future for the region”.

**John Amos, CEO, SkyTruth**

“The consequences of increased fossil fuel development in the Coral Triangle include increased vessel traffic and chronic oil pollution, which has devastating impacts on ecosystems and communities. The report profiles how just one shipwreck – in this case the Princess Empress – impacted 20 marine protected areas, decimated local farming and fishing industries and persisted for months on end. We must prevent fossil fuel expansion in these delicate regions and turn our attention toward developing renewable, sustainable energy sources.”

**Elissama Menezes, Global Director, Say No to LNG**

“The billions of dollars invested in Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) projects are expanding LNG import capacity and vessel traffic through some of the world's most critical marine ecosystems. This increased shipping

activity in areas like the Verde Island Passage—one of the most biodiverse regions in the Coral Triangle—threatens to introduce invasive species and exacerbate risks to marine life.

Methane leaks from LNG-fueled ships and their supply chain will push us past climate tipping points. Meanwhile, ship collisions and noise pollution from exploration and drilling will have devastating consequences for marine species that rely on sound for survival. The science is clear, and the choice is ours: protect these ecosystems or push them past the brink.”

## About Earth Insight

Earth Insight is a research and capacity building initiative that is a sponsored project of the Resources Legacy Fund, based in Sacramento, California. Staff and partners span the globe and represent a unique grouping of individuals and organizations with diverse backgrounds in mapping and spatial analysis, communications, and policy. Earth Insight is committed to advancing new tools, awareness, and momentum for protecting critical places and supporting civil society and Indigenous and local communities in this effort. [www.earth-insight.org](http://www.earth-insight.org)

## About Partner Organizations

### CEED

The Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED) is at the forefront of the Philippines' just energy transition, integrating research and advocacy with community engagement. CEED spearheads movements for ecological justice, energy democracy, engaging with civil society groups and communities across the Philippines to foster a sustainable future that prioritizes people and the planet. CEED's leadership in movements such as Protect Verde Island Passage (VIP), Withdraw from Coal, and #WagGas campaign highlights the organization's dedication to promoting sustainable, people-centered development for all. <https://ceedphilippines.com>

### 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 where 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. <https://skytruth.org/>.

### Say No to LNG

Say No to LNG is a global campaign dedicated to exposing the environmental, social, and financial risks associated with LNG as a shipping fuel. We are a coalition of experts and activists working to prevent the adoption of LNG as a marine fuel, which contributes to global warming, financial losses, human rights issues, and public health concerns. Say No to LNG educates key stakeholders and collaborates to ensure sustainable pathways for decarbonization and achieve a zero-emissions shipping future for all. <https://saynotolng.org/>