

UK supports international efforts to protect over 500,000 km of ocean with £2M investment

Today (27 January), Lord Goldsmith announced that the UK will help to protect some of the world's most important and biodiverse marine environments in the Eastern Pacific, including key migratory routes for sea turtles, whales, sharks, and rays.

At COP26 in Glasgow, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, and Panama made headlines with their announcement that the four countries are now working together to expand and connect marine protection covering over 500,000 km² of ocean.

The Eastern Tropical Marine Corridor stretches from the rich breeding and feeding grounds around Malpelo Island, the Cocos Ridge, and the Cordillera de Coiba seamounts, to the Galapagos Islands that inspired Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

The UK will invest an initial £2m of UK Aid through the World Bank's PROBLUE fund, and deploy marine experts to provide technical assistance through our Ocean Country Partnership Programme.

This initiative is supported by the UK's newly established [Blue Planet Fund](#), that will help us do even more to develop sustainable marine economies around the world, protect species found nowhere else on earth, and help coastal communities counter a range of threats – including illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and plastic pollution.

The UK has a wealth of experience to share – from restoring fragile habitats like corals and key carbon-rich ecosystems like mangroves, to deploying the satellite, drone, and acoustic monitoring technologies that can bolster marine protection and support nature's amazing ability to recover.

During his visits to Ecuador and Costa Rica this week, Lord Goldsmith had the opportunity to see some of the work that is already under way in the Eastern Pacific.

In Ecuador, he joined a Galapagos community beach clean and helped launch a refilling station that will help islanders and tourists alike drink more water, for free – and reuse the plastic bottles that are so often used once, before ending up in our rivers and ocean. And in Costa Rica, he saw how coastal communities are using sustainable tourism to support conservation at scale.

Speaking at a meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean in Costa Rica today, he said:

I commend and thank Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, and Panama for

their leadership. This is exactly the sort of ambition and cooperation we need now.

I am delighted that the UK will be supporting this inspiring initiative through our newly established Blue Planet Fund, drawing on decades of experience protecting an area of ocean larger than India around the UK Overseas Territories.

The Eastern Tropical Marine Corridor is set to become the largest transboundary marine protected area in the world, taking us closer to protecting at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030 – a UK-led campaign backed by over 100 countries.

Lord Goldsmith urged leaders from across government, sectors, and society to work together to accelerate the critical transition towards a decarbonised, net-zero, nature-positive global economy – and make sure that everyone benefits from turning things around.