

Manifesto for our Seas

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We call on the next UK Government to urgently invest in the recovery of our ocean and end the discharge of untreated sewage into our seas.

The Marine Conservation Society is the UK's leading marine charity, with the goal to recover the health of our ocean. To do this we are fighting for a cleaner, better protected and healthier ocean for everyone to enjoy. The Marine Conservation Society are calling on all UK political parties to act to address the crisis facing our ocean.

We are in the middle of a nature and climate emergency. The natural world, including our ocean, is the bedrock of our health and our livelihoods. The benefits that we enjoy from our seas - including biodiversity, carbon storage, food, energy and flood defence - have been valued to be [worth at least £211 billion](#).

To keep and increase these benefits and the value of UK seas, the environment and our ocean must be properly protected and allowed to recover and flourish.

Our Manifesto for our Seas sets out an ambitious and bold agenda for ocean protection and recovery, cementing our position as global leaders on the world stage.



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Sustainable ocean investment

- Deliver a sustainable blue economy through dramatically scaling up public investment and setting regulatory frameworks to stimulate private investment.
- Marine planning prioritises the restoration and enhancement of the marine environment for current and future generations.
- Fully account for blue carbon in UK carbon budgeting and include the marine environment in our Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Climate Agreement.



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Marine Protected Areas

- Support and incentivise the fishing industry to significantly reduce fishing damage in marine protected areas that protect the seabed and other vulnerable seabed areas.
- Designate areas of enhanced protection that offer the strictest possible environmental management, prohibiting damaging activities, to cover at least 10% of UK waters.
- Maintain support for the Blue Belt programme by committing at least £50 million from 2026 for the following five years to continue to protect more than 4 million km² of ocean across the UK Overseas Territories.



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Pollution

- End all discharges of untreated sewage into the environment except under true emergency conditions or exceptional rainfall.
- Support a shift to an economy based on reuse that includes introducing a comprehensive Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for all drinks containers, including glass.
- Protect the health of humans, wildlife and the ocean from damage from persistent chemicals, in particular by banning PFAS (forever chemicals) from uses where there are clear alternatives.



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Fisheries

- Achieve sustainable fisheries alongside the restoration of the marine environment and set catch limits within scientifically recommended sustainable levels.
- Increase fisheries management budget to modernise vital infrastructure to support sustainable practices, including the roll out of remote electronic monitoring with cameras onboard all vessels.
- Enable a transition to sustainable and innovative low-carbon commercial fisheries and aquaculture.

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