

Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
Written NGO Statement to the UN Ocean Conference 2022
June 2022

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) greatly appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement to the UN Ocean Conference 2022, and welcomes a broad and collaborative approach to ocean conservation, management and restoration.

This UN Ocean Conference provides the ocean community and the billions of people globally reliant on marine resources with a decisive moment to reflect on progress to date, to review commitments made during the UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow last year and to forge and consolidate cross-sectoral partnerships to better deliver against SDG14. The eight themes of the Conference resonate and align with FFI's marine conservation portfolio, which covers 17 countries globally.

We urge governments to proactively make decisions which collaboratively scale up ocean action based on sound science. FFI is committed to preventing further loss of marine biodiversity, and promoting its recovery, by securing protection of critical marine areas and basing conservation actions on a robust and credible scientific evidence base, while taking into account the traditional knowledge and experience of local people.

FFI recognises that the **30x30 target** in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework would be a step change in tackling major drivers of biodiversity loss. As part of this, **we call for the creation of a global network of effective and representative marine protected areas** that are well enforced and managed, and contribute to climate resilience in vulnerable coastal areas. However, it is essential that a **30x30 commitment is implemented with the free, prior and informed consent, participation and leadership of Indigenous peoples and local communities.**

FFI seeks to reduce **plastic pellet pollution**, the second largest direct source of microplastic marine pollution. The continued pollution of the ocean by plastic pellets is harming marine life and ecosystems, and has severe socio-economic repercussions. Chronic plastic pellet loss is entirely preventable; **governments must not delay in introducing legislation to create a level-playing field by ensuring all pellet-handlers take measures to achieve zero pellet loss.** Likewise, the introduction of better disaster protocols is essential to mitigate acute pellet spillages at sea, like those resulting from the Pearl Xpress shipwreck near Sri Lanka in 2021. **To promote better handling, storage, transportation and stowage of plastic pellets in the maritime stage of the supply chain, we encourage all stakeholders to support the International Maritime Organisation to agree new mandatory measures.**

FFI seeks to empower and build the capacity of local organisations in order to strengthen **local coastal communities and small-scale fishers** in their role as the custodians of biodiversity. **We call on member states to prevent and reduce the prevalence of all destructive fishing in nearshore waters.** FFI is leading a collaborative research project with UNEP-WCMC, Birdlife International and University of Cambridge to better define 'destructive fishing'. This project has engaged 80 expert opinions from 32 countries to identify areas of consensus around the term 'destructive fishing' in order to enhance implementation of SDG 14.4 across member states and the fisheries industry.



FFI is particularly alarmed about the expansion of extractive industries into the deep sea, due to the potential harm to ocean environments and their associated biodiversity, processes and functions. Building on [IUCN resolution 122](#), **all global governments should support a global moratorium on mining in the deep ocean**. To deliver transformative change to reverse biodiversity loss, stronger leadership is required from member states in resisting arguments that the rush to mine seabed minerals is necessary for decarbonisation.

FFI calls for greater investment in **high integrity nature-based solutions** to climate mitigation and adaptation, such as the protection and restoration of blue carbon habitats including mangroves, seagrass and salt marsh. **We encourage member states to incorporate blue carbon systems into their plans to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts, and to reflect this in all nationally determined contributions under the UNFCCC.**

To effect the ocean-reviving changes we urgently need, national governments, private companies, local communities and NGOs must work together, securing partnerships and seeking innovative solutions to the key challenges of destructive fishing, plastic pollution, ineffective marine resource governance and the urgent and critical threat of the prospect of deep-sea mining.

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