

Summer 2025



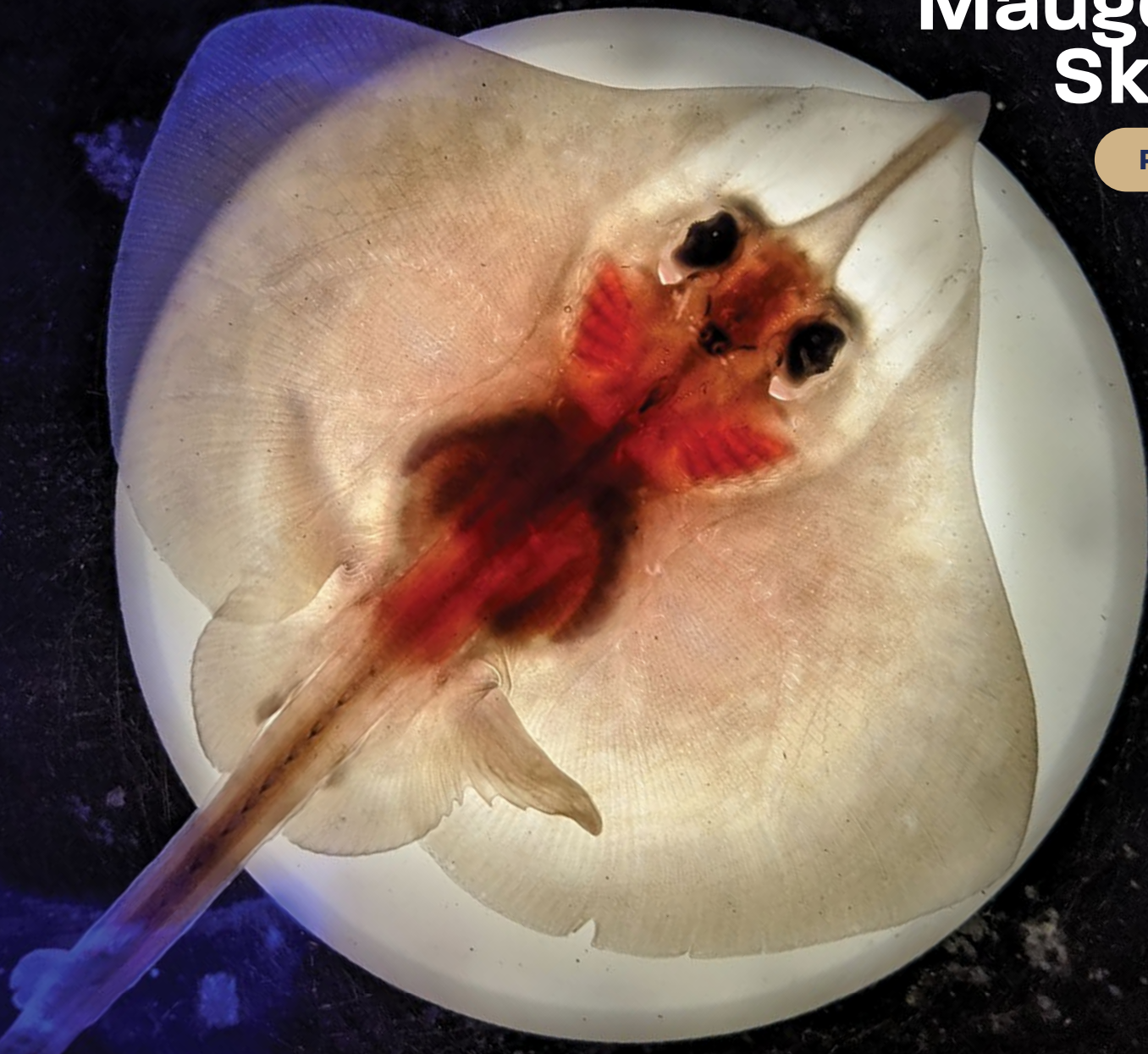
# Turning THE TIDE

Supporter Newsletter

CREATURE FEATURE

## Maugean Skate

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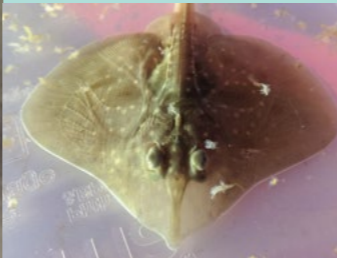
With Thanks to YOU 

“Dinosaur in a bathtub”



**Did you know?**

Skates are the only species of ray that lay eggs.



**Living Dinosaurs**

**Described as Australia’s ‘dinosaur in a bathtub’, the Maugean skate has ancient lineage and is found only in a small enclosed pocket of water.**

The Maugean skate is a ray found only in Macquarie Harbour, Tasmania, and has been alive since T-Rex roamed the Earth.

Rarely seen, their dappled exterior camouflages them against the dark, silty bottom of Macquarie Harbour where they prefer depths of 5 to 15 metres and feed on bottom-dwelling native crabs.

Maugean skates are flat-bodied and cartilaginous, similar to a stingray. They typically reach lengths of around 75 cm from the tip of their pointy snout to the end of their tails.

These living dinosaurs are facing imminent extinction because of depleting oxygen in the harbour effectively choking the skate to death.

**Threats**

Maugean skates are facing imminent extinction with only an estimated 4,100 remaining in the wild.

The main threat to the species is depleted oxygen chewed up by fish feed and fish waste produced by intensive salmon farming.

Other threats include:

- Damming and manipulated river flows into the harbour prioritising hydroelectricity production.
- Climate change and extreme weather events.
- Accidental capture in local fisheries.
- Historic mining pollution.

**Emergency conservation action is needed.**

**Facts & Figures**

- COMMON NAME:** Maugean Skate
- SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Zearaja maugeana*
- FAMILY:** Rajidae, Rajiformes, Chondrichthyes, Chordata, Animalia
- BODY SIZE:** Medium-sized skate 85–86 cm
- LIFESPAN (IN WILD):** Approximately 10 years
- DIET:** Crabs, carid shrimp and mysids
- LOCATION:** Macquarie Harbour, Tasmania
- CONSERVATION STATUS:** Endangered (EPBC status)
- POPULATION TREND:** Declining

**Why is the skate choking to death?**

Maugean skates are facing imminent extinction because oxygen levels collapsed in the skate’s only home and still remain at critical levels.

Macquarie Harbour’s water quality has crashed primarily from the oxygen depleting effects of intensive salmon farming, compounded by the effects of hydroelectricity production.

Intensive aquaculture causes microbes to consume what little oxygen there is when they break down fish feed and waste. **This can potentially create ‘dead zones’ in the harbour.**

Dams that allow constant river flow into the harbor to generate electricity limits oxygen-rich seawater entering and ‘recharging’ the harbour.



**AMCS turns 60**

**Learn More:** From strength to strength; together, we’ve achieved so much for our oceans since 1965. Visit [amcs.org.au/history](http://amcs.org.au/history)

**2025 marks 60 years since the Australian Marine Conservation Society was formed by a community of scientists and ocean conservationists who came together to protect our marine life.**

Throughout 2025 we celebrate our crew of incredible supporters – the hundreds of

thousands of you who continue to create change with AMCS. Without you, we wouldn’t be able to fight for the urgent protections that our amazing oceans and marine wildlife need. We are deeply grateful for your continued support and involvement, and we look forward to another 60 years of success together.

**From strength to strength; together, we’ve achieved so much for our oceans since 1965. Here are a few top highlights:**

**1965 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Secured:** One of the defining moments in Australian environmental history, AMCS co-led a national campaign to protect the Great Barrier Reef from oil drilling and coral mining.

**2011 Ningaloo Reef protected from marine development:** In 2003, AMCS and allies protected Ningaloo, Australia’s largest fringing reef, from a major marina development, then secured 34% of the Ningaloo Marine Park as green zones, and achieved World heritage listing in 2011.

**2012 Creating the largest marine park network on Earth:** AMCS campaigned to achieve the largest network of marine reserves on Earth and showed the world that Australia means business when it comes to protecting our oceans.

**1980 - TODAY Global ban on commercial whaling:** Australia’s government banned whaling in 1979, and in 1986, the global whaling ban took effect. AMCS played a leading role in securing a 2014 ruling that Japan’s Antarctic whaling program violated international law, ending whaling in the Southern Ocean.

**2004 Live shark finning banned:** Live shark finning at sea was declared illegal in Australia. In 2023 AMCS campaigned to close a loophole, and live shark finning was comprehensively banned.

**2023 Stopped the largest offshore oil and gas seismic exploration proposal globally:** In 2023, AMCS launched a campaign against offshore oil and gas in Australia’s oceans. In 2024, working with local communities, we stopped the largest seismic blasting proposal on record in Australian waters from going ahead off the Victorian and Tasmanian coastline.

1. Di Tarte, AMCS field work circa 1980s. 2. Dave Graham, Mud Island survey after dredging blocked off creek and killed mangroves 1996. 3. Midnight Oil at the Reef @ Justin Heitman 2017

The AMCS team

We are the guardians and voice for marine life.

Read more:

You can read more about AMCS' 2024 Year in our Annual Report: amcs.org.au/annualreport

2024 Ocean Wins

Thanks to your generous support, in 2024 AMCS achieved some amazing wins for our oceans.

For many 2024 was a tough year. But in the face of escalating crises across climate, the cost-of-living and powerful vested interests, ocean lovers, like you, are still showing up to fight for our oceans.

AMCS supporters made a staggering impact. Together we gained Queensland's commitment to a 75% emissions reduction target, seismic blasting cancellation and expanded marine protections for wildlife and habitats. We fought

to safeguard our iconic places - the Great Barrier Reef and Ningaloo - and we saved countless dugongs, sawfish, turtles from a slow death by securing the removal of deadly gillnets. As climate threats grow, AMCS remains committed to marine resilience, recovery and responsible renewable energy.

From the bottom of our deep blue hearts, all of us at AMCS thank you for your commitment and support during 2024. Let's stand up together and build on these achievements in 2025.

Ocean Conservation Key Highlights in 2024:

Mega seismic blasting proposal abandoned in oceans between Victoria and Tasmania due to community opposition. Pygmy blue whale feeding grounds now protected.

The Australian Government proposed a 73,000km2 expansion of marine sanctuaries off south-east Australian oceans.

The Northern Territory government committed to banning gillnets in key threatened species habitats.

Queensland Acts On Emissions: In April Queensland legislated a 75% emissions reduction target by 2035 with bipartisan support.

Five new Net Free Zones were added to the Gulf of Carpentaria, protecting endangered sawfish and rare spartooth sharks.

Protect Ningaloo took our campaign to Germany to combat K&S Salt mine proposal threatening Exmouth Gulf.

Our Wavemakers and Ocean Lovers inspired a record \$1,126,853.77 for our oceans on World Oceans Day.

Heard Island and McDonald Islands Marine Reserve quadrupled in size. New sanctuaries increased protections for king and macaroni penguins, Antarctic fur seals, albatross.

Australia's management of the Great Barrier Reef remains in the international spotlight at the World Heritage Committee.

GoodFish 'Check Your Tuna' guide released - Australia's first canned tuna sustainability guide in years.

Thanks to your generous support in 2024, AMCS achieved some significant wins for our oceans.

Watch Our Wins: Watch our 2024 achievements video here: amcs.org.au/2024wins



Unwrap Our Groceries

Thank you to our 2,073 citizen science plastics investigators, and supporters all across Australia.

With your help, we're holding supermarkets accountable for failing to address the plastic pollution crisis.

Unwrapped 2024: Plastic Use in Australian Supermarkets - the second audit report on Australia's \$130 billion supermarket industry was released in November 2024.

With the help of our investigators, we found that over 70% of the time, customers are being charged more for loose fruit and vegetables compared with plastic-wrapped produce.

In the midst of a cost-of-living and environmental crisis, shoppers are being penalised for avoiding plastic packaging and buying only what they need.

AMCS Plastics Campaigner Tara said: "Recycling just can't keep up with the amount of plastic waste we produce. We need to cut our plastic use, but the supermarkets are not giving us a fair option to do that."

Read the report

See how the four major supermarkets performed. Read the report at amcs.org.au/unwrapped



Plastics Treaty Negotiations

AMCS has proudly been a voice for our oceans at Global Plastic Treaty negotiations working towards an international agreement to end plastic pollution.

Thank you to our ocean loving community! It's because of you that AMCS Plastics Campaign Manager and a group of Dhimurru Rangers were present at the November 2024 negotiations in Busan, South Korea, calling for global laws to prevent plastic pollution - including from fishing gear.

Yolngu Traditional Owner and Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation Chair, Mayatili Marika said: "Our ecosystem is fragile and so precious but more and more we are seeing not just in our Country, but all over the planet that plastics are choking the very lifeforce out of us all."

Pro-plastic nations and industries continue to stall essential progress. Treaty negotiations will continue in 2025.



Read more

Read Plastics Campaign Manager Cip Hamilton's full report from treaty negotiations and future plans. amcs.org.au/plasticstreaty

This is how grassroots activism can make an enormous difference in protecting our marine environments from harmful fossil fuel exploration.



### PEP11 Quashed

#### In a HUGE win for our oceans, together we have stopped PEP11!

The Australian and NSW governments' Joint Authority announced they have refused both gas exploration permit applications known as PEP11.

PEP11 (Petroleum Exploration Permit 11) is a licence to explore for fossil gas in our oceans. If renewed, it would have allowed drilling for gas in our ocean just 5.5 kilometres off the coast of New South Wales, in an area of 4,500 square kilometres of ocean, spanning from Manly to Newcastle.

Thousands of you stood up to call for PEP11 to be cancelled, countless communities along the NSW coast paddled out against this reckless proposal, and AMCS presented to parliamentary enquiries on the harm that this gas exploration would cause.

Thank you to local community groups and everyone who took action to help put an end to this reckless gas exploration licence and stand up for our oceans and marine life.

#### Demand Seismic Blasting Moratorium

Now we need the Australian Government to declare an urgent moratorium on all seismic blasting exploration for fossil fuels, as part of ending fossil fuels in our oceans.

Seismic blasting is a process involving loud, powerful airgun blasts fired every few seconds, 24 hours a day, sometimes for months which threatens our unique marine ecosystems.

You can add your name here to join the call for a moratorium on seismic blasting.

Take action at [amcs.org.au/stopseismic](https://amcs.org.au/stopseismic)

### Seismic Shift

#### Community opposition sent seismic blasting firm TGS packing from waters between Victoria and Tasmania.

Thousands of people turned out to protest in coastal communities, and more than 30,000 people made submissions to oppose this controversial project.

In the face of overwhelming community opposition, oil and gas exploration companies TGS and SLB-Schlumberger withdrew their plans to conduct seismic blasting. The plan originally proposed blasting over 77,000 square kilometres of ocean between Victoria's Otway coast and Tasmania's north west – an area larger than the size of Tasmania.

In a major victory for marine conservation, this seismic blasting proposal was cancelled in September 2024.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of local community groups and concerned individuals across Australia, the largest 3D seismic blasting proposal on record no longer threatens our marine life.

Standing up to protect Scott Reef and our climate has never been more important.

### Save Scott Reef

#### Scott Reef is under threat from a proposal by Woodside to drill 50 gas wells around it to access the Browse offshore gas field.

Woodside is also seeking to dump the project's polluting carbon in the seabed there, using a failed, expensive and dangerous technology.

In December, AMCS patron Tim Winton and WA Director Paul Gamblin joined a group of marine scientists, filmmakers and conservationists on a voyage to Scott Reef to document the threats posed by Woodside's risky and polluting gas proposal.

Located 270 km off Western Australia's Kimberley Coast, Scott Reef is made up of two large, spectacular reefs, and is home to an incredible range of species.

*"Scott Reef is like a skyscraper of coral rising from the ocean floor that's home to over 1000 species of marine life like sea turtles, pygmy blue whales and sea snakes," Paul said. "Although lesser known, it rivals the famous World Heritage Listed Ningaloo Reef for the diversity of ocean wildlife that's found there."*

Media coverage of the trip is helping Australians understand how precious this lesser known reef is and what's at risk.

#### Take action

We're calling on the WA Environment Minister and Federal Environment Minister to reject Woodside's dangerous proposal. Add your name today. Visit [amcs.org.au/SaveScottReef](https://amcs.org.au/SaveScottReef)



### Scott Reef Deep Dive

Scott Reef is Australia's largest offshore coral reef, supporting over 1000 species, including endangered turtles, sea snakes and migratory pygmy blue whales.

Located 270 km off Western Australia's Kimberley Coast, Scott Reef, is one of Australia's most important and biodiverse coral reefs supporting reef-building corals and myriad fish species.

Sandy Islet on South Scott Reef, provides critical nesting habitat for green turtles that swim hundreds of kilometres to lay their eggs here.

Scott Reef is also Australia's last remaining habitat for the endangered dusky sea snake.

*"Wild places feed our spirit. And our bodies. And our planet. They are not a luxury –*

*they're a necessity. The world's coral reefs are in desperate trouble, and Scott Reef is like a sentinel. If we lose Scott Reef, it'll signal the end for all coral reefs. And when they cook and die, we'll be left with a poorer, harsher world."*

**TIM WINTON**



“The science is clear. Salmon farming in Macquarie Harbour is causing permanent damage to ecosystems and marine life.”

“Australia's nature laws are failing.”

## Stopping Extinction

AMCS is the sole environmental representative member of the National Maugean Skate Recovery Team, working urgently with other key stakeholders for a solution.

The Recovery Team has developed a Roadmap to coordinate recovery efforts.

Agreed actions are to:

- Improve water quality in Macquarie Harbour.
- Establish a captive breeding and release program to supplement the wild population.
- Continue building awareness about the species within the local community.

### Why AMCS is fighting to protect the Maugean skate

The Maugean skate is facing imminent extinction.

Macquarie Harbour is only home for the Maugean skate but intensive salmon farming, compounded by manipulated river flows to support hydroelectricity production, is depleting oxygen and choking the skates to death.

We vow to represent science-based conservation solutions to protect our endemic Aussie battler, and work with all stakeholders to ensure this species safety.

### Save The Maugean Skate

Australia's living dinosaur faces imminent extinction because of its primary threat, salmon farming, in its only home, Macquarie Harbour, Tasmania.

Contact your local Member now to ensure they know the skate's plight and uphold the Australian Government's promise of 'no new extinctions'.

Visit [amcs.org.au/SaveSkate](https://amcs.org.au/SaveSkate) to take action

## Salmon Polluting Macquarie Harbour

Salmon farms must be removed from Macquarie Harbour for the endangered Maugean skate to have any chance of survival.

Intensive aquaculture in the harbour results in uneaten fish-feed and fish faeces sinking to the bottom, driving microbial activity that consumes oxygen and further depletes the naturally low-oxygen levels in the harbour.

Such is the extent of this, that 'dead zones' have been created throughout the harbour's deeper waters.

Independent advice from the Threatened Species Scientific Committee to the Australian Government recommended as an urgent priority, the removal of salmon from the harbour as one of the fastest ways to improve oxygen levels and save the skate.

Without action, this could be the first time aquaculture has been the primary cause and directly driven the extinction of a marine fish. Tasmania's famed reputation for its wild and unspoilt natural places will be forever tarnished if the skate becomes extinct.

Ensure your local Member is aware of the skate's plight, and urge them to support the science and uphold the Australian Government's promise of 'no new extinctions'.

## Nature Needs Strong Laws

Australia's current nature laws are weak, outdated and failing.

In 2022, the Australian Government announced plans to update the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) – for the first time in 20 years.

We've long been campaigning for strong national nature laws. These are crucial for protecting and restoring Australia's diverse species and ecosystems like kelp and our endemic sharks and rays like the Maugean skate.

The Albanese Government has failed to deliver the reform package this term, leaving crucial environmental issues unaddressed.

AMCS had been encouraging the government to work with the Senate crossbench to strengthen the legislation, and a deal was reportedly reached.

However in the final days of parliament, in the face of intense lobbying and opposition from powerful corporate interests and direct intervention from the WA Premier, the Prime Minister reneged and ruled out passing the legislation.

### Act For Nature

Help protect nature and demand strong environment law reform.

Every day, species are pushed closer to the brink, and ecosystems are degraded beyond repair. Time is running out.

Take action [amcs.org.au/NatureLaws](https://amcs.org.au/NatureLaws)

The urgency is palpable, especially for species like the red handfish, giant kelp, and the Maugean skate.

### Maugean Skate

The Maugean skate is staring down the barrel of extinction, with only an estimated 4,100 remaining in the wild largely due to the failures of the EPBC Act. Salmon farming has decimated their habitat, poor water quality is suffocating them, and time is running out.



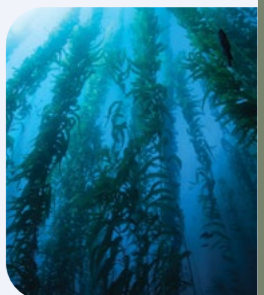
### Red Handfish

The red handfish is one of the rarest and most endangered fish in the world, found in just two small areas near Hobart. With a tiny population of 100 or so left in the wild, it's crucial we protect this Critically Endangered fish.



### Giant Kelp

The Giant Kelp Marine Forests of South East Australia are a vital component of our marine ecosystem, providing critical habitats for many species and supporting the health of our oceans. Giant kelp forests are facing unprecedented threats, and urgent action is needed to protect these vital ecosystems.



## Bird Flu Risk

**Deadly bird flu can spread between mammals, meaning Australian sea lions, seals and dolphins are at risk.**

New research provides the first strong evidence of mammal-to-mammal transmission of the deadly H5N1 strain. The newly evolved bird flu strain caused 'unprecedented' mass deaths of elephant seals and sea lions since it reached South America and spread from north to south within six months.

**The potential consequences of bird flu for Australia's marine mammals are frightening.**

Australia's endemic sea lions are already endangered, with only about 12,000 remaining – far fewer than the 30,000 sea lions killed in South America.

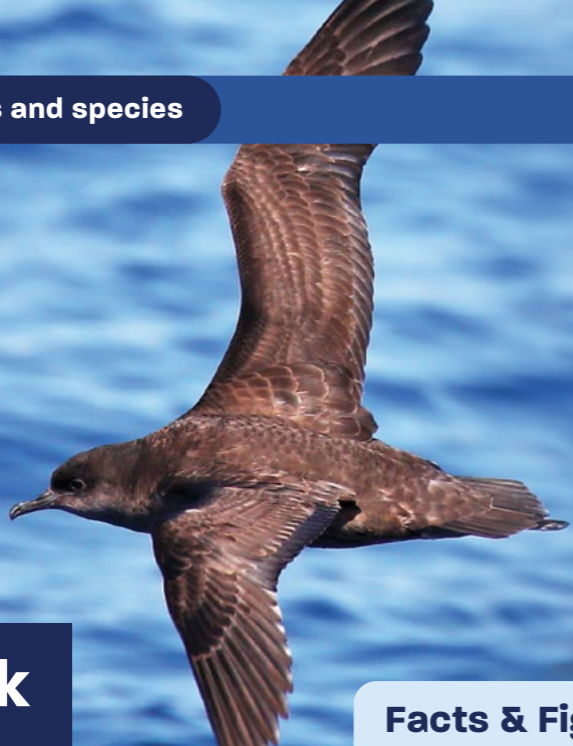
This killer disease has also wiped out millions of birds around the world, including penguins in Antarctica. Our native birds could face a similar fate if the disease reaches Australia.

As the last continent free of this deadly virus, Australia must prepare now to prevent or minimise outbreaks among our vulnerable and unique species.

### Call to Prepare

We need a coordinated, nation-wide monitoring plan, strong biosecurity measures for early detection. AMCS is working with Biodiversity Council, Invasive Species Council, BirdLife Australia and the Australian Land Conservation Alliance to call on the Government to:

- Establish a national wildlife preparedness taskforce, co-led by the Government together with experts to drive collaboration and preparation.
- Ensure that preparedness and response remains a priority for agriculture ministers.
- Scale up public communication to achieve this effectively.



### Facts & Figures

**COMMON NAME:** Short-tailed shearwater, muttonbird

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Ardenna tenuirostris*

**CONSERVATION STATUS:** Migratory and Marine under EPBC Act



### Short-tailed Shearwater

One of Australia's beloved migratory sea birds, the short-tailed shearwater calls Australia home in the spring.

The short-tailed shearwater, also known as moonbird, yolla or muttonbird, is a member of the family Procellariidae, which are medium to large seabirds. This family includes shearwaters, petrels and prions.

Approximately 23 million short-tailed shearwaters breed in about 285 colonies in south-eastern Australia from September to April. They travel about 15 to 17 thousand kilometers in each direction annually.

The short-tailed shearwater was identified as one of a number of species migrating from the North Pacific that would potentially be a pathway for the virus to enter Australia.

## Deep Dive: Seabirds

Seabirds are most commonly found on, over or near the ocean, and are adapted to life in the marine environment. Globally seabirds are a varied group of nearly 350 bird species that depend on the marine environment for at least part of their life cycle.

**In Australia, over 200 seabird species are protected as marine species.**

Seabirds are defined as species in the families:

- Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)
- Hydrobatidae (Northern Storm-petrels)
- Oceanitidae (Austral Storm-petrels)
- Diomedidae (Albatrosses)
- Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)
- Spheniscidae (Penguins)
- Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)
- Sulidae (Gannets and Boobies)
- Pelecanidae (Pelicans)
- Stercorariidae (Skuas)
- Laridae (Gulls and Terns)

### Little Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*)



The little penguin is the smallest penguin species and is endemic to Australia and New Zealand.

In Australia, the species occurs from Western Australia (Carnac Island) to New South Wales (Broughton Island) and Tasmania. The only truly nocturnal penguin species on land, adults always arrive after dusk and leave before dawn.

### Australasian Gannet (*Morus serrator*)



The Australasian gannet is a large predominantly white seabird, found in temperate zone waters around Australia and New Zealand.

Breeding colonies are found off the coast of Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand. One small colony is also found farther north at Norfolk Island.

### White-bellied Sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*)



The white-bellied sea-eagle is a large raptor that has long, broad wings and a short, wedge-shaped tail.

They are distributed along the coastline (including offshore islands) of mainland Australia and Tasmania. The white-bellied sea-eagle breeds in solitary and monogamous pairs that mate for life.

### Australian Pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*)



The Australian pelican is a large waterbird, widespread on inland and coastal waters primarily in large expanses of open water, such as lakes, reservoirs, billabongs and rivers.

They feed by plunge-diving while swimming on the surface of the water. Working in groups they drive fish to shallower water, where they use their sensitive bills to snatch their prey.

Foraging Australian Pelicans.





### Ocean Lovers Heard

#### Ocean lovers unite to create change.

Save Our Marine Life alliance campaigned and welcomed the news last October that the World Heritage-listed Heard and McDonald Islands' Marine Reserve would quadruple in size, and fully protected sanctuary zones expanded within the park!

These remote islands and their waters, 4,000 km southwest of Perth, is an Australian external territory comprising a volcanic group of sub-Antarctic islands, containing Australia's only two active volcanoes.

The news followed over 'over 3600 submissions made by AMCS supporters' calling for political support of the expansion. We send our sincere thanks to ocean lovers everywhere for your action.

While the expansion has been welcomed by the alliance, more action is required to safeguard large breeding populations of seabirds and marine mammals, including threatened seals and albatross, four species of penguin, and two species of birds found nowhere else.

The news follows work by the SOML alliance to improve protections for marine life in Australia's Macquarie Island territory, which saw an area the size of Germany protected in marine sanctuary in 2023.

#### Did You Know?

The Australian Marine Conservation Society and The Pew Charitable Trusts jointly lead Save Our Marine Life – an alliance of 27 environmental organisations which works with local communities, scientists, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders to protect Australia's marine life.

### New WA Marine Park

#### A brand-new WA South Coast Marine Park has been created!

Significant protections have been provided for sea life within the new WA South Coast Marine Park. The network of marine sanctuary zones within the marine park will help to safeguard WA's globally important marine life.

Until now, there has been no marine sanctuary protection along a 1,000km stretch of WA's south coast, which features a large part of the Great Southern Reef – home to more unique species than the Great Barrier Reef.

Thank you to the 20,000 ocean-lovers who wrote to the WA Government calling for strong sanctuary protection for this special part of Australia. Our Save Our Marine Life alliance celebrates this win with you!

More than 30 years after it was first proposed, the South Coast Marine Park lays a strong foundation.

However, habitats critical to the health and survival of unique and endangered species such as Australian sea lions and southern right whales remain under-protected. We must continue to build a truly world class marine park network that fully protects our treasured marine life and our way of life.

### 17,000 Oppose Saltworks Proposal

#### Thank you to you, our ocean loving community for your continued support to protect Exmouth Gulf, Ningaloo.

In December, online ads you help fund appeared on the main news website in the city of Kassel, where company K+S is based. The ads link to a page on our website which explains in German why the saltworks shouldn't proceed.

K+S is a German-based corporation seeking to build an enormous saltworks, the size of around 12,000 MCG ovals, which would threaten wetlands at Exmouth Gulf. The wetlands are a vital source of nutrients to Exmouth Gulf, Ningaloo's nursery, and home to critically endangered species like the sawfish and shovelnose rays.

Back in Australia, Protect Ningaloo and ocean lovers like you continue to apply pressure on the state government.

Nearly 17,000 emails have been delivered to WA's Environment Minister calling for a refusal of K+S's proposal!

Exmouth Gulf is a unique and precious place that is already under stress from climate change impacts. It deserves protection from industrialisation so that it can be enjoyed now and by future generations.

#### Protect Ningaloo





Send an email to WA's Environment Minister to protect Ningaloo.  
Take Action [amcs.org.au/NoSaltworks](https://amcs.org.au/NoSaltworks)

### 80,000 km<sup>2</sup> Sanctuary

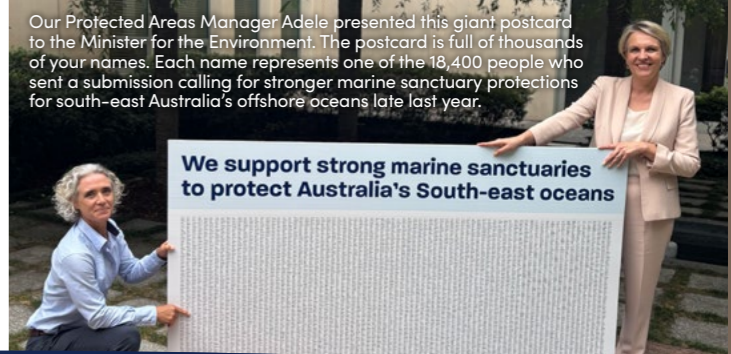
#### The Australian Government has just revealed their final South-east marine region plans which include 80,000 square kilometres of new marine sanctuary protections – that's an area larger than Tasmania!

Thank you to everyone who submitted a letter, signed a petition, attended an event, or shared important news on social media – these are your wins!

Key highlights include:

-  11 new offshore marine sanctuary areas
-  New protection for little penguins, endangered pygmy blue whales, albatrosses, ancient black corals, aggregations of Port Jackson sharks, seamounts, underwater canyons and golden kelp forests
-  A ban on all new oil, gas, carbon dumping (CCS) and seismic blasting titles
-  Finalisation of the expanded marine park around Australia's sub-Antarctic territory of Macquarie Island

There are still a few parliamentary hoops to jump through, but we'll be there every step of the way.



Our Protected Areas Manager Adele presented this giant postcard to the Minister for the Environment. The postcard is full of thousands of your names. Each name represents one of the 18,400 people who sent a submission calling for stronger marine sanctuary protections for south-east Australia's offshore oceans late last year.

King penguins on Heard Island (Heard and McDonald Islands) © Matt Currock

Australian Sea Lion and Leafy Sea Dragon amongst Kelp, WA Coast © Scott Portelli

Urala Creek South, WA @ Andre Rerekura

Adele Pedder, Protected Areas Manager and Tanya Pilberek, Australian Minister for the Environment

Heron Island, Great Barrier Reef, October 2023 © Tanya Murphy



## GBR Coral Harvest

**Did you know that our incredible Great Barrier Reef is home to Australia's largest coral fishery?**

Each year up to 190 tonnes of coral can be hacked off our Reef by hammer and chisel. These precious corals are often destined for the global aquarium trade.

Hard corals are the building blocks of our Reef. These incredible animals form diverse structures that create habitat for our Reef's incredible biodiversity. Many different coral species are harvested, but all are highly vulnerable to coral bleaching and mortality in increasingly frequent and severe underwater heatwaves.

The Great Barrier Reef is under immense pressure from climate change, a wild harvest coral fishery is not compatible with conserving one of our greatest treasures.



## Devastating Bleaching

**2024 recorded the most widespread coral mortality.**

New data from last year's coral bleaching event on the Great Barrier Reef reveals the most widespread coral mortality ever recorded.

Underwater surveys conducted by the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) confirmed that 41% of corals in the southern section of the Reef died in 2024.

This marks the largest annual decline since AIMS' Long Term Monitoring Program began, driven by record-high ocean temperatures caused by climate change.

One-third of corals in the Far Northern Section also perished.

Meanwhile, water pollution and destructive fishing practices continue to threaten the Reef's survival, along with the \$6.4 billion tourism industry and 64,000 jobs it supports.

With extreme heatwaves already affecting the Reef again this summer, the urgency to act has never been greater. With a federal election this year, we need strong commitments from all political parties to protect this global treasure. The decisions made in the next three years will determine the Reef's fate for decades to come.

### Fight For Reef

**It's not too late to save the Reef—but we must act now.** Whether you volunteer on the ground or support from a distance by signing petitions, making donations, or spreading the word, your efforts matter.



INSET: Volunteers Camilo Alvarez, Senyah Mari, Romy Smith, Tanya Murphy, Jeffrey Cantor

## Reef Heroes

**71 Reef heroes volunteered 554 hours of their time to run a powerful awareness campaign in Cairns, ensuring Reef protection remained a key issue in the Queensland election.**

They hosted 18 market stalls, door-knocked 2,528 homes, collected over 1,000 petition signatures, handed out more than 4,000 flyers at election booths, distributed hundreds of campaign signs, and ran a successful Candidates Forum engaging in hundreds of meaningful community conversations.

For many of our Cairns volunteers—divers and Reef tourism workers—this battle is deeply personal. They are witnessing the impacts firsthand.

In 2025, these efforts continue, as we fight to keep the Reef front and centre for decision-makers.



Visit [www.FightForOurReef.org](http://www.FightForOurReef.org) to take action, donate, or volunteer. Together, we can ensure the Reef gets the protection it deserves. Thank you for standing with us.

## Win for Wetlands

**Last year over 5,000 Fight For Our Reef action takers turned the tide on Reef water pollution by calling for wetland restoration.**





As a result, we saw the announcement of the \$192 million federal "Clearer Water for a Healthy Reef" program last August.

But, only a small amount is considered for wetlands, the Reef's life support system.

Over 50% of natural wetlands have been lost in the Reef region.

The Reef needs wetlands.

Wetlands have superpowers. They:

-  Filter pollution that runs into waterways and the Reef.
-  Protect our coastlines from cyclones and floods.
-  Boost biodiversity.
-  Absorb CO<sub>2</sub> and store it for thousands of years.

### Protect Our Reef

Water pollution in our rivers and streams enters the ocean, threatening the survival of inshore coral reefs, seagrasses, and iconic wildlife like dugongs, turtles, and inshore dolphins.

Water pollution is the biggest local threat to our Reef. Urge the minister to fund and deliver more wetland restoration now and boost the health of our Reef.

Take Action [amcs.org.au/WaterQuality](http://amcs.org.au/WaterQuality)

Meandering rivers and mangroves in front of Hinchinbrook Island, Queensland © Coral Brunner



Orange roughy © Mark Yokoyama



## Orange Roughy

**Your support for the orange roughy has been critical.**

Last month we lost our appeal against the eco-certification of Australia's endangered orange roughy fishery with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) blue tick.

**The decision to support serving endangered species as 'sustainable' is a major blow to marine conservation. There is no justification for certifying a fishery that targets an endangered species.**

It's not the news we wanted. The bottom line is that the MSC's broken standard allows blatant greenwashing.

We will continue to fight for the orange roughy and against greenwashing.

We beat the fishery in its first attempt to gain MSC certification in 2021 because it was classified as an endangered species in Australia. However, MSC weakened its standards twice so assessors could disregard governments' endangered species declarations.

**Australians know endangered species are not sustainable seafood. It's unacceptable that this level of greenwashing has succeeded, betraying well-meaning shoppers who will be misled.**

Our work will not stop here. We will continue to fight for strong national nature laws to ensure that endangered species such as the orange roughy get the protection they deserve.

## Dishing Up Change

**In November 2024 we hosted a lunch for our QLD and northern NSW partners at Pipit to celebrate our Sustainable Seafood GoodFish guide.**

Our 'Dishing up change' lunch was an opportunity for us to sit down and talk about the future of sustainable seafood, while witnessing the incredible skill and passion of the chefs and producers.

We were able to connect with fishers and chefs creating meaningful connections and strengthening commitment to improving the state of seafood in Australia - one of the key aims of the GoodFish Project.

We are so grateful to everyone who came and shared their ideas and experience. It was so good to hear from so many esteemed producers and chefs.

Do you have a restaurant or food business that believes in better seafood choices? Businesses around the country are already making this change. Use this link to start the journey to support healthier oceans today. Apply now. [goodfish.org.au/join-goodfish](https://goodfish.org.au/join-goodfish)

### Goodfish In Your Pocket

Checking the Guide is even easier now with the GoodFish app! Available at the App Store and Google Play Store. [goodfish.org.au](https://goodfish.org.au)



20th Celebration at Pipit © Cindy at Sea Photography

Simone Watts' Turkish Style Mussels

## Simone Watts' Turkish Style Mussels

**You cannot go wrong with mussels if you are looking for a tasty, sustainable seafood option to cook with. They are farmed on longlines or racks in the sea, which has a negligible impact on habitat or other species, and filter the surrounding water for their food.**

Simone Watts from Barragunda Estate put together this impressive recipe for GoodFish, showcasing mussels with yoghurt flatbread pockets and fermented ezme salsa! While it may seem intimidating with lots of steps, it's worth it we promise!

Barragunda Estate in Cape Schanck celebrates fresh, organic produce grown from the Estate's garden through share-style vegetable-forward menu complemented by seafood from local fishers.

## Blayne Bertencello's Roasted Whiting

**King George whiting are an iconic Australian table fish, caught throughout southern Australian waters. They are prized for their delicate flesh and easy-to-cook nature.** Partner chef Blayne Bertencello from O.MY restaurant shares his recipe for roasted King George whiting, with Jerusalem artichokes, wild pine mushrooms, and garden leaves. Fresh, delicious, and easy to whip up!







Blayne and the team at O.MY are long-time GoodFish partners. Sitting in Beaconsfield on the outskirts of Melbourne, O.MY grows their own produce and sources their seafood from the nearby Corner Inlet Fishery.

Blayne Bertencello's Roasted Whiting

## Easter GoodFish

**Easter is Australia's second-favourite time to eat seafood only surpassed by Christmas, and GoodFish makes it easier than ever to choose seafood caught or farmed with a light touch on our oceans.**

This Easter, we've pulled together some of our top picks for your table.

-  Farmed Barramundi (Australian)
-  Mussels
-  Southern Calamari (specifically VIC, NSW and SA)
-  Murray Cod
-  King George Whiting
-  Red Emperor

Check out all of our Green and Amber options at [goodfish.org.au](https://goodfish.org.au)

### Download GoodFish Cookbook

To find more recipes from partner chefs that showcase sustainable seafood, download our free cookbook. Visit [goodfish.org.au](https://goodfish.org.au)





### Blue Sky Ours

### Festive50 Challenge

### Great Ocean Walk

### A Breathtaking Record

**Thank you to the Powderworkers for their generous support of our oceans.**

The Powderworkers, a community of Midnight Oil fans, have raised over \$2,800 for marine conservation.

Matthew Yau of the Powderworkers explains *"The Powderworkers stand side by side with the AMCS in their honourable work to protect our oceans."*

He continues, *"As passionate Midnight Oil fans from across the globe, we share the band's belief that urgency is needed—our oceans and marine life are worth fighting for. Our ocean ecosystems must remain intact so that future generations can experience the same joy and connection we have had with the sea."*

The Powderworkers exist to celebrate the music of Midnight Oil and its members, past and present. Its fundamental purpose is to promote equality, positivity, tolerance and happiness through the music of Midnight Oil. Matthew and Powderworkers, have taken their passion for one band and turned their drive, their energy, their resolve to make meaningful music that crosses the line from art to advocacy. Thank you!

**47 Rusty Rays in Anglesea set themselves a swimming challenge: to each ocean swim 50 kms in five weeks.**

A group of local residents and visitors committed to swim 50 kms, or a distance aligned to their abilities, named the Festive50 challenge.

Ocean swimming is a demanding activity, as you need to negotiate waves and swells, and navigate in the open ocean.

The Festive50 community collectively swam more than 2,000km, roughly the same distance as swimming from Anglesea to Tasmania, around Tasmania and then back to Anglesea.

To celebrate their community achievement, a charity breakfast was organised, with \$1,150 raised for the Australian Marine Conservation Society.

Greg, a Festive50 challenger said *"The collective challenge of getting to our overall goal aligned neatly with the task of improving the oceans; no one person can get it done themselves, they need everyone to play their part."*

We are in awe of the community's achievement and thank Festive50 for supporting our oceans.

**Congratulations to Anne on completing the Great Ocean Walk 100KM Challenge!**

With every step of the trek, Anne raised over \$2,300 to help support our big blue backyard.

*"I felt like doing something active to help manage and contain some of the threats the oceans are facing from human exploitation."*

Anne continues, *"I love walking, so I was drawn to [the] idea of combining that with helping the Australian Marine Conservation Society raise funds for their conservation projects."*

The hike began in Apollo Bay and concluded with the world-famous Twelve Apostles.

Living landlocked, miles from the oceans, Anne speaks tenderly of reconnecting to the ocean.

*"I feel drawn to their movement and tides, dynamic forces that interact with the land and the moon. They create a sense of wonder in me."*

Thank Anne for supporting our oceans, and send our congratulations on this epic achievement.

**Congratulations to Amber Bourke on your Guinness World Record!**

In August 2024, Australian freediver Amber Bourke set the record for the longest underwater walk with one breath. At 370 feet 2 inches, Amber covered a distance greater than that of an American football field!

From the bottom of our big blue hearts, we sincerely thank Amber for raising \$2,000 for marine conservation during the record-breaking journey.

*"Being a freediver, we spend so much time in the ocean, and the ocean has been such a big part of my life, and I just felt I wanted to give back a little bit,"* says Amber.

In October 2024, Guinness World Records officially recognised Amber's incredible achievement.

#### ★ Create Your Fundraiser

Are you passionate about Australian oceans and marine life? Do you want to make a difference? Join the AMCS team today and support our marine life. It's easy to get involved in saving our oceans – whether you're like Greg in an ocean swim challenge, hiking 100 km like Anne, or breaking

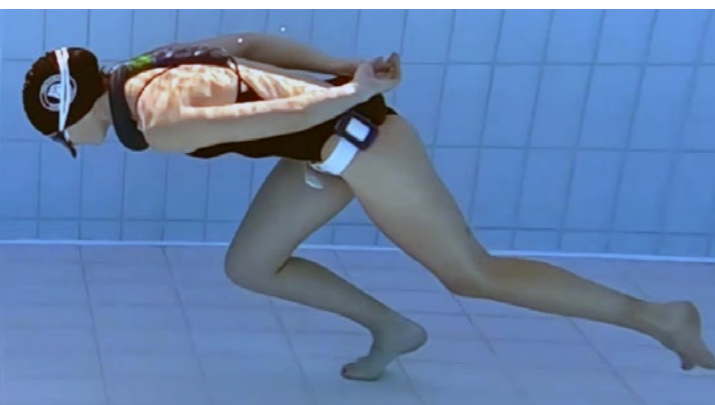
freediving records like Amber, you can make a world of difference for our seas. **Thank you to our ocean-loving community.** If you would like to raise funds to protect our oceans visit [amcs.org.au/fundraising-ideas](http://amcs.org.au/fundraising-ideas) or email [community@amcs.org.au](mailto:community@amcs.org.au)

Matthew Yau, Powderworkers - Sydney arbour @Aurrielle Willison-Yau

Festive50 Community, Anglesea, Victoria

Anne, Great Ocean Walk - Twelve Apostles

Amber Bourke, INSET: Amber walking underwater





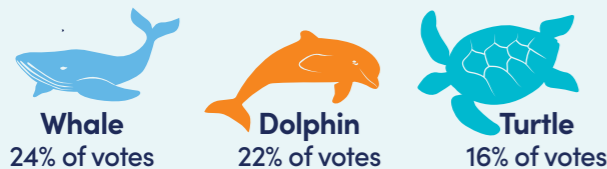
## Your Survey Results

Earlier this year over 3,600 of you, our ocean-loving community completed our Supporter Survey.

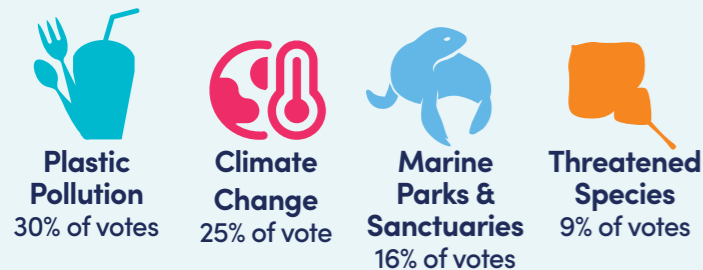
Thank you to all who contributed to our Supporter Survey. Your feedback will help impact and frame our work in ocean conservation over the coming years.

Here are a couple of top fun results from the survey.

### Favourite top 3 marine animals are:



### Most passionate areas of ocean conservation are:



Your valuable insights help us grow our movement of ocean lovers.

Together as a unified voice for our oceans we work to ensure Australia's coasts and oceans are healthy and thriving for tomorrow's generations.

## 50 Great Dives

The 50 Great Dives Challenge has raised over \$2,000 for marine conservation, donating 20% of entry proceeds to AMCS.

Run by Steve Sinclair, a passionate advocate for ocean protection, the Challenge highlights the beauty of kelp forests and the urgent need to preserve them.

Open to snorkelers, freedivers and scuba divers, the Challenge offers over \$30,000 in prizes, including two chances to win a Spirit of Freedom Cod Hole liveaboard for every dive completed. Entries are open until 31 July 2025 and participants can claim dives dating back to 1 October 2024. †

We send our deepest thanks to competition organiser and all-round legend Steve for the support of our oceans with AMCS.



Steve Sinclair

### Dive on in

Find out more about the 50 Great Dives Challenge and support our oceans with AMCS. Dive in, support AMCS, and help protect our oceans.

Learn more at [50greatdives.com](https://50greatdives.com).

## Hello Finn

Thank you so much to Finn for your significant volunteering contributions with AMCS.

For more than a year, Finn has generously committed time to supporting marine conservation efforts, while completing a Masters in Environmental Science!

With a connection to our oceans from a young age, Finn speaks fondly of growing up at the beach, countless surf trips with Dad, and a memorable field trip to Heron Island while studying Marine Biology and Ecology.

"I love so many things about the ocean," Finn says. "I love how it effortlessly holds its beauty whilst simultaneously acting as a carbon sink in mitigating climate change, and also holds so much mystery surrounding its undiscovered parts leaving room for the imagination!"

"The ocean is an integral part of our environment and local culture, and ensuring its safety and preserving its beauty is incredibly important to me."

We sincerely thank Finn, and volunteers everywhere, for their generosity, commitment and support – you are absolutely critical to change-making work.

### Make A Difference

Every win for our oceans – from our Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, to our critical marine parks – is achieved by ocean loving volunteers and staff. Join the community working to save the ocean and all those who call it home. Visit [amcs.org.au/volunteer](https://amcs.org.au/volunteer)

## Benni Designs

Benita Vincent, founder of Benni Marine Designs, is a passionate advocate for the environment.

She draws her inspiration directly from the ocean. Each design originates from Benni's own underwater photography. With a vision to inspire deep connections to the ocean by transforming its beauty into stunning fabrics and products using ethically sourced, sustainable materials.

For Benni, supporting the AMCS is integral to her mission, and she's committed to fighting for the oceans. "We care for our oceans like they are our home. To support ocean conservation efforts, we proudly support the Australian Marine Conservation Society by donating 5% of our profits annually."

Congratulations to Benita - her underwater photography and dedication to ocean conservation has earned her a prestigious spot as one of 110 people globally to serve as Ocean Geographic's BIG ACE Expedition Ambassador for the Arctic in June 2025.

### Our Business Supporters

Our business supporters lead by example by constantly striving to operate in the most ethical and sustainable ways possible. They do more than donate money, they demonstrate that businesses can simultaneously flourish and nourish healthy oceans. Visit our Business Supporters [amcs.org.au/business-supporters](https://amcs.org.au/business-supporters)

“I’m inviting you to be a warrior for life.”



## Tim’s Legacy

**Every good story is fuelled by tension – a sense of jeopardy, something big at stake.**

I’m forced to confront this dynamic every day. But so are you. Because at this moment in history, we all find ourselves living and creating the same shared story, a global tale drenched in jeopardy. And you know exactly why: the life of our oceans – indeed all life on earth – is in danger.

We’re in a fight for Life itself, and our planet needs comrades and warriors.

Tolstoy declared that the two strongest warriors of all are Time and Patience. But those words were written over two centuries ago. Things have changed so much and so quickly since then. Science has shown that Patience is no longer sufficient. And that Time is not on our side.

**As the Australian Marine Conservation Society’s patron, and one of its longest-standing donors, I’m asking for your help.**

I’m inviting you to be a warrior for life. Because when you defend our seas, you fight for life on Earth. It’s that straightforward. And it’s that urgent.

### Please join me

AMCS Parton and iconic renowned author Tim Winton penned a passionate piece inviting ocean-lovers to join Tim in doing everything you can to support those fighting the good fight for life on Earth.

Read the full letter at [amcs.org.au/TimsLetter](http://amcs.org.au/TimsLetter)

Without our oceans, we have nothing. There’s no greater threat to life on this planet than global heating. And the greatest driver of this lethal force is the fossil fuel industry working around the clock to drill, dig and destroy our ocean habitats for profit. I’m at the stage of life when I think about legacy. And I don’t think I’m alone in this. There’s nothing like age and a growing sense of jeopardy to clarify the mind, to remind us of what matters most.

I want to know I did everything in my power – in life and afterwards – to defend what’s most precious. And I suspect you do too.

**Which is why I’m inviting you to consider an Ocean Legacy.**

### What is your Ocean Legacy?

How would you like to be remembered? For your sense of adventure? Your love of the ocean? Your determination to make a difference? What would be the one thing you would like to pass on to the next generation? By giving a gift in your Will, you will hand on a wilder, safer, more diverse and beautiful ocean planet for future generations. Visit [amcs.org.au/OceanLegacy](http://amcs.org.au/OceanLegacy)

## Harry’s Passion

**Scuba diving and snorkelling Australia’s east coast, including the Great Barrier Reef, has given Harry a deep appreciation for the incredible biodiversity in our oceans.**



After witnessing the damage caused by fishing and trawling, he became acutely aware of the fragility of the underwater world.

Harry joined AMCS as a Sea Guardian over ten years ago after discovering the “Good Fish” app, which now guides his seafood choices.

After working in academia, federal public service and at the World Health Organisation, Harry is now restoring his rural property which was cleared for agriculture. He’s amazed at how quickly native animals return to the newly created habitat.

Having seen how quickly newly created marine reserves become havens for marine wildlife, Harry strongly supports AMCS’ efforts to create and expand our network of marine reserves.

Sunset near Port Douglas, Great Barrier Reef. INSET: Harry Rothenfluh

## Anne and Richard’s Dedication

**Anne and Richard love nature and have been Sea Guardians since 2008.**

Both have recently retired. Richard ran a business that researched and grew insects for crops as an alternative to pesticides. Richard is a sea person and often skipped school to surf. Now, he sails in a tiny one-person yacht.

Anne worked as a teacher and researcher in universities.

Anne says, “we all rely so utterly on the oceans, land and air and everything that’s part of them – to breathe, eat and just to live. So we need to care for all these relationships.”

She believes we can learn from First Nations People when they say “care for Country and it’ll care for you”.

Supporting AMCS is part of Anne and Richard’s commitment to caring for our oceans and the natural world.



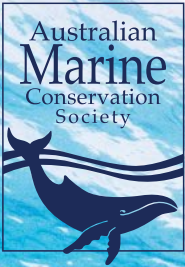
Anne Brown & Richard Llewellyn

### Become a Sea Guardian

Thanks to the amazing support of our amazing Sea Guardians like Harry and Anne, we can continue to defend our iconic reefs, beautiful oceans and the precious marine life that depend on them.

You too can become an advocate and guardian for our oceans as an AMCS Sea Guardian with an affordable monthly gift. Visit [amcs.org.au/SeaGuardians](http://amcs.org.au/SeaGuardians)





Scott Reef, WA @ Nush Freedman Photography

# Thank you for your support

The Australian Marine Conservation Society is the voice for Australia's ocean wildlife. We have defended Australia's oceans since 1965. Thank you for helping to make Australia's coasts and oceans healthy and thriving for future generations.

- Stay in touch** @australianmarine @AustMarConsSoc @marineconservation.au
- Contact Us** 07 3846 6777 marineconservation.org.au
- amcs@amcs.org.au PO Box 5815 West End QLD 4101

*The Australian Marine Conservation Society acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land and sea country, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge that this land and sea was and always will be Aboriginal land and sea.*

