

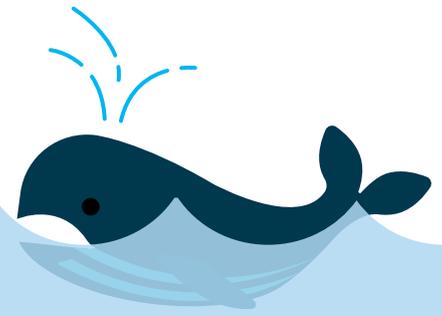


SEAS AT RISK

for the protection and restoration of the marine environment



MANIFESTO FOR THE SEA



European seas are in a sorry state

Successive governments have allowed over-exploitation, pollution and mismanagement of an environment that was once abundant and diverse. Europeans are deeply connected to the water, with half of the population of maritime countries located within coastal regions¹. Yet, over 60% of Europeans believe that neither national governments nor the EU are doing enough to protect the environment². The citizens of Europe expect more – and demand more - from their leaders.

The protection of European seas should be central to all European parties' manifestos, given that all EU governments have committed to achieving healthy European seas by 2020³. Simple changes in policy can lead to healthier, more resilient oceans for all Europeans to enjoy for decades to come. Seas At Risk thus calls on European political parties to make your manifestos marine.

Commit to the following actions, as demanded by scientists, economists and society - your voters - to address key threats to our seas and oceans and finally begin to manage them sustainably.



Protect our marine biodiversity

Commit to protecting at least 30% of EU seas in networks of well managed Marine Protected Areas.

Science: Over 650 marine fish species, 180 marine bird species, five turtle species and almost 40% of the world's known marine mammals are found in Europe's seas. Sadly, less than 20% (and often far less) of all marine species, habitats and ecosystems are considered to be in Good Environmental Status⁴. Scientists globally agree that at least 30% of our seas should be well-managed Marine Protected Areas if we are to enable ecosystem recovery⁵.

Society: Over half a million citizens signed statements in support of the conservation of biodiversity on land and at sea, seeking assurances that EU legislation would not happen at the expense of the environment.

Economy: Marine Protected Area networks have been proven to be worth billions for tourism. The Commission reports that the marine Natura 2000 network generated approximately €1.5 billion of benefits in 2011.



1 Eurostat, 'Nearly half of the population of EU countries with a sea border is located in coastal regions', Statistics in Focus, No 47/2009, June 2009.
2 European Commission, 'Environment poll: citizens trust the EU, but expect more' [last updated 11/04/2018].
3 European Commission, 'Legislation: the Marine Directive' [last updated 18/05/2017].
4 European Environment Agency, Marine Messages, 2014.





Save the seas from our waste

Commit to the ambitious implementation of EU legislation to 1) prevent waste dumping at sea from ships and fisheries, 2) drastically cut single-use plastics and 3) work towards an overall reduction in plastic consumption in order to close the tap on excessive and unnecessary waste.

Science: Up to 50% of the marine litter on Europe's beaches is made up of disposable, single-use plastic items. An estimated 100,000 tonnes of plastic from EU countries ends up in the sea every year from coastal land areas alone⁶. We cannot recycle our way out of plastic pollution (a shocking 40% of Europe's 'recycled' plastic is actually shipped to other continents) and most plastic packaging is not currently recyclable.

Society: Citizens have woken up to the vast quantities of unnecessary plastic in their lives and the needless damage it is doing to the marine environment, with more than 750,000 people signing a petition in 2017 asking for EU legislation in this area. Measures to reduce plastic have become popular, with significant and visible public support for plastic bag charges and national bans on single-use plastics.

Economy: Marine litter can cause serious economic damage to coastal communities, tourism and fishing. The cost of coastal and beach cleaning is of the order of €630 million a year in the EU. Single-use waste management also imposes a huge practical cost on society, as well as the opportunity cost of projects or other investments foregone as a result.

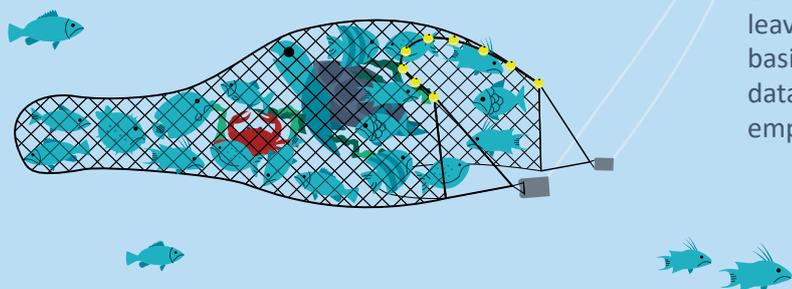
End overfishing and ensure all fisheries are sustainable

Commit to supporting sustainable fisheries by promoting strong measures under the Common Fisheries Policy and refusing attempts to water down this important law.

Science: Our fish stocks continue to be threatened by overfishing, despite the comprehensive and hard-fought reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. Currently about 40% of the 71 assessed fish stocks in the Northeast Atlantic are fished above scientifically recommended exploitation levels, while almost 70 stocks remain without assessment and an alarming 87% of assessed stocks in the Mediterranean continue to be overfished.

Society: Your voters support sustainable fisheries, with over 870,000 people supporting the petition to end the practice of discarding fish that was launched during the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.

Economy: It makes no financial sense to overfish, leaving fewer and fewer fish to reproduce. This is basic biology, supported by numerous studies' data proving the considerable economic and employment benefits of fishing sustainably⁷.

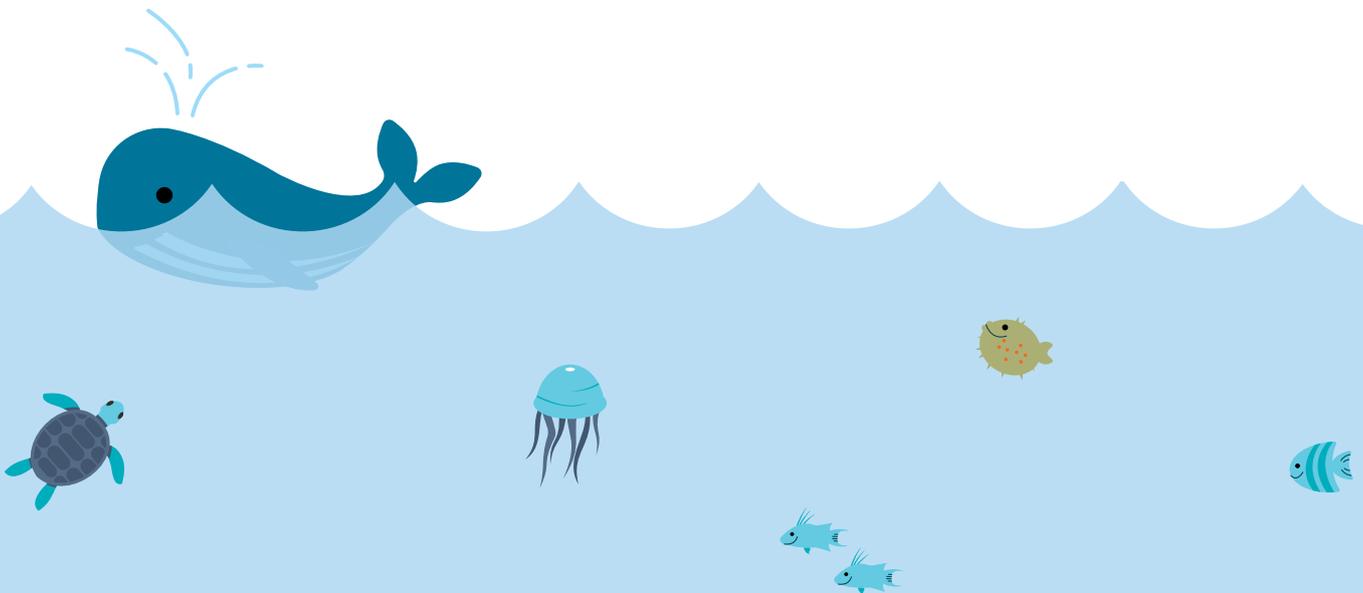


5 IUCN, 'Motion 53 – Increasing marine protected area coverage for effective marine biodiversity conservation', World Conservation Congress, Final version, 28 January 2017.

6 Jambeck, J.R., Geyer, R., Wilcox, C., et al., 'Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean', Science, Vol. 347, No.6223, pp.768–771, 2015.

7 Guillen J. et al.' Sustainability now or later? Estimating the benefits of pathways to maximum sustainable yield for EU Northeast Atlantic fisheries' Marine Policy, 72, 2016, pp. 40-47. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2016.06.015>

The future of European seas lies in your hands



Our seas and oceans are deeply connected to our lives and influence us in a myriad of ways. Beauty, resources, wildness, opportunities or freedom: everybody has their own personal connection to the sea. What most of us do not know is that we are also physically bound to the ocean, as it provides us with more than 50% of the oxygen we breathe.

Our seas and oceans maintain our planet's resilience to existing challenges and those yet to come, and we have a duty to minimise the damage to them. You will be elected to deliver existing international commitments, to safeguard future endeavours and to lead the way in restoring our marine world and its ecosystems to health.

This is a manifesto for the sea, the salty half of the European Union. Civil society demands that seas and oceans are given the attention they need to safeguard our future. We ask you now to commit your work - and that of your political group - to protecting our European Seas for the decades to come.

 **SEAS AT RISK**

for the protection and restoration of the marine environment

