

[AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENTS OF COSTA RICA AND ECUADOR
TO PROTECT SHARKS, SEA TURTLES, AND WHALES]



Act now to create the
Cocos-Galapagos
Swimway and safeguard
the biodiversity of two key
World Heritage Sites.



Carlos Alvarado Quesada | Luis Madrigal Mena

Guillermo Lasso | Fundación del Barrio

On behalf of current and future generations, we the undersigned urge you to quickly move forward in creating the Cocos-Galapagos Swimway, one of the world's first bilateral fully protected marine protected areas designed to safeguard the migratory pathways of endangered marine species including leatherback sea turtles, scalloped hammerhead sharks, and green sea turtles.

This is a critical part of the expansion of both of these marine reserve areas which will anchor the ambitious plan to protect at least 30% of the marine territories of each country, a goal both Ecuador and Costa Rica have wisely committed to achieve.

We also urge both governments to fulfill their commitment to increasing protection in the open waters surrounding both Cocos and Galapagos: a wider process that integrates the Swimway concept with providing resilience to climate change, protection from illegal fishing, and taking firm steps towards a bluer economy in both nations.

Studies providing the scientific and economic justifications for protecting these important marine ecosystems have been completed by an international group of marine scientists

among which MigraMar has been a key contributor. In addition, support has been shown by a growing number of environmental organizations including the Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project who supported some of these studies and Mission Blue who recently declared the Cocos-Galapagos Swimway an international "Hope Spot."

By creating the Cocos-Galapagos Swimway, the nations of Ecuador and Costa Rica will protect the marine biodiversity of the Galapagos and Cocos Island World Heritage sites, which is threatened when these highly migratory species move beyond the fully protected zones of the reserves and fall victim to fishing pressures. Furthermore, the Cocos-Galapagos Swimway will create a new paradigm for marine species protection and will highlight the proactive efforts of your two great nations.

For these reasons, we urge you to sail forward quickly and decisively. In your hands is the opportunity to set an incredible global precedent for marine conservation by building on the cutting-edge environmental reputations you have built through the creation of terrestrial National Parks.

Now is the time to extend similar protections to the sea.

Endorsed by Dr. Sylvia Earle of Mission Blue, more than 10,000 scientists and concerned citizens, and more than 150 organizations around the world:

- Center for Biological Diversity • Centro Rescate Especies Marinas Amenazadas CREMA • Colectivo Internacional Pelagos Okeanos • Endangered Species Coalition • Equilibrio Azul • Fins Attached Marine Research and Conservation • Frente Insular de la Reserva Marina de Galapagos • Fundación MarViva • Fundación OneSea • Galapagos Conservation Trust • Green Wolf Costa Rica • Grupo de los Cien • Humane Society International • Instituto Baleia Jubarte • International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute • Island Conservation • Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ocean Futures Society • Marine Conservation Institute • Mas Galapagos • MigraMar • Mision Tiburon • Oceanic Preservation Society • Oceanic Society • One Health Ecuador • Operation Rich Coast • Osa Conservation • Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project • Sea Shepherd Conservation Society • Sea Turtle Conservancy • Seacology • Shark Allies • SOS Galápagos • The Leatherback Trust • The SeaChange Agency • Undersea Hunter • Upwell • ADIP • Aeon for Ocean • AIDA • Aktiosgemeinschaft Artenschutz (AGA) e.V. • American Bird Conservancy • Asociación Ecuatoriana de Carreras Ciencias Ambientales y Afines • Asociación OneHand Costa Rica • BigAnimals.com • Bitácora Ambiental • Bluecology • Born Free USA • Buceo Gavilana • Buro Comunicacion Integral • Campaña Escazú Ahora Costa Rica • CEDENMA • Ceiba Foundation for Tropical Conservation • Central Caribbean Marine Institute (CCMI) • Centro Comunitario de Buceo Embajadores y Embajadoras del Mar • Centro de Conservación Cetacea • Charity CR • Christian Vizl Underwater Photographer • Coalición Ambiental CR • COMARINO • Comité Bandera Azul Ecológica de Buena Vista • Conservation Council For Hawaii • CORAL MORPHOLOGIC • Corcovado Foundation • Costa Rica Dive and Surf • Daana Blue • Dive Resort Dive Costa Rica • Diwo Ambiental • Dodó Ilustración • Earth Law Center • Eco Runners CR • El Refugio Guanacaste • Endangered Habitats League • Enviajarme • Environmental Protection Information Center • For the Oceans Foundation • Fundación Promar • Fundación Somos Árboles y Vida • Fundación Soy Heroe Ambiental • Fungreen • Gallifrey Foundation • Great Old Broads for Wilderness • Green Heart • Hatillo Verde • Hawaii Wildlife Fund • IBRACON - Instituto Brasileiro de Conservação da Natureza • Inland Ocean Coalition • INNOCEANA • IntelliReefs CAN • JACÓ IMPACT • Keiko Conservation Ecuador • Klamath Forest Alliance • Kuychi • Lemur Conservation Network • Living Ocean Productions • MarAlliance • MareBlu Organización de Conservación Ambiental • Marine Conservation Costa Rica • Marine Megafauna Foundation • Mas Kagin Tapani (Makata) • Mexico Azul • New England Coastal Wildlife Alliance • North-West University • NY4WHALES • cean Conservation Research • Ocean Crest Alliance • Ocean Defenders Alliance • Ocean Doctor • Ocean First Institute • Ocean Planet • Ocean Protectors • Oceanic Global • Océano Divers Costa Rica • Olive Ridley Project • Paso Pacifico • Pelagios Kakunjá • Planeta Océano • Plastic Free Turtles • Plastic Ocean Project, Inc. • Projeto Verde Mar • Recuperadora Bosque Plástico S.A • Red de Juventudes y Cambio Climático de Costa Rica • Reef Life Foundation • Research Center for Environmental Management and Development - CIMAD • Safina Center • scubashooters.net • Sea Save Foundation • seasynergy.org • SEE Turtles • Shark Stewards of Earth Island Institute • Sustainable Ocean Alliance Ecuador • Talk on Climate • Tandari • The Clean Wave • The Manta Trust • The Science Exchange • The Wanderlust Fund • Tiburones Vivos • VICTORIA ANIMAL • VP Consultorías • Watermen Project • WildAid • Wings for Amazon Project • Wyland Foundation • ZERO



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