



THOMAS HORIG/OCEAN IMAGE BANK



A Blue Wave of Ocean Action

EVENTS GUIDE PART I
(JANUARY-JUNE 2026)

Prepared by Our Shared Seas

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OurSharedSeas.com

Overview

In 2026, the global ocean community is continuing to shift from planning to action, as the world races to meet the ambitious 2030 goals set out in the UN Ocean Decade. Facilitating these efforts, dozens of events in 2026 will gather leading ocean experts, funders, practitioners, and decision-makers to shape the future of a sustainable ocean.

To catalogue some of the most salient events, Our Shared Seas (OSS) is returning with our “Blue Wave of Ocean Action” series to highlight the most impactful events of the year, handpicked by our team. Once again, the calendar is replete with enough events that OSS is releasing our events guide in two parts this year. This edition will cover all events from January through June.

Multiple high-profile conferences and landmarks have already occurred at the time of publishing, and others are still on the horizon. So, this year, we will analyze the topline impacts of events that have already happened in 2026 and provide summaries of future events. The entries in this guide are a mix of open conferences, closed-door policymaking sessions, invite-only gatherings, and global landmarks. Dive in for detailed descriptions of these top-line ocean events! For a more complete list of ocean-related events happening in 2026, please visit oursharedseas.com.

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Key Events



HIGH SEAS TREATY ENTERS INTO FORCE

WHEN: January 17, 2026
WHERE: Global
MORE INFO: Global Event

Summary: The Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) treaty (also known as the “High Seas Treaty”) protects the two thirds of the global ocean area that is international waters (defined as more than 200 nautical miles from the nearest coastline) and its associated seabed. The High Seas Treaty created a mechanism for establishing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) on the high seas, with the aim of securing 30 percent protection by 2030. The treaty also established rules for sharing benefits from marine genetic material, sharing crucial marine knowledge, and conducting environmental impact assessments.

After 20 years of negotiation, the High Seas Treaty was adopted by the United Nations in March of 2023 and came into force on January 17, 2026, three months after the 60th country ratified the treaty.

Today more than 80 countries have ratified the treaty and those party to the agreement must begin the challenging work of implementing the protections by aligning on methods for identifying MPAs, developing methods for sharing monetary benefits from high seas genetic material, and developing an information-sharing platform. The first Convention of the Parties, at which member countries will begin efforts to implement the treaty, will likely occur later in 2026.



31ST INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY MEETING—PARTS I AND II

WHEN: February 23–March 19, 2026 (Part I)
June 29–July 31, 2026 (Part II)
WHERE: Kingston, Jamaica
MORE INFO: Policy-making event (closed)

Summary: Since 2021, the ISA has been under pressure to develop regulations on deep-sea mining in international waters after The Metals Company (TMC), supported by the Pacific island nation of Nauru, submitted its intent to seek a commercial mining operations permit in the highly valuable Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ) between the west coast of Mexico and Hawaii. This pressure ramped up in 2025 after United States President Trump signed an executive order calling for commercial mining in the CCZ, under dubious legal claims, potentially in violation of international law. Bolstered by this Executive Order, TMC claims that it will begin mining operations in late 2027.

For its 31st session, the ISA is working to develop regulations on commercial deep-sea mining to avoid a “wild west” scenario, and while the head of the ISA believes the organization can set regulations by the end of the session, many experts are doubtful and maintain that a slower process is necessary to ensure robust regulation. The first part of the conference resulted in slight progress toward agreement on a tax rate for deep-sea mining and other technical elements about financial regulations, but there are still significant details to be ironed out before a policy is ready. To track the meeting, visit the [ISA's website](#).



WORLD OCEAN SUMMIT 13

WHEN: March 4–5, 2026
WHERE: Montreal, Canada
MORE INFO: [Conference \(open\)](#)

Summary: An annual event from Economist Impact, the thirteenth World Ocean Summit convened leaders in ocean sustainability from industry, philanthropy, and NGOs to meet the moment of increasing climate impacts and new international ocean regulations. Attendees at this year’s summit noted a palpable shift away from problem identification and goal setting and toward implementing solutions, with a particularly strong focus on sustainable finance for these solutions.

The summit highlighted the need for accelerated blended finance and the need to better connect science and technology development with financing to deploy cutting-edge solutions at a rapid pace. The necessity of collaboration to move novel solutions from testing to full-scale deployment was also a major theme. Further, attendees noted an increased focus on the need to deploy solutions within a context of climate change; ocean acidification, rising sea levels, and decarbonization opportunities provided the backdrop for many of these solutions- and finance-focused conversations.

As with previous editions, the summit continued to feature “how-to” workshops, which have been a unique staple of the conference since they were introduced in 2024. These interactive workshops allow attendees to co-create actionable insights to drive sustainability in the ocean economy. This year’s workshops focused on the need for better baseline data to support solutions deployment, opportunities to include small-scale fisheries in ocean sustainability solutions, and scaling MPA implementation.

To view a summary of this year’s event, visit events.economist.com.



OCEAN INNOVATION AFRICA 2026

WHEN: March 23–25, 2026
WHERE: Durban, South Africa
MORE INFO: [Conference \(open\)](#)

Summary: Centered around achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14, Life Below Water. This conference brings together over 500 delegates, predominantly from the marine industry, working to drive a sustainable ocean economy in Africa. The conference aims to spark innovation and entrepreneurship, while building connections among ocean professionals to accelerate the development and funding of an innovative, sustainable blue economy.

Last year’s 2025 summit unveiled multiple high-profile accelerants for the sustainable African blue economy, including the launch of the Bahari Accelerator to invest in promising startups that aim to revolutionize Africa’s blue economy.

For more information and to attend, visit the [event website](#).



SKOLL WORLD FORUM 2026

WHEN: April 21–26, 2026
WHERE: Oxford, United Kingdom
MORE INFO: Conference (open to all digitally, invite-only in person)

Summary: The Skoll World Forum is one of the premier social innovation conferences in the world, bringing together influential stakeholders in philanthropy, civil society, government, industry, and entrepreneurship. The forum uses storytelling, collaborative workshops, and networking opportunities to share narratives of the push for global social improvement and connect professionals working on these topics. The role of art and story in driving global action is a cornerstone of each year's iteration.

The Skoll World Forum is a generalist space that covers global issues from economic inclusion to climate to human rights and more. The forum aims to drive collective action across a suite of interconnected social issues affecting the globe.

For more information, please visit skoll.org.



WIND EUROPE ANNUAL EVENT

WHEN: April 21–23, 2026
WHERE: Madrid, Spain
MORE INFO: Conference (open)

Summary: Wind Europe's annual event is the premier venue for the European wind industry to gather, learn from each other, and accelerate wind's role in European energy supply. The event is of rising importance to the ocean community as offshore wind becomes an increasing share of total wind buildout on the continent. In 2023, 20 percent of new wind capacity in Europe was offshore, but that figure is expected to grow to approximately [30 percent by 2030](#). This is reflected in this year's programming, which features multiple offshore wind-related sessions.

This year's event comes at a crucial time in Europe's energy future, as decarbonization has become a necessity for both climate mitigation and ensuring the region's energy security and economic future. The largest players in European offshore wind will gather to chart a path forward for the ocean's role in securing the decarbonization of electricity in Europe.

For more information and to register, visit windeurope.org.



5TH WORLD SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES CONFERENCE

WHEN: April 27–May 1, 2026
WHERE: Hua Lin, Thailand
MORE INFO: [Conference \(closed\)](#)

Summary: The 5th World Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) Conference reckons with both the increasing global attention being paid to SSFs globally, contrasted with the much slower rollout of protections for SSFs and the fishers dependent on them. The Conference will interrogate this gap between ideology and implementation by providing a space for practitioners to co-develop solutions and actions for the future of SSFs.

The conference will center on three themes: Just Harmony, Young Futures, and Regenerative Wisdom. The themes aim to uplift a future of fisheries policy that is equitable for SSFs, promotes the continuation of SSF fishing traditions well into the future, and uplifts indigenous knowledge as a critical component of sustainable fisheries.

The 5th World SSF Conference is hosted by Too Big to Ignore (TBTI). This year's fifth Congress is the first international Congress since 2018. While registration has completely filled, you can track the event at worldssfcongress.com.



BLUE FOOD INNOVATION SUMMIT

WHEN: May 27–28, 2026
WHERE: London, United Kingdom
MORE INFO: [Conference \(open\)](#)

Summary: The Blue Food Innovation Summit is one of the largest global gatherings of the aquaculture industry, civil society, and governments. The Summit showcases the cutting-edge technologies and practices shaping aquaculture's sustainability. The Summit looks to the future of aquaculture, helping next-generation producers scale up their production through networking, panels, and discussion spaces dedicated to the intersection of aquaculture science, technology, and sustainability.

This year's conference will center on the theme of aquaculture as a solution for food security and climate action. It will elevate aquaculture's role in a climate-friendly future where growing global wealth is increasing demand for animal protein. Panels will cover diverse topics from global supply chains to novel species production to financing to AI.

For more information and to register, visit bluefoodinnovation.com.



WORLD OCEAN DAY

WHEN: June 8, 2026
WHERE: Global
MORE INFO: Global Event

Summary: World Ocean Day is an annual day of celebration about the ocean and its role in sustaining global life. World Ocean Day provides an opportunity for organizations and educators to spread awareness about the Ocean, the threats it is facing, and the opportunities for individuals to act on its behalf. World Ocean Day is often a time for community events such as beach clean-ups.

The World Ocean Day, led by a council of young people from around the world, promotes community events on June 8th and everyday action throughout the rest of the year. The group aims to galvanize the public to take action for ocean sustainability by promoting education, community building, and political engagement. For more information, visit worldoceanday.org.



ASIA PACIFIC WIND ENERGY SUMMIT

WHEN: June 9–11, 2026
WHERE: Hanoi, Vietnam
MORE INFO: Conference (open)

Summary: Hosted by the Global Wind Energy Council, the Asia Pacific Wind Energy Summit provides a structured space to address policy frameworks, market development, and technology pathways shaping the region's energy transition. As the summit enters its fourth year, offshore wind is one of its leading topics. The Asia Pacific region represents the next frontier for offshore wind energy and a unique opportunity to accelerate the development of floating offshore wind technology.

This year, the Global Offshore Wind Alliance (GOWA) will be one of the most significant delegations. Launched at COP27, the alliance is formed by a collection of governments committed to accelerating offshore wind deployment through clear targets and coordinated action. GOWA's presence indicates that this year's summit will likely be a key venue for governments and the wind industry to help shape the future of offshore wind in the Asia Pacific region.

For more information and to express your registration interest, visit gwec.net.



BIODIVERSITY FUNDERS GROUP ANNUAL MEETING

WHEN: June 15–18 2026
WHERE: Girdwood, Alaska
MORE INFO: [Conference \(closed\)](#)

Summary: The Biodiversity Funders Group is a coalition of over 1,000 members, whose annual environmental grantmaking totals more than 1 billion dollars. The group facilitates research, knowledge sharing, and collaboration to shape the future of biodiversity-focused giving for both terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

Each year, the Funders Group gathers to learn about pressing issues facing biodiversity and opportunities to solve them, exchange strategies, and build relationships to multiply the organizations' collective impact. This year's meeting will be the first to be held in Alaska.

Details on the meeting, including speakers, sessions, and special activities, are still being determined. To track the event, visit biodiversityfunders.org.



11TH ANNUAL OUR OCEAN CONFERENCE

WHEN: June 16–18, 2026
WHERE: Mombasa, Kenya
MORE INFO: [Conference \(closed\)](#)

Summary: The annual Our Ocean Conference (OOC) convenes governments, NGOs, industry, and academia to align on solutions for and commitments to ocean sustainability. The conference represents a yearly opportunity for the community to reflect on lessons learned, updated science, and new solutions for protecting the ocean. While attending the official conference events requires accreditation, side events are open to non-accredited individuals.

The 11th edition (OOC 11), hosted in Kenya, will be the first Our Ocean Conference held in Africa. The conference centers on the theme “Our Ocean, Our Heritage, Our Future,” grounded in the ocean’s pivotal role in Kenyan society for millennia and into the future. The conference will focus on six core elements of ocean health: marine protected areas, sustainable blue economy, the ocean-climate nexus, sustainable fisheries, pollution, and maritime security. OOC 11 will also debut a new Commitments Tracker to encourage ambitious goal-setting, transparency, and accountability for governments and companies seeking to heal the ocean.

For more information, visit ouroceankenya.com.

Visit [Our Shared Seas](https://OurSharedSeas.com) to track the latest developments in the ocean event calendar:
<https://OurSharedSeas.com/events>