



THOMAS HORIG/OCEAN IMAGE BANK



A Blue Wave of Ocean Action

EVENTS GUIDE PART II
(JULY-DECEMBER 2026)

Prepared by Our Shared Seas

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OurSharedSeas.com

Overview

In the latter half of 2026, the global ocean community continues to race to meet the ambitious 2030 goals set out in the UN Ocean Decade. With momentum from a new set of commitments set during the Our Ocean Conference in June, leading ocean experts, funders, practitioners, and decision-makers will continue to meet throughout the end of the year to shape the future of a sustainable ocean.

Our Shared Seas (OSS) is thus returning with our “Blue Wave of Ocean Action” series to highlight the most impactful events of the year, handpicked by our team. This edition covers events from July through December, and will include a special entry for the first Conference of the Parties (COP1) to the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement in early 2027.

The entries in this guide are a mix of open conferences, closed-door policymaking sessions, and invite-only gatherings. We provide summary descriptions of each; for a more complete list of ocean-related events happening in 2026, please visit oursharedseas.com/events.

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Key Events



THE 31ST SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY (ISA), PART II

WHEN: June 29–July 31, 2026
WHERE: Kingston, Jamaica
MORE INFO: Policy-making event (closed)

Summary: The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is the sole global body responsible for regulating mineral resource extraction in international waters and has a mandate to protect the marine environment from harm caused by deep-seabed activities. The area under their regulation covers 54% of the world's oceans. For its 31st session, the ISA is working to develop regulations on commercial deep-sea mining, following mounting pressure in recent months after United States President Trump used a series of executive orders to call for commercial mining within the ISA's jurisdictional waters and directed his Administration to fast-track mining permits and approvals outside the ISA process.

The first part of the 31st Session was held in late February and early March and resulted in slight progress toward agreement on a tax rate for deep-sea mining and other technical elements of financial regulations. The second part of this conference will convene the Legal and Technical Commission (June 29–July 10), Finance Committee (July 7–10), Council (July 13–24), and Assembly (July 27–31) to continue negotiations to develop rules, regulations, and procedures around the commercial exploitation of deep-sea mineral resources. 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.

For the full program of events, visit [ISA's website](#).



THE 16TH INTERNATIONAL CORAL REEF SYMPOSIUM (ICRS)

WHEN: July 19–24, 2026
WHERE: Auckland, New Zealand
MORE INFO: Symposium (open)

Summary: Between 2023 and 2025, the world witnessed the fourth global coral bleaching event, the second in a single decade, affecting 84% of the world's reefs and threatening biodiversity, food security, coastal livelihoods, and local economies. Coral reefs are vital to the health of our oceans and planet, and the urgency of this situation has rapidly evolved since the International Coral Reef Symposium (ICRS) last convened four years ago. ICRS 2026 will serve as an important forum to highlight the plight of global reefs and to discuss scalable management solutions.

This year's Symposium in New Zealand will focus on the themes of traditional knowledge and management, coral reef ecology and connectivity, reef monitoring and assessment, socio-ecological feedback of reefs, and innovations in reef conservation and intervention.

For more information on panels, speakers, and the symposium schedule, visit the [event website](#).



THE 14TH ANNUAL WORLD CONGRESS OF OCEAN (WCO) 2026

WHEN: July 22–24, 2026
WHERE: Helsinki, Finland
MORE INFO: [Conference \(open\)](#)

Summary: The World Congress of Ocean (WCO) is considered one of the most renowned ocean events in the world, offering professionals in the ocean field a multidisciplinary, cooperative platform to meet and exchange ideas. WCO 2026 will feature scientific sessions, exhibitions, poster presentations, and technical tours to inspire action and foster solutions for a healthier, more resilient ocean.

Across three days in the heart of the Baltic Sea archipelago, session themes will span blue economy and financial innovations to maritime law, coastal and ocean engineering, aquaculture and fisheries, ocean science, energy development, and shipping. WCO is an opportunity to learn about impactful innovation and new research directly from industry leaders, academic researchers, government agents, and decision-makers.

A full list of speakers and events can be found on the [event website](#).



THE 55TH PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM (PIF) LEADERS MEETING

WHEN: August 30–September 4, 2026
WHERE: Koror, Palau
MORE INFO: [Conference \(closed\)](#)

Summary: Slated to be the most high-profile regional gathering to take place in Palau since it last hosted in 2014, the 55th annual Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders Meeting will convene under the theme, *Building Economies: Life. Action. Unity*. The forum is recognized as the premier policy platform for the Pacific region, fostering a space to develop collective strategies toward a resilient Pacific region through cooperation between governments, regional and international agencies, development partners, and local stakeholders.

Uplifting the shared Pacific identity, the meeting will strengthen community and culture and facilitate collaboration to safeguard and nurture a resilient, inclusive, sustainable Blue Pacific. This PIF Leaders Meeting comes at a pivotal time for the region as it aligns its policies under the [2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent](#). This strategy leverages technology, scientific research, cultural values and traditional knowledge, and equitable partnerships to secure our ocean with environmental integrity and drive sustainable economic prosperity for all Pacific peoples. Key priorities for the meeting align with those of the strategy: economic development, peace and security, gender equality, technology and connectivity, and trade amid growing challenges from climate change and geopolitical competition.

For more event details and to learn more about the PIF, visit their [website](#).



THE 3RD SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES (SSF) SUMMIT 2026

WHEN: September 4–6, 2026
WHERE: Rome, Italy
MORE INFO: [Conference \(closed\)](#)

Summary: Following successful gatherings in 2022 and 2024, the 3rd Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) Summit will provide an inclusive space for dialogue, learning, and exchange between small-scale fisher representatives, NGOs, academia, and government decision-makers. The core purpose will be to discuss and advance the implementation of [SSF Guidelines](#)—the first internationally negotiated, voluntary guidelines for sustainable small-scale fisheries, adopted by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 2014.

As part of the Summit's goal to ensure diverse regional representation and inclusive participation of women, youth, and Indigenous peoples, the International Planning Committee's (IPC) Working Group on Fisheries is co-developing with regional and global small-scale fisher representatives and technical experts the thematic pillars for the event.

The Summit aims to generate recommendations to drive the 2026–2028 SSF Global Strategic Framework (GSF), with a focus on policy mainstreaming, knowledge sharing, people-centered assessments, and national implementation. Additional expected outcomes include pathways for future collaborative actions at global, regional, and national levels and recognition of SSF actors in marine and inland fisheries governance as stewards of biodiversity, food security, and poverty eradication. To view the Summit's concept note and preliminary draft agenda, visit the [event website](#).



NEW YORK CLIMATE WEEK

WHEN: September 20–27, 2026
WHERE: New York, NY
MORE INFO: [Conference \(open\)](#)

Summary: Climate Week NYC is the world's largest climate event and a global platform for advancing climate and economic progress at scale. Over 100,000 climate actors from business, government, and local communities engage across 1,000+ events. *Nature, Land, & Oceans* is one of this year's twelve themes, which will focus on protecting and restoring nature to support communities, strengthen food and water security, and help societies adapt to a changing climate.

Climate Week NYC takes place alongside the UN General Assembly—the heartbeat of finance, policy, and global influence. The week serves as a catalyst for progress, partnerships, policymaking, and prioritization for climate impact. For more information and the full Events Program, visit their [website](#).



CONSERVATION ALLIANCE FOR SEAFOOD SOLUTIONS (CASS) CONFERENCE

WHEN: September 22–24, 2026
WHERE: Halifax, Nova Scotia
MORE INFO: [Conference \(open\)](#)

Summary: The Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions (CASS) Conference is an annual member gathering for NGOs, businesses, foundations, and academia to unite around the belief that the responsible seafood movement can protect our ocean and the people who depend on it.

The seafood industry is constantly evolving, as are solutions for greater sustainability. The conference will explore sustainable seafood solutions such as social responsibility efforts, accountability and transparency, responsible seafood in East Asia, NGO and business engagement, and other emerging challenges and opportunities. CASS members will explore these thematic areas through in-depth workshops and a first-ever “Fish Market” activity—plenary presentations and breakout groups to share ideas, pitch projects, and spark new partnerships and innovation. For more information and to track event updates, visit their [website](#).



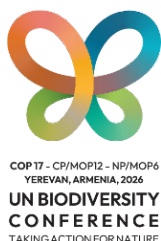
ARCTIC CIRCLE ASSEMBLY

WHEN: October 8–10, 2026
WHERE: Reykjavík, Iceland
MORE INFO: [Conference \(open\)](#)

Summary: Arctic Circle is the largest network of international dialogue and cooperation on the future of the Arctic. The annual Assembly is an open platform with participation by heads of state and governments, Indigenous leadership and representatives, experts, scientists, entrepreneurs, business leaders, students, and activists from the growing international community interested in the Arctic.

The Assembly offers pop-up events such as International Film Festival showcases, art exhibitions, and research booths. Last year’s event presented the Business Forum, the Polar Dialogue, and Roundtables, with government speakers, including ministers, senators, and diplomats. The 2026 Assembly is set to host similarly high-profile leaders and advocates for the Arctic Circle, as well as a new All-Access Journey for Arctic Indigenous Youth (ages 18 to 30) to participate in sessions and speaking opportunities.

To learn more about the event, programs, and logistics, visit their [website](#).



THE 17TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (COP 17)

WHEN: October 19–30, 2026
WHERE: Yerevan, Armenia
MORE INFO: [Conference \(closed\)](#)

Summary: The 17th Conference of the Parties (COP 17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity will mark the first global review of collective progress towards the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), which includes the “30×30” biodiversity targets. At this COP, decisions will be made on the monitoring, financing, and implementation of marine ecosystems and climate. Priority areas include strengthening Indigenous peoples’ role in biodiversity protection, confronting the biodiversity financing gap, and mainstreaming biodiversity across government and industry.

COP 17 aims to set a multi-year roadmap through 2030 to accelerate action for nature and strengthen links between biodiversity and climate. COP 17 will occur in Yerevan in conjunction with the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CP-MOP-12) and the sixth MOP to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from their Utilization (NP-MOP-6). The joint conferences allow for alignment between biosafety regulations, benefit-sharing mechanisms, and broader global biodiversity targets to ensure the use of modern biotechnology does not outpace environmental safeguards.

To learn more about COP 17 and the Convention on Biological Diversity, visit the [website](#).



THE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD SUMMIT (TSSS)

WHEN: October 21–23, 2026
WHERE: Tokyo, Japan
MORE INFO: [Conference \(open\)](#)

Summary: The Sustainable Seafood Summit (TSSS) is one of Asia’s largest sustainable seafood events, aiming to advance sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. Key domestic and international players across business, research, implementation, and advocacy will convene to exchange knowledge and hands-on experience. The theme of this year’s TSSS is “Resonating Actions, Scaling Impact.”

The sustainable seafood sector faces discrete challenges but also has the potential to protect our global oceans with solutions that transcend borders, cultures, and industries. Sessions will include the East Asian Roadmap, a Global Roadmap to 2030, with the goal for sustainable seafood to “win the mainstream.”

For the full program of events, speakers, and updates, visit the [event website](#).



THE 31ST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (COP 31)

WHEN: November 9–20, 2026
WHERE: Antalya, Turkey
MORE INFO: [Conference \(closed\)](#)

Summary: Turkey will host this year's United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) global climate summit for negotiations and commitments to climate action. The Presidents of COP 31 have emphasized the urgency of collective action as our strongest tool to counter the current moment of uncertainty and to accelerate climate strategies and impact. Turkey has announced its new targets under the Global Climate Action Agenda, namely, expanding electrification, minimizing global waste, and reducing energy consumption in the building sector.

During COP 31, the Brazilian Presidency will report on the outcomes of their roadmaps developed last year at COP 30 on a just transition away from fossil fuels and on halting and reversing deforestation. Other anticipated topics of discussion at COP 31 include the seventh review of the financial mechanism and the periodic review of the long-term global goal under the Convention and of overall progress toward achieving it.

For full program details, schedules, and announcements, visit the official COP 31 Turkey [website](#).



THE 8TH INTERNATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION CONGRESS (IMCC8)

WHEN: November 13–17, 2026
WHERE: Edinburgh, Scotland
MORE INFO: [Conference \(open\)](#)

Summary: The International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC) strikes a balance between science, policy, and real world conservation, aiming to connect marine science with action for the planet and its people. Hosted biennially by the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) Global Marine Program, IMCC is the world's largest gathering dedicated to ocean conservation, where stakeholders convene to exchange research and advance evidence-based ocean conservation solutions. Anticipated topics of focus include the blue economy, marine food systems, coastal restoration, deep-sea mining, ocean acidification, and fisheries.

IMCC8 will bring together diverse voices from across disciplines and geographies. This year's plenary speakers from across the global marine conservation community are Kathryn Matthews (Oceana), Liz Karan (The Pew Charitable Trusts), Helen Webb and Rachel Lopata (Sea Changers), Gonzalo Araujo (Mareco), and Paolo Fanciulli (National Geographic Pristine Seas Fellow). Guided by the theme Marine Science for the Planet and its Peoples, IMCC8 builds on the Congress's mission of making marine science matter. For more information and the Congress's program of events, visit their [official website](#).



THE 7TH WORLD CONFERENCE ON MARINE BIODIVERSITY

WHEN: November 17–20, 2026
WHERE: Bruges, Belgium
MORE INFO: [Conference \(open\)](#)

Summary: The World Conference on Marine Biodiversity (WCMB) is a recognized UN Ocean Decade event, advancing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14. This year marks WCMB's halfway point as a Decade event, which makes it a unique opportunity to evaluate its ongoing initiatives and strategize for the next five years. Serving as a platform to discuss current and emerging marine biodiversity issues, the 7th WCMB is devoted to the theme “the marine biodiversity insights we need, for the ocean we want.”

Scientists, practitioners, and policymakers will assemble to identify ways to protect and sustainably manage marine ecosystems and their resources. The Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ), the organizer of the conference, is a major player in marine biodiversity data and research across Europe and worldwide. Participants will get to exchange knowledge and participate in the field-wide community driving evidence- and nature-based climate solutions and modern conservation initiatives. For details on the program, registration, and sponsorship, visit the [official event site](#).



THE 1ST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP1) TO THE BIODIVERSITY BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION (BBNJ)

WHEN: January 11–22, 2027
WHERE: New York, NY
MORE INFO: [Conference \(open\)](#)

Summary: The Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement's historic first Conference of Parties will mark the shift from negotiation to practical implementation of the High Seas Treaty. Ninety-one states have ratified the agreement, and the COP will be an opportunity to establish the treaty's foundational architecture. The UN General Assembly established a Preparatory Commission (PrepCom) as the acting interim secretariat, which is drafting recommendations on the Agreement's institutional and financial matters to be considered for adoption at COP1. The PrepCom convened for its third time in April to finalize their recommendations. At PrepCom 3, three candidates—Belgium, Chile, and China—presented bids to host the BBNJ Secretariat. The final host selection will occur at COP1.

BBNJ COP1 is expected to focus on governance issues; financial rules, resources, and mechanisms; and issues pertaining to the operation of the clearing-house mechanism (a centralized digital platform for the Treaty's database). Delegates will seek to finalize the governing rules of procedure and operations to ultimately enact practical protections for marine biodiversity. The full agenda is still in progress.

To learn more about the BBNJ Agreement and track official updates, documents, and schedules, visit the official UN agreement [webpage](#).

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