



Photo by Sterling Zumbrunn

Bird's Head Seascape

The Bird's Head Seascape (BHS) located in northwest Papua in Indonesia, stretches from Cenderawasih Bay in its eastern reaches to the Raja Ampat archipelago in the west and the Fakfak-Kaimana coastline in the south, sitting firmly in the global epicenter of marine biodiversity. With more than 1600 recorded species of coral reef fishes and 600 scleractinian corals (approximately 75 percent of the world's total), the BHS has the highest coral reef biodiversity recorded for an area of this size anywhere in the world. The BHS also includes critical habitats for globally threatened marine species, including turtles, whales and dolphins.

These reefs and mangrove forests are the life support system for the people of the BHS. They provide food, jobs, and protection from storms and rising seas for more than 761,000 people. Sadly, these vital resources are under threat. Destructive and overfishing practices, poor coastal development, unsustainable and illegal logging and mining are negatively impacting the Seascape's coastal and marine environment.

Thanks to strong partnerships, engaged local governments and communities, more than 3.5 million hectares spanning 12 Marine Protected Areas (MPA) across the BHS is now protected. But to secure the health of these vital resources for the people of the BHS, there is still much more to do.

Working in Partnership

The BHS Initiative was established in 2005 to find a balance between protecting the Seascape's rich natural resources and ensuring people continue to benefit from the use of these resources. A strong, successful and unprecedented partnership between three international NGOs— The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Conservation International (CI) and WWF-Indonesia — local, regency, provincial and national governments, coastal

- 🌿 Total area: Over 22.5 million hectares
- 🌿 Population: 761,000
- 🌿 Rich Papuan Culture
- 🌿 255 tribes and language groups in West Papua and Papua Provinces
- 🌿 600+ species of corals
- 🌿 1,669 species of reef fish
- 🌿 16 species of whales and dolphin
- 🌿 Resident and migratory whale sharks
- 🌿 Dugongs
- 🌿 Saltwater crocodiles
- 🌿 Regionally significant nesting leatherback and green populations, and hawksbill turtles
- 🌿 Globally important dive destination

communities, local organizations and universities provides the platform on which sustainable development can be achieved.

Our Conservation Goal

The coastal and marine resources of the Bird's Head Seascape are effectively and sustainably managed and provide lasting, tangible benefits for its people.

The Bird's Head Conservation Initiative

At the center of this ambitious initiative is the establishment and implementation of a multiple-use network of ecologically connected and resilient MPAs that is supported by and embedded in local and national legislation and co-managed by local communities and local government agencies.

Locally declared MPAs focus on empowering local communities to manage their own MPAs, and strengthening their land and marine tenure rights. Management and zoning

Bird's Head Seascape : Marine Protected Areas



plans incorporate cutting-edge fisheries management theory while also reviving traditional Papuan resource management systems, such as 'sasi', and encouraging these communities to retain their cultural identity.

The efforts of the BHS team and our partners are directed toward strengthening on-the-ground implementation in the Seascape's MPAs as well as supporting cross-cutting policy, governance, environmental education, monitoring, and financing initiatives to secure a sustainable future for the Seascape.

Our Conservation Strategies

There are six conservation strategies guiding the implementation of the BHS MPA Network. These include:

Developing **effective local management** to monitor, enforce and provide community outreach for the MPA Network.

Building the capacity of local MPA managers to manage the Seascape's rich natural resources by hiring, empowering, and training local people in natural resource management.

Establishing a BHS Secretariat to ensure the MPA Network is integrated with Provincial level efforts.

Working to ensure that the **MPA Network is recognized and embedded** within regency, provincial and national spatial plans and coastal management strategies.

Improving tourism practices to minimize environmental impact and maximize economic benefits to local people.

Providing environmental education for school children in remote communities.



Photo by Jones/Shimolee-Secret Sea

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