



newsletter: december 2022

RAJA AMPAT, INDONESIA

Welcome to Misool Foundation's Newsletter. This time:

- Rewilding at Misool: Reversing the Extinction Trend
- Manta Populations Double in Southeast Misool
- Full Moon Coral Spawning
- End of Year Donations

Read, watch, listen and [let us know](#) what you love.

Rewilding at Misool: Reversing the Extinction Trend



In 1854, the author of 'Walden', Henry David Thoreau, famously withdrew from daily life and began a self-imposed hiatus in the wild. Enconced in a woodland cabin for two years, two months and two days, he observed and documented his experience in nature. His intention was to: "*live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life.*" Some theorists believe that he felt impelled to cut himself off due to his rising despondency with the changing world.

Two centuries ago, human activity already had a discernible impact on nature's rhythm. Population numbers were 85% lower than today: approximately 1.2 billion in 1850, compared to the current estimate of [8 billion in 2022](#). Despite significantly lower population pressure, the Industrial Revolution brought pioneering changes to industry, communication, and transport networks that redefined commerce and laid the foundations for globalization. Thoreau, also known as the [granddaddy of environmentalism](#), foresaw the emerging conflicts between humans and nature.

"I should be glad if all the meadows on the earth were left in a wild state, if that were the consequence of men's beginning to redeem themselves."

- Henry Thoreau, Walden



His philosophies remain relevant in our modern world and unless, like Thoreau, you've been living a disconnected life in the woods, it's quite likely that you have heard of rewilding. The intention of rewilding is a slow, steady restoration of native nature, creating spaces inside which ecosystems can rebalance. [Rewilding Europe](#) defines it as the act of: "letting nature take care of itself, enabling natural processes to shape land and sea, repair damaged ecosystems and restore degraded landscapes."

Rewilding is a concept that would undoubtedly have had Thoreau's full backing. This is one of a number of strategies that are urgently needed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, one of the central goals of the [COP15 Biodiversity Conference](#) happening right now in Montreal.



In 2005, when we began our mission at [Misool Resort](#) to transform a shark finning camp into a thriving marine protected area, the term was yet to enter the popular lexicon, but we were rewilding. We knew if we gave nature space to breathe, it would recover and rebound.

Our investment in rewilding has been a win for nature. We've recorded a remarkable increase in fish biomass and shark numbers, protected a thriving population of endangered manta rays and reversed the degradation of the coral reefs. In 17 years, we've employed a holistic approach, from our 18-person Ranger patrol who protect the boundaries of the [Misool Marine Reserve](#), a [Reef Restoration Project](#) that replants corals and direct, small-scale interventions such as assisting turtles back to the ocean after laying their eggs.

We invite you to enjoy this short film about our rewilding journey thus far. Special thanks to MAC3 Impact Philanthropies for sharing this at the Asian Philanthropy Circle event in November.



VIDEO: Rewilding Misool



Manta Populations Double in Southeast Misool

New research from University of Auckland's Edy Setyawan and leading manta ray researchers from Raja Ampat MPA management authority, [Yayasan Konservasi Indonesia](#), has shown that Raja Ampat's reef manta rays are thriving, and that Misool's reef manta ray population has more than doubled in a 10-year period.

Despite a bleak global outlook for sharks and rays, this research demonstrates that with the right conservation measures and a vested economic interest in protecting them, manta rays can indeed prosper in our modern oceans.

We're particularly grateful to everyone who has visited Misool and provided ID shots to the [Misool Manta Project](#). Our guests donated almost all the data from the Misool area that was used in this paper, further exemplifying the power of tourism and citizen science in the conservation mix.

[Read the Full Research](#)



Can you help? Edy and his team would like anyone who has Manta ID shots from Raja Ampat and Misool to share them and support this ongoing research.

Send directly to Edy using the button below and if you need a little guidance, take a look at [The Birdsheed Seascape's Guide to Manta IDs](#).

[Submit Manta ID Shots](#)

Full Moon Coral Spawning

Each year on Misool's reefs, under a blanket of moonlight we witness a rare and exciting spectacle: full moon coral spawning.

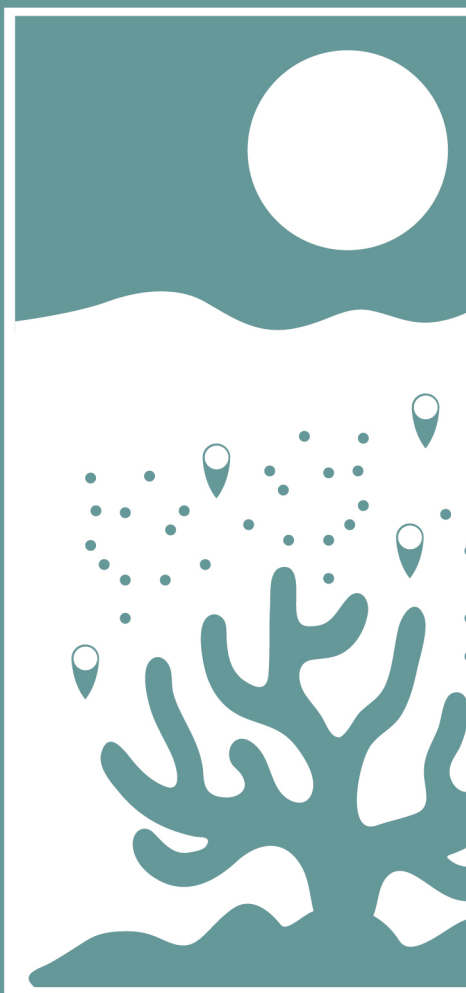


VIDEO: Full Moon Coral Spawning

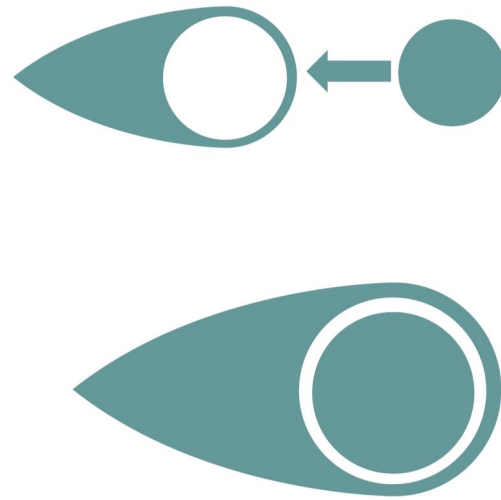
During these events, coral release gametes (eggs and sperm) into the water in a synchronised act of mass repopulation.

In many locations, this happens once a year, but at Misool there are two occurrences, one in October and one in April. In fact, Sabine our resident nature nerd, can predict the exact date this will take place.

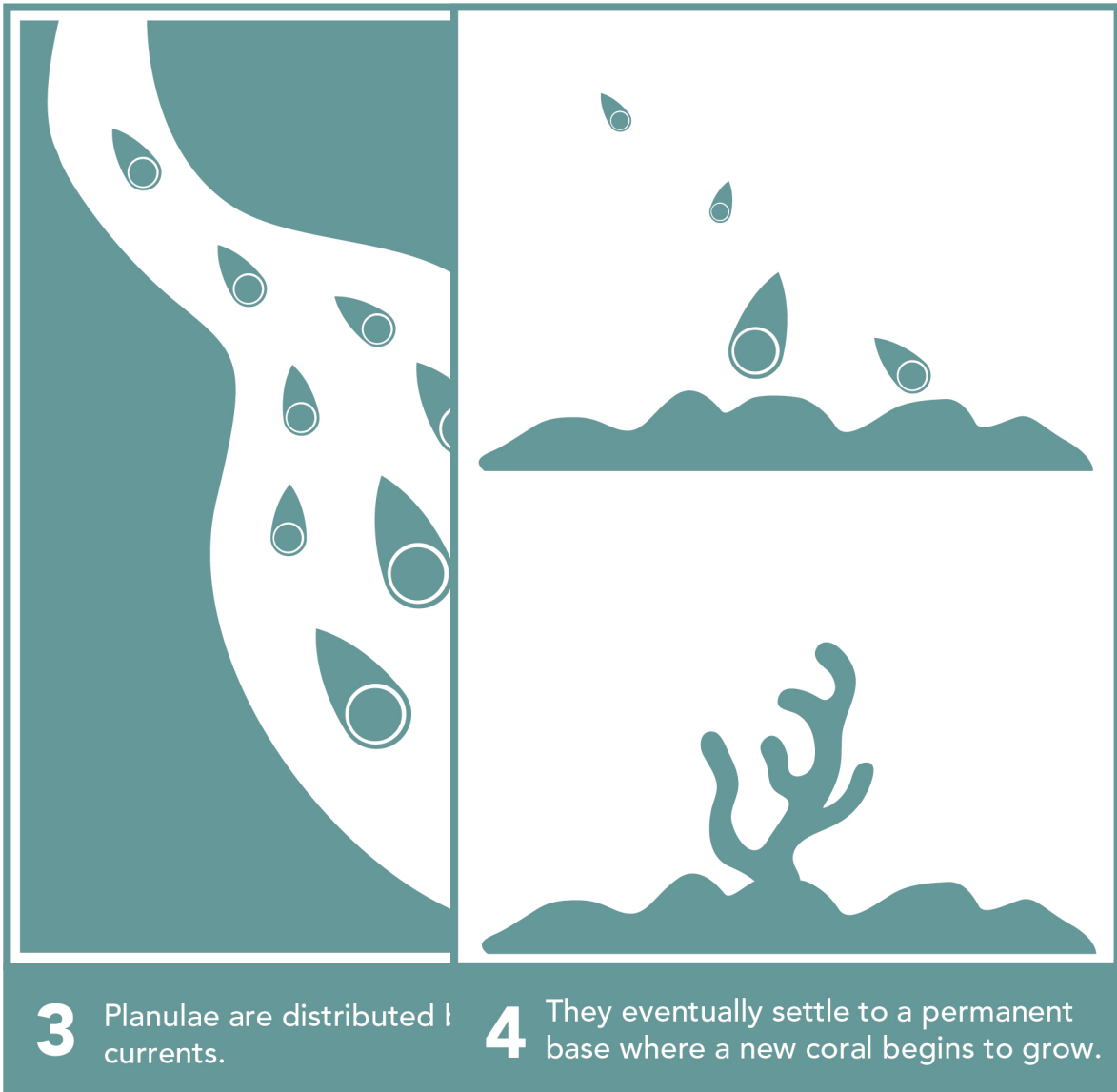
We've identified the coral species are Acropora, a hard, reef building coral. What we don't know is exactly how far they travel on Raja Ampat's ocean currents, but this biannual event is fundamental in maintaining healthy reefs throughout the Coral Triangle.



1 Triggered by the full moon
release eggs and sperm.



2 Eggs and sperm meet to form
planulae.



End of Year Donations

If you are inspired by our work and would like to support us, donations, no matter how big or how small, are gratefully received.

You can donate online via our partner, Wildlife Conservation Network. Please make sure you select 'Coral – Indonesia' from the Programs List and we will receive 100% of your donation. Wildlife Conservation Network is a registered 501(c)(3) charity. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

[Donate Now](#)

next time: the new boat at misool resort (it's electric!) and recipes from our island kitchen



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Misool, Raja Ampat, Indonesia
Protecting the World's Richest Reefs