

Commonwealth Blue Charter

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Commonwealth Secretariat



The Commonwealth
Blue Charter

December 2021

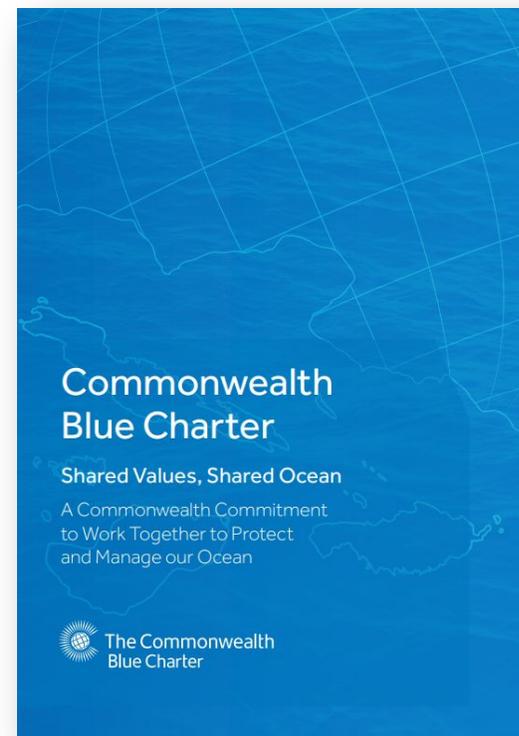
The Commonwealth is an Ocean Commonwealth

- **87% (47/54) of Commonwealth countries border the ocean**
- **Over 1/3 of the ocean under national jurisdiction is in the Commonwealth (35.5%)**
- **More ocean than land**
 - Commonwealth SIDS/LOS average 20x more ocean, for some 4000x more ocean
- Globally, Commonwealth countries are stewards of:
 - **~45% warm water coral reefs**
 - **~34% of mangroves**



(c) Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific

The Commonwealth Blue Charter



Implementation: Action Groups

- Countries working together - 46 to date
- Set a shared agenda - varied approaches
- Supported by Secretariat - meetings, webinars, trainings, project development
- Implementing projects with partners



Bloomberg
Philanthropies
Vibrant Oceans
Initiative

eXXpedition
MAKING THE UNSEEN SEEN

ORRAA
Ocean Risk and
Resilience Action Alliance

NEKTON
DEEP OCEAN EXPLORATION

The Association
of Commonwealth
Universities

ASU
Arizona State
University
VULCAN

Blue Charter Champions and Action Groups



Coral reef protection and restoration

Australia, Belize and Mauritius



Mangrove ecosystems and livelihoods

Sri Lanka



Marine plastic pollution (CCOA)

United Kingdom and Vanuatu



Ocean and climate change

Fiji



Ocean acidification

New Zealand



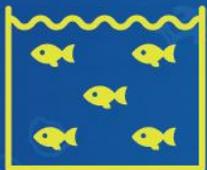
Marine protected areas

Barbados and Seychelles



Ocean observations

Canada



Sustainable aquaculture

Cyprus



Sustainable blue economy

Antigua and Barbuda and Kenya



Sustainable coastal fisheries

Kiribati and Maldives





Coral Reef Protection and Restoration Action Group

- Co-Championed by Australia, Belize & Mauritius
- 8 member countries
- 37 of the 54 Commonwealth countries have warm-water coral reefs, accounting for 45% of global coverage
- 10 out of 20 countries with largest coral reef area are within the Commonwealth
- Knowledge sharing, cooperation, best practices

Overarching Goal for Coral Reef Ecosystems

Improved outlook for the health, sustainability and functionality of coral reef ecosystems, which in turn can maintain and enhance livelihood opportunities.



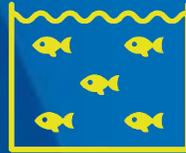
Membership with ICRI - our commitment

- Supporting collective and coordinated action addressing challenges related to corals, noting that 19 ICRI members are also Champions or members of a Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group;
- Working with ICRI and its *ad hoc* committees to develop research, policy, knowledge sharing and educational opportunities;
- Communicating about threats to coral reefs and actions being taken to tackle these threats;
- Providing expertise to assist in developing and reviewing policies;
- Supporting the work being undertaken by the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network by providing a platform for more Commonwealth countries to contribute to the mapping and monitoring.

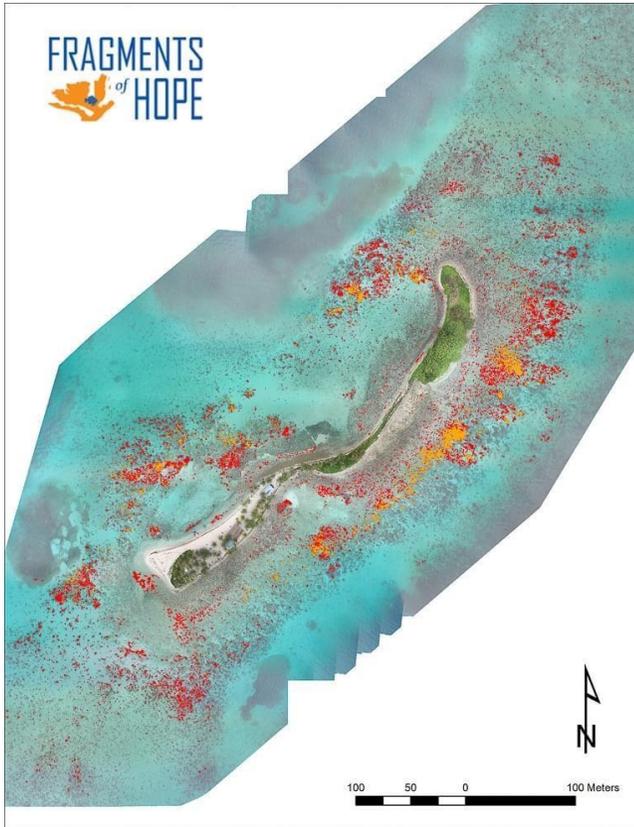
Commonwealth Blue Charter Case Studies



The Commonwealth
Blue Charter

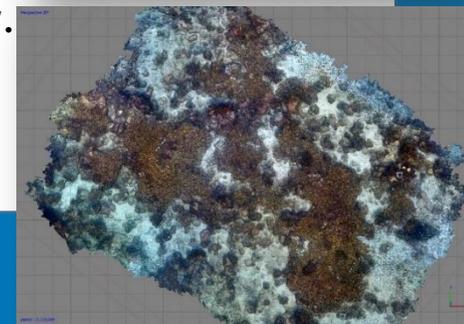
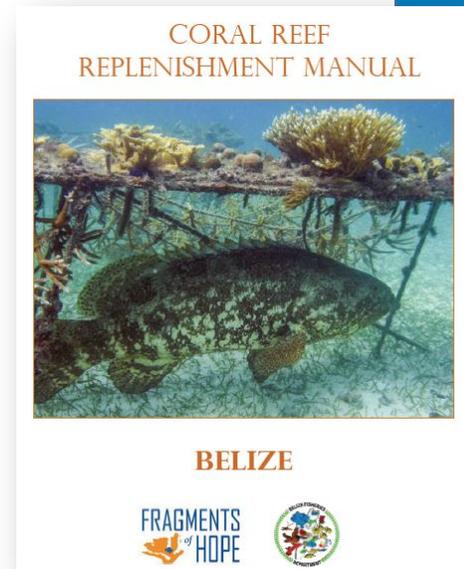


Case study 1: Reef restoration at Laughing Bird Caye, Belize



Credit: Steve Schill (TNC) and Emily Peterson (BYU)

- *Acropora* decline: hurricanes, bleaching, white-band disease
- Fragmentation approach - select for heat resistance
- 82,879 nursery-grown corals outplanted
- 10-20% annual coral cover increases *without adding more corals*.
- > 1 ha of shallow degraded reef replenished.
- Live coral cover increase from 6% (2010) to 40% (2020)
- 89% survival of outplanted individuals after 13 years.
- Now 23 *in situ* coral nurseries throughout Belize
- Training curriculum & manual developed for coastal community.
- Lessons: involve local community - build expertise - protect grazers and control fishing (no-take zones) - avoid outplanting in hurricane/bleaching season



Case study 1: Reef restoration at Laughing Bird Caye, Belize



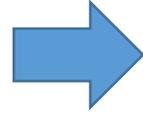
Case study 2: National Coral Reef Network, Mauritius



- Aims:
 - improvement and harmonization of policies, legal and institutional frameworks
 - through a collaborative and consultative approach
 - enhancing networking and improving collaboration
 - better exchange of data and biodiversity-related information
- Network members:
 - Government bodies
 - public/private institutions, research institutions, NGOs
 - coastal communities directly or indirectly involved in marine-related activities
- Recent activities:
 - harmonization of coral data collection methodology;
 - training workshop on “Identification of Coral Diseases and Monitoring”;
 - drafting “National Protocol for the population control of Crown of Thorns starfish in Mauritius”.

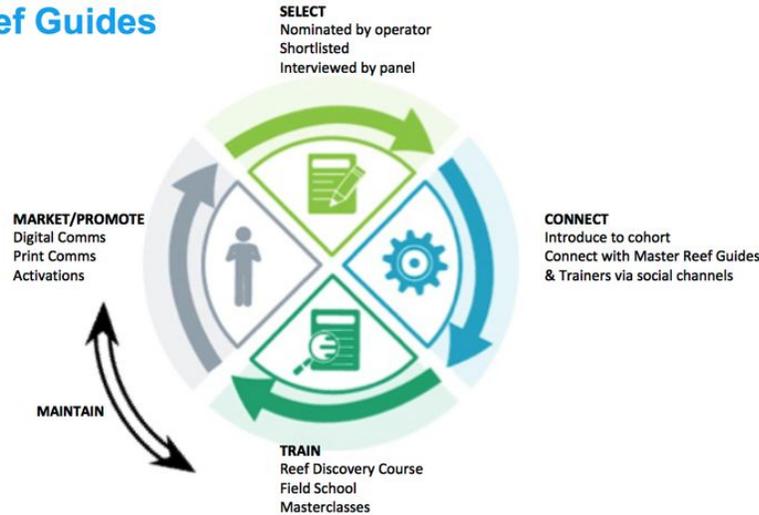
Case study 3: Master Reef Guide program, Australia

- Great Barrier Reef - World Heritage Area
- 65,000 tourism jobs
- Healthy reef = healthy industry



- First-of-kind program for coral reefs.
- Provides industry and government recognized qualification to build capacity of tourism staff.
- Master Reef Guides need to pass a comprehensive selection procedure and training process.
- 3 cohorts of Master Reef Guides trained in 2018/19.

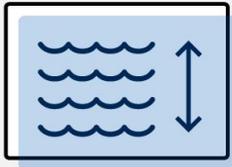
Master Reef Guides Model



Partnerships: The Allen Coral Atlas



SATELLITE IMAGERY

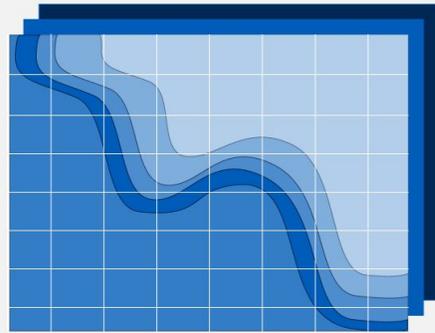


DEPTH DATA



FIELD VERIFICATION

Allen Coral Atlas



The Allen Coral Atlas provides the first regularly updated 3.7-meter resolution satellite images of the world's coral reefs. With the Atlas, coral conservationists, reef managers and scientists have access to information that has never before been available at this scale.



CONSERVATION



RESTORATION



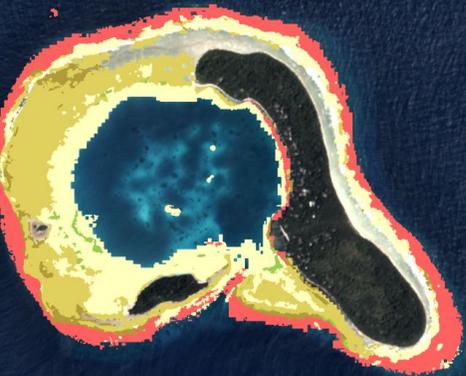
PROTECTION



Learn more at www.allencoralatlas.org and www.thecommonwealth.io/coral-reef-mapping/

Fiji

WWF Fiji expedition to Great Sea Reef using the Atlas for MPA implementation, reef status assessment and to inform regional marine spatial planning



Benthic classes

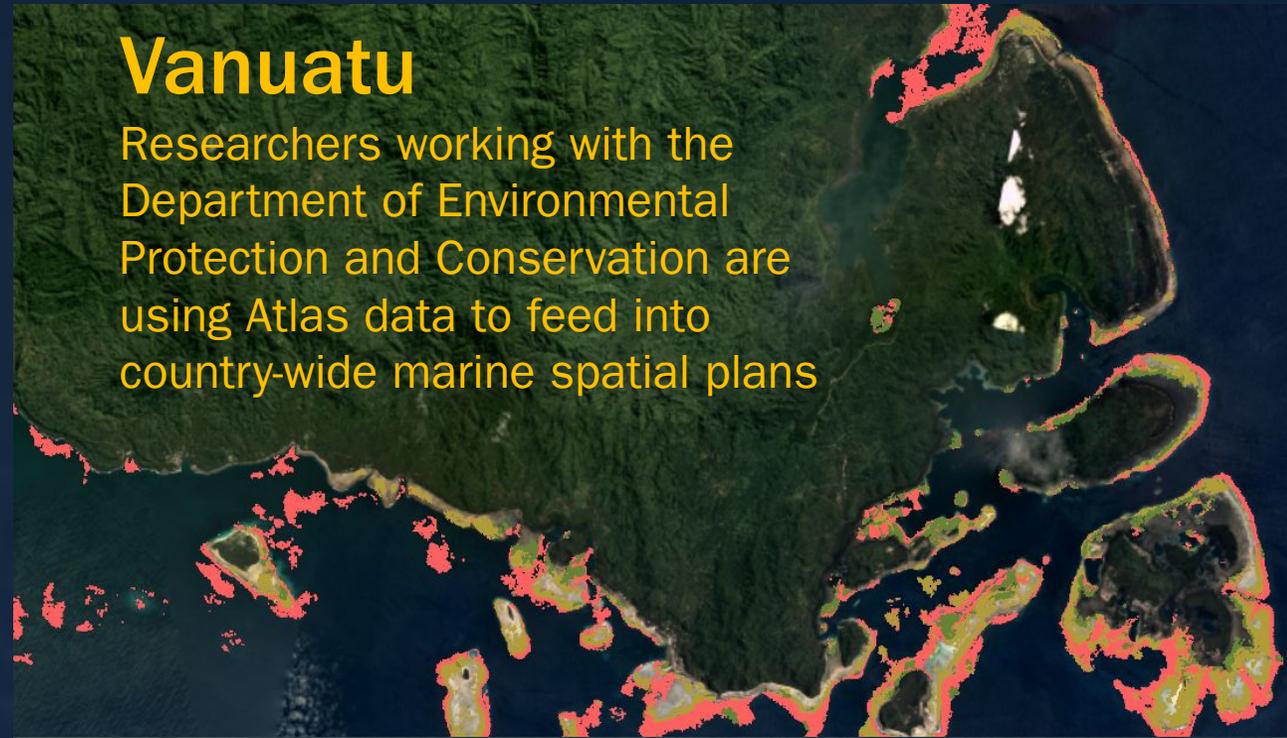
- Coral/Algae
- Microalgal Mats
- Rock
- Rubble
- Sand
- Seagrass

Geomorphic zones

- Back Reef Slope
- Deep Lagoon
- Inner Reef Flat
- Outer Reef Flat
- Patch Reefs
- Plateau
- Reef Crest
- Reef Slope
- Shallow Lagoon
- Sheltered Reef Slope
- Small Reef
- Terrestrial Reef Flat

Vanuatu

Researchers working with the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation are using Atlas data to feed into country-wide marine spatial plans



Sri Lanka

Designation of the Kayankerni Reef area as a National Park based on Allen Coral Atlas habitat data



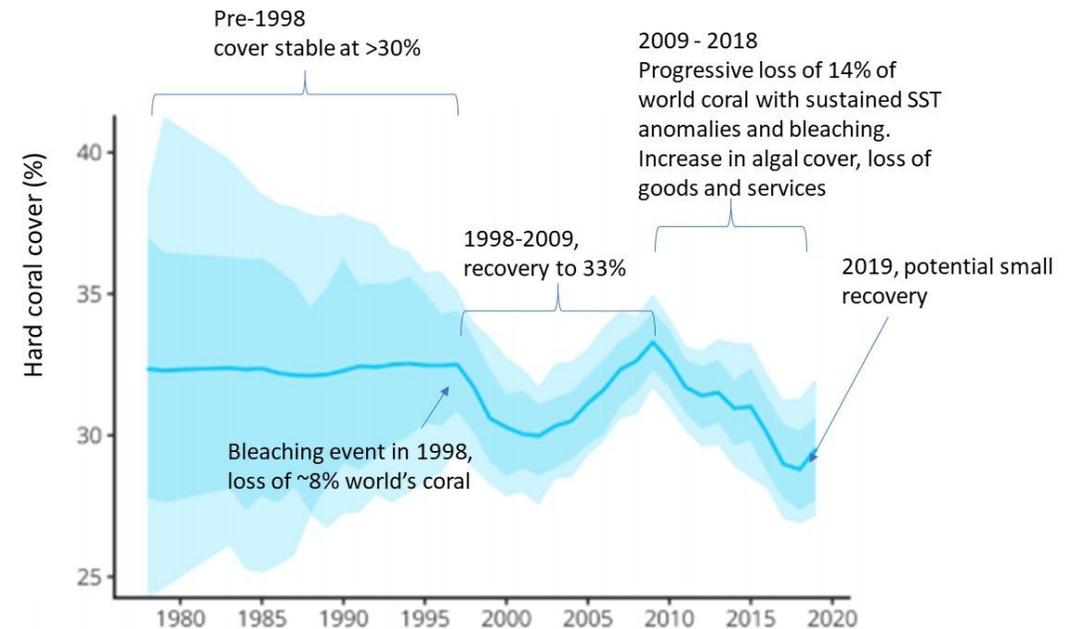


Any Questions?

#BlueCharter
@commonwealthsec
@nmco2

GCRMN Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2020 Report

- First to base results on quantitative analysis of a global dataset spanning from 1978 to 2019, consisting of almost 2 million observations from more than 12,000 sites globally.
- Large scale bleaching events are greatest disturbance to global and regional coral cover on reefs.
- Coral reefs will experience further declines in the coming decades associated with continued sea surface temperature (SST) increases.
- However, many of the world's coral reefs remain resilient and can recover if conditions permit.
- Not declining: East Asian seas region and Western Indian Ocean
- Ongoing investment in methodological approaches, capability and capacity that expands geographic coverage of data is essential.



Progress so far



6 Partnerships



Over 30,000 visitors welcomed to the website



19 promotional videos created



280 officials registered on the CBC knowledge hub



11 Knowledge Exchange webinars and 10 hybrid ocean events at COP26



15 Thematic toolkits developed



215 external training opportunities compiled in a searchable database



16 bespoke online training courses held or scheduled



115 online funder profiles compiled, providing access to opportunities worth £126,250,360

