Looking forward to 2019

As a strong voice for communicating the urgent need for ocean protection, Dr. Sylvia Earle continues to lead communities around the world into action through Mission Blue’s Hope Spots initiative.

Highlights 2018:

• Dr. Earle met with world leaders, encouraging them to institute unprecedented marine protected areas around the globe. This included Mexico’s President, Enrique Niento Pena, who designated the largest MPA in North America; and Chile’s President, Michel Bachelet, who created ocean protected areas in Chile encompassing almost 450,000 square miles, including Rapa Nui. She also gave President Tommy Remangeseau Mission Blue’s first Ocean Leadership award.

• The Hope Spot online community continues to grow. For engagement, we are in the top 10 ocean conservation brands. We are on track to have 1 million followers across our online channels by mid 2019.

• This past year, we designated 17 new Hope Spots— for a total of 107.

• We led two Hope Spot expeditions to Spitsbergen and Palau. These expeditions enable us to build support—at the local level—for Hope Spots which is critical to the success. During the past ten years our expeditions have taken us to more than a dozen Hope Spots locations, including trips to Spain, Mexico, and Costa Rica.

Momentum behind Hope Spots continues to grow at the grassroots level and with the general public. Our primary aim is to advance these locations from hope to real maximum protection. Community engagement is at the heart of Hope Spots and our ability to share the passion and action happening at the local level fuels inspiration and hope globally. This upcoming year we’ll focus even more on highlighting all of the action and progress in our Hope Spots at the local level.

Mission Blue is in a strong position to impact even greater change in 2019!
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A Network of Hope Spots

by Shannon Rake

In 2018, interest in Hope Spots and our work to engage local communities continued to expand, not only with local groups and NGOs, but also within the ocean science community globally. Hope Spots represent the first step in a process towards protection for many cases. In others it is helping to push for a management plan for a park already designated by a government or doubling down with support for protected areas in light of regular changes in government administrations that inevitably take place over time.

The flow of nominations is steady, and in partnership with IUCN and the Hope Spot Advisory Council, we designated 17 new Hope Spots in 2018. We will work with these communities over the upcoming year to develop local protection efforts including outreach, policy, science programs, and ultimate government action.

In 2019, Mission Blue will continue to scale up community engagement. With 107 current Hope Spots and under the guidance of the Hope Spot Advisory Council, we are standardizing designations and creating an interactive online management system, the Hope Spot Information Platform (HSIP) to guide communities and partners through the process of progressing these areas from hope to maximum protection. We will be presenting the following nominations to council in 2019 to be approved for designation as Hope Spots:

- Sydney Marine Park Australia
- Kep Archipelago Cambodia
- Dulce Gulf Costa Rica, Island of Tetiaroa French Polynesia
- Agyll Coast and Islands Scotland
- Salisbury Island Australia
- Pangatalan Island Phillipines

Community Engagement Goals/Outcomes

- Increase Hope Spot designations
- Develop effective methods to support Hope Spots — individually and collectively — to raise awareness and support communities directly
- Leverage Dr. Earle’s voice via videos and social media to support local efforts
- Initiate Hope Spots in Asia
- Monitor and report success for all Hope Spots in progressing from hope to full protection
Building an Online Community through Outreach and Education

by Brett Garling

In 2018, the communications department has become a lean Hope Spot launching machine. From initial meetings with Hope Spot champions all over the world, to the ensuing exchange of ideas, information, photos and strategy, we have worked to launch 17 Hope Spots in 2018. The work that goes into each and every one of these launches is meticulous, however the reward is a growing online community that continues to appreciate and take inspiration from our expanding, grassroots network of ocean conservationists across the planet. From Jaeren Coast, Norway to the waters of Uruguay, we have worked with scores of scientists, NGO leaders, policymakers, citizens, photographers, educators and ecotourism operators to unearth and shine our bluest gemstones of hope to inspire a global campaign to create public support for marine protected areas.

With expeditions to some of the most exciting Hope Spots yet, we were spoiled with beautiful content and stories from icy Spitsbergen and aqua-green Palau. We generated scores of blogs, live videos, edited shorts and social media posts from this content that accounted for millions of impressions across our online properties. We also shouted out our supporting partners loud and proud, from financial backers like ACTAI Global and Biotherm to gear sponsors like Scubapro and Gates Underwater Housing. The original content that we produce from Mission Blue expeditions continues to be our most valuable and impactful content, setting Mission Blue apart from the other ocean conservation communications efforts that lack original expeditions content.

We have deepened key partnerships in 2018. Google Earth has continued to feature Mission Blue original content, most recently with our Spitsbergen content going live globally on Google Earth on December 3rd. We have also continued to work to give PADI fresh Hope Spot content every month that they are featuring on their blog and blasting out through their social networks, inspiring divers the world over to visit and learn more about Mission Blue’s Hope Spots. On Earth Day, we flexed our muscles with a simultaneous communications partnership with Niantic in support of a global beach clean up, as well as an on-the-ground partnership with TNC and NOAA at EarthX in Dallas to launch the Palmyra Hope Spot, one of our biggest and most successful launches to date.

As of November 29th 2018, we have received online donations of $28K on PayPal and $94K on Network For Good (our primary citizen fundraising platform). We also activated Facebook donations in 2018 and have received over $28,000 on this new fundraising platform as of November 29th, 2018. We expect total on-line donations to exceed $175K by end of year. This success is a team effort across all departments. For our part, we hammer donation asks on social media, newsletters and campaigns throughout the year.

In 2018, we wrote nearly 80 blogs, published 18 newsletters and put out an average of 10 different social posts a day adding up to approximately 3,500 posts across the year. We continue to interact with our followers, answer questions and cheerlead positive sentiments on all of our channels.
As was the case in 2017, Mission Blue will register a reach of approximately half a billion in 2018. While this number is impressive, given current revelations in the social media industry that there are more meaningful metrics than “reach” and “impressions”, we have decided to shift our key tracking metric in 2019 to “engagement”. Our content’s “reach” is determined by the number of people that see it — even if only for a moment. “Engagement” takes into account a multitude of factors — how long did the user view the content? did they click to learn more? did they share it with a friend? — to measure how involved people are with the content we create. We look forward to measuring and tracking this more meaningful metric into the future and further honing our ultimate aim — to influence people to embrace and act on the ocean conservation agenda.

In terms of other key metrics, such as audience growth, we continue to enjoy very strong month over month growth. By early to mid 2019, our combined online accounts will have 1 million followers.

On Facebook, for example, take a comparison with Conservation International. We have ¾ of their page likes and 73% of their engagement.
In 2019, we will continue to stay laser focused on launching Hope Spots and telling the stories of those that are lining up behind our global vision of marine protection.

We will continue to work closely with expeditions to produce original content in the form of live broadcasts, articles, photos and videos.

We will continue to expand existing partnerships and grow meaningful new partnerships that enhance our ability to spread our messages to diverse communities around the world.

We will also continue to grow our fundraising impact, through donation drives and promoting the online store.

As the marketing engine behind Hope Spots, we are seeking a $13K increase to effectively support the growing number of Hope Spots.

**Communications Goals/Outcomes**

- Continue to support Hope Spot champions and the announcement of new Hope Spots.
- Create over 1 million engagements across our platforms in 2019.
- Grow our social media following to over 1.3 million users in 2019.
- Grow the level of online donations made in 2018 to $200,000.
- Continue to nurture partnerships (i.e. PADI, Google Earth) to fuel audience growth and fundraising efforts.
- Continue to work closely with the Expeditions Department to highlight in-house content creation and storytelling.
- Continue to launch multimedia adventures through Hope Spots on Google Earth.
- Leverage the ascendant power of video through the use of live streaming and edited videos on social media.
- Invest in the new HSIP to update current information, create story maps, and train our partners to use the system.
Exploration + Storytelling
by Kip Evans

Exploration is at the core of all Mission Blue Hope Spot expeditions. By conducting expeditions to Hope Spots these short-duration trips create global awareness, foster meaningful partnerships, and build community support for marine conservation. Our expeditions have taken us to more than a dozen Hope Spots locations, including trips to Spain, Mexico, Costa Rica, and most recently Spitsbergen and Palau.

We have worked with local partners, stakeholders, and government representatives to help build awareness for MPAs and critical conservation issues such as the overfishing of sharks, and the case for MPA’s. Our expeditions program works closely with the Mission Blue communications team and we have greatly increased our global reach with videos, social media posts and well-crafted blogs.

In 2017 we initiated Facebook Live to engage more viewers and added more media tools to our outreach efforts.

In 2019, we are planning an expedition to the Galapagos which is an iconic Hope Spot for Mission Blue. This World Heritage site, situated in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of South America has been called a unique “living museum and showcase of evolution.”

The purpose of the **Galapagos Islands expedition** will be to explore the remote underwater ecosystem with a diverse team of dedicated experts.

The expedition will present a number of opportunities to explore deep-reefs using scuba and a 2-person submersible called the DEEPSEE. Mission Blue and it’s partners have chartered the vessel ARGO, which will serve as the research platform during this expedition.

**Some of our key objectives include:**

- Explore seamounts and critical shark habitats using the 333M DEEPSEE submersible
- Document shark populations and the ongoing effects of El Niño cycles on these populations
- Create a variety of visual content that will highlight exciting discoveries, conservation challenges, and cutting edge science
- Highlight the conservation work being done currently
EXPEDITIONS, continued

Gulf of California
Shark Conservation Program

We will be continuing our shark conservation project, funded by Marisla Foundation, that is raising awareness and protection for the thousands of sharks that are being removed from the Gulf of California.

This project includes the following components:

1. Work with our Mexican partners to raise awareness among decision makers at local and federal levels
2. Finish a short documentary that contrasts the Revillagigedo Islands with the Gulf of California
3. Work with donors, scientists, and partners to create opportunities for shark fishermen, enabling them to transition into more sustainable careers
4. Amplify the work being done by Mexican scientists and policymakers to combat shark fishing and finning along the Baja Peninsula
5. Organize a winter shark conference in Mexico

Malpelo Hope Spot, Colombia

We are also currently looking at an expedition to Malpelo Columbia in 2019. During the past 5 years Mission Blue has led or participated in several expeditions to explore critical shark feeding areas, including the Revillagigedos Islands, Gulf of California, Cocos Island, the Galapagos, and the Costa Rican Dome. These locations are ground zero in the Eastern Tropical Pacific for shark conservation and research.

Working with our partners, we are in the process of organizing an expedition to Malpelo to continue our efforts to learn more about shark migrations and to help reduce fishing pressure and finning impacts. Located about 500 kilometers off the west coast of Colombia, the cool waters surrounding the rugged, unpopulated volcanic island of Malpelo are recognized as a global hotspot for marine life. Malpelo is highly influenced by strong currents, which push cold nutrient-rich waters to the surface attracting seabirds, hundreds of fish species and marine mammals. These productive waters also support large populations of hammerhead sharks, silky sharks, whale sharks, eagle rays and other important pelagic species.

Objectives

The goal of this expedition will be supporting efforts to create a protected migration corridor that will give sharks safe passage between the areas described above. Mission Blue expedition staff will work with scientists to place satellite tags capable of tracking shark movements between these locations. The tags will record a host of scientific information.
A key strategy for Mission Blue is to develop creative and cost-efficient ways to broaden both the brand and the impact of Hope Spots. We do this through strategic partnerships with foundations, corporations and scientific partners. Corporate partnerships enable us to amplify Hope Spots tenfold — through exposure in our partners’ customer channels. Millions of dollars of advertising are leveraged through our partnerships every year. And with our NGO partnerships, we leverage each other’s skills and strengths for efficient impact.

**Niantic / Pokemon Go Partnership**

On Earth Day, 2018, with support from John Hanke’s Niantic, Pokemon Go and Playmob, Mission Blue’s Hope Spot and affiliate partners participated in a beach cleanup that spanned the globe, from San Francisco, to Hong Kong and South Africa. A collaborative effort pulled in Hope Spot champions and Mission Blue affiliate partners from all sectors to orchestrate this first-ever of its kind event.

It was inspiring to witness the enthusiasm shown by this new gaming audience as they learned more about the issues surrounding the ocean and Hope Spots, while learning how they could make a difference. Donations to Mission Blue were enabled inside the game, providing funds for selected Hope Spot partners for projects such as turtle tagging and reef surveys. In addition, Niantic and Pokemon jointly made a contribution to Mission Blue of $250,000 for 2018, the first year of our partnership. It is our hope that this relationship continues to engage a new and untapped audience of ocean protectors, as well as raise financial support for the IUCN/Mission Blue Hope Spot Program.

**Arthur Vining Davis / Marine Conservation Institute Partnership**

In addition to Mission Blue’s own Hope Spot expeditions, we will continue to work in partnership with the Marine Conservation Institute and the California Seamounts Coalition to explore The California Seamounts Hope Spot, supported by funds from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation. Together we are working to advance exploration and protection for the seamounts, ridges, hydrothermal vents and other fragile deep-sea treasures off the California coast.

Mission Blue and MCI have developed a compelling outreach strategy to educate and reach a broader audience to increase awareness of these critical and threatened ecosystems. The project will include a public event in the San Francisco Bay area attended by Dr. Earle, celebrating this extraordinary ecosystem. The ultimate goal for this Hope Spot program is to create and implement a detailed strategy to secure protection for these fragile and biodiverse deep-sea habitats.
Biotherm/L’Oreal Partnership

Since 2012, Biotherm Water Lovers has supported Mission Blue to help protect seven Hope Spots with donations adding up to over 850,000 Euros.

Beginning in 2017 with the Balearic Islands Hope Spot in Spain and continuing with the Spitsbergen Island expedition in June 2018, Biotherm began directly supporting Mission Blue to conduct Hope Spot Expeditions to create awareness, foster partnerships and ignite broad public support for a global network of marine protected areas.

In 2019, Mission Blue is seeking support from Biotherm to launch a new Hope Spot from the ground up, creating a unique opportunity to leverage the L’Oreal brand to foster and amplify public and political support for conservation in a unique ecoregion. Potential new Hope Spots being considered include Jeju Island, South Korea and the Cantabrian Sea along northern Spain.

Google Partnership

Mission Blue has partnered to bring the ocean into the Google Earth platform for over a decade. Currently we are one of their premier content providers and provide Hope Spot images and information 4x per year. This enables millions of viewers to see and learn about Hope Spots.

Rolex Partnership

Rolex has been a Mission Blue premiere partner since 2015.

In addition to annual financial support, Rolex has been running an ad campaign featuring Sylvia and Mission Blue in all of Hearst and Conde Nast magazines globally. This has provided Mission Blue and Hope Spots exposure to millions of people at no cost.
**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, continued**

**Partnership Goals/Outcomes**

- Secure additional corporate partnerships $250K and above
- Collaborate with another NGO such as WCS or NGS on Hope Spot development and progress.

**PARTNERSHIP LEVELS**

1. **ALLIANCE**
   - Corporations or other entities who have signed on in support of Mission Blue and ocean protection. This network is currently over 225 partners.

2. **STRATEGIC**
   - Mission Blue partners who have agreements or MOU’s to carry out a specific scope of work. These partners include PADI, Google, MarViva, TED

3. **PREMIERE**
   - Mission Blue premiere partners have contributed $25k or more. These include Rolex, Biotherm, Gallifrey, Dalio and Niantic
New Technology for Ocean Conservation
by Graham Stickler

**Hope Spot Information Platform (HSIP)**

To ensure we are able to create, sustain and share a digital legacy, we are working to create a vitally important IT platform integrating easy-to-use technology that acts as a central repository of information to increase the Mission Blue community’s understanding of Hope Spot environments; and drives efforts towards the shared collective goal of protecting the ocean.

In 2017, with donations from Esri and Beyond180, we developed a pilot system for the management of Hope Spots that demonstrated how we could bring together all our legacy data and put in place the foundation for an integrated environment for Hope Spot operations, from nomination through to the management of global and local outreach to increased protection.

2018 has seen us work to bring this demonstration platform into operational use which is on track to be completed by the year end.

This has encompassed the following tasks:

- Creation and loading of a secure, cloud-based, database of all Hope Spot information providing us with a single source for all Hope Spot information
  - Creation and Testing of DropBox integration with the HSIP for multi-media storage and management
  - Loading/consolidating photos, videos and documents from disparate sources
  - Sourcing and formatting featured image for each Hope Spot to be displayed on HSIP map
  - Producing a unique and intriguing description for each Hope Spot
  - Transitioning from old media/data storage and tracking methodology to HSIP
- Building and testing of simple and advanced map portals, ready to be deployed within the websites for public and partner access and a new Mission Blue HSIP web-based control portal for staff and Champions
- Deployment of updated Nomination Form on the HSIP for general use of the public
- Creation of Nomination process tools and Council reports generator
- Deploy the Mission Blue HSIP ‘Mission Control’ --an internal dashboard to monitor Hope Spot activities
• Creation of an open API interface for developers to access Hope Spot Information for websites and other applications
• Production of Web Map services for external developers and partners wishing to gain access to the HISP maps
• Automatic generation capability of story maps from the HISP
• Deploying HSIP live on Mission Blue website using the HSIP API

By End Of Year, the goal is to have a fully integrated, fully deployed HSIP running as Mission Blue’s single source of truth and repository for all Hope Spot information. This will allow us to cease using legacy platforms and avoid duplication of data and inefficiencies associated with disparate sources of information. It will be run securely in the cloud with open interfaces for those who wish (and are granted permission) to integrate their own systems and applications. This is a bonus win for us this year as such comprehensive integration functionality was not originally envisaged for this first stage, this year. However it was seen as also providing the most efficient way to integrate our own website with the HSIP and so was accelerated into this year.

This has taken us a very large step forward from where we expected to be and sets an important foundation for moving forward in terms of integrating with partners and other stakeholders.

Goals/Outcomes

With the first Phase of the HSIP is operational; the following are next tasks to be considered to continue developing the platform from the initial foundation and deliver benefit across the community:

• Create a data library for our champions and partners to upload and manage their own data
• Add Reporting and Metrics components to gather real-time progress and success
• Fully integrate the Mission Blue Blog post text into the HSIP
• ‘Mobilize’ the HSIP to work on a smartphone or tablet
SYLVIA EARLE ALLIANCE (SEA) ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

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