



Our Reefs, Our Future

World's leading conservation organisations join forces to campaign for urgent protection of climate-resilient coral reefs

Mombasa, Kenya (June 16th, 2026) – Three internationally acclaimed conservation organisations have launched a new global campaign titled [Our Reefs, Our Future](#) calling on governments to prioritise and protect climate-resilient coral reefs worldwide.

Unveiled today to coincide with the start of the Our Ocean Conference in Kenya, the campaign has been co-created by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with support from the Bloomberg Ocean Initiative.

The launch marks an exciting turning point in how the world understands coral reefs. Although frequently framed as ecosystems in collapse – symbolic of irreversible climate tipping points – new research has uncovered a globally significant percentage of reefs that have the potential to survive and recover from the climate crisis.

2026 offers a unique opportunity to convert scientific research into political momentum for coral reefs. Following the campaign's launch at the Our Ocean Conference, governments will have further opportunities to advance coral reef protection at upcoming milestones such as the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in the Republic of Palau, Global Coral Reef Summit in Saudi Arabia, and UN Climate Change Conference (COP31) in Türkiye.

The campaign is encouraging governments to use these moments to announce new actions for coral reefs, strengthen protections for climate-resilient reef systems, and increase investment in conservation and management.

It is also calling on governments to sign the [High-Level Commitment on Climate-Resilient Coral Reefs](#), launched at the United Nations Oceans Conference in 2025, and translate that commitment into clear, near-term actions to shield climate-resilient reefs from immediate local pressures. The ambition is to secure the backing of 31 governments – representing over 90% of the world's coral reefs – by the time COP31 convenes in November.

With many of the pressures driving reef decline being local, solvable, and within national control, governments have no excuse for delaying action. In practice that means increasing investment in long-term conservation and management and taking action to tackle immediate local threats – including pollution, destructive fishing, unsustainable coastal development, and poorly managed tourism – to give these crucial habitats the best possible chance of surviving.

A major new global study by WCS and Macquarie University – launched as part of the campaign – has identified 165,922 km² of coral reefs across 71 countries and 100 territories with the strongest potential to survive the climate crisis.

Building on an original analysis in 2018 to identify the coral reef systems most likely to withstand climate change and serve as priorities for conservation action, this new research reveals that three times more reefs may be capable of surviving the climate crisis than previously thought.

However, despite the growing scientific understanding of where climate-resilient reefs are sited, major protection gaps persist. Only around 28% of identified priority reefs currently fall within protected or conserved areas, leaving more than 119,000 km² outside existing conservation frameworks. Many existing marine protected areas also continue to face significant challenges around funding, enforcement and long-term management capacity.

Dr. Emily Darling, Director of Coral Conservation at WCS and co-author of the study said: “This is a significant breakthrough in our understanding of coral reef resilience, revealing a far greater opportunity than previously understood. Coral reefs are often framed as ecosystems beyond saving, but this research shows that there is a global set of reefs that have the potential to survive and recover from the climate crisis. We now have a critical opportunity to mobilize the necessary action to protect these reefs in meaningful partnership with local stakeholders and national governments.”

Dr. Stacy Jupiter, Executive Director of the Global Marine Program at WCS and study co-author, said: *“For years, the world thought we were watching the final decline of coral reef ecosystems. Instead, we now know there are far more reefs with the potential to survive and recover from climate change than previously understood. More than half of these climate-resilient reefs are concentrated in just five countries. That creates an extraordinary opportunity for governments to protect ecosystems that could help regenerate reefs globally, while safeguarding food security, coastlines, jobs and billions of dollars for their own economies.”*

Dr. Gabby Ahmadia, Vice President of Seascapes and Science at WWF US, said: *“For millions of people, coral reefs are not just an ecosystem; they are food, income, protection and identity. As governments move to protect climate-resilient reefs, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and reef-dependent populations must be at the centre of decisions and investment. Protecting coral reefs is ultimately about protecting people and nature together because the world above depends on the world below.”*

Petra MacGowan, Director of Coral Reef Partnerships at The Nature Conservancy, said: *“We now know more than ever about which coral reefs are most likely to survive climate change – but identifying them is only the first step. Without urgent investment in management, sustainable financing, and partnerships with the communities who depend on these reefs, they will remain at risk. The science is there, the tools are working, and partners are ready to act. What we need now is speed and scale – to rapidly expand protection and secure the future of the world's most climate-resilient reefs.”*

Melissa Wright, who leads the Bloomberg Ocean Initiative at Bloomberg Philanthropies, said: *“Coral reefs support more than a quarter of all marine life and sustain the livelihoods of more than 500 million people around the world. Yet for too long, the story of coral reefs has*

been framed as one of inevitable decline. New science makes it clear that many reefs still have a viable future—but only if governments act now to protect these ecosystems and strengthen their long-term resilience. We look forward to working with partners and governments to help translate this science into lasting conservation and policy action.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Bloomberg Ocean Initiative

The Bloomberg Ocean Initiative is Bloomberg Philanthropies’ effort to protect the world’s ocean from climate change, overfishing, and pollution threats. Since 2014, Bloomberg Philanthropies has invested \$375 million to restore and protect critical ocean ecosystems to support the global goal of protecting 30% of the world’s ocean by 2030.

The Bloomberg Ocean Initiative supports local and global partners in advocating for data-driven solutions, community involvement, and policy change that can help safeguard marine ecosystems, including coral reefs, and the billions of people who depend on them. To date, these efforts have helped pass over 100 new policies at the local and national level that have strengthened the protection of over 11 million square miles of ocean – nearly three times the area of the United States.

Learn more at www.bloomberg.org/environment/protecting-the-oceans.

About The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a global conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, TNC creates innovative, on-the-ground solutions to the world’s toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. Working in more than 70 countries and territories, TNC uses a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners.

Learn more at www.nature.org.

About The Wildlife Conservation Society

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is a global conservation organization working to protect the world’s wildlife and wild places through science, conservation action, education, and partnerships with governments, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and the private sector. WCS operates conservation programs in more than 50 countries and across the world’s oceans, with a mission to help secure a future where nature and people thrive together.

Through its marine conservation work, WCS supports the protection and sustainable management of coral reefs, fisheries, mangroves, and other critical ocean ecosystems that sustain biodiversity, coastal protection, food security, and livelihoods for millions of people worldwide.

Learn more at www.wcs.org.

About World Wildlife Fund

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is one of the world’s leading conservation organizations, working for 60 years in nearly 100 countries to help people and nature thrive. With the support of nearly a million members in the United States and more than 5 million members worldwide, WWF is dedicated to delivering science-based solutions to preserve the diversity and abundance of life on Earth, halt the degradation of the environment, and combat the climate crisis.

Learn more at worldwildlife.org.