



# PROJECT SEAHORSE

advancing marine conservation

## Partner with Project Seahorse to save seahorses and the seas

Project Seahorse is a leader in marine conservation, making discoveries and collaborating globally to take effective action for seahorses and their seas. We envision a world in which marine ecosystems are healthy and well-managed. Our vision embraces the need to reconcile conservation and human dependency on the ocean.

**Project Seahorse seeks allies, partners and donors for our projects and our program.** We are an award-winning team that achieves a huge amount, using innovation and strategy. We have a rich slate of projects ready to go as soon as resources allow. Your engagement and contributions could make all the difference. We would be delighted to explore ideas with you. This document offers some examples of where we are poised to leap forward once resources are available.

**Our approach is best summarised as pragmatic idealism.** We are evidence-based but quick to deploy new information, rather than aspiring to perfect knowledge. Our research is intimately linked to our practical conservation action in a tight feedback loop. We often take the view that “we know enough” and just plunge in to management and policy, explicitly highlighting our uncertainties and adapting as new knowledge becomes available (often through those same initiatives). We pride ourselves on being responsive, nimble and quick to grasp opportunities that are within our reach and scope. We collaborate with partners and communities, using seahorses to focus efforts on finding marine conservation solutions.

**We offer opportunities to influence the fate of marine life** by collaborating with our team of ocean optimists and marine advocates. Project Seahorse paints a very broad canvas intellectually and programmatically, from fundamental biology and protected area planning to fisheries management and United Nations policy. We are proud of having made measurable differences to wild species and spaces in all these domains. We feed our many outputs directly into community empowerment, management, and policy... and then ensure that our contributions are mobilised for action.

**Project Seahorse has a specific goal of securing healthy populations of seahorses – and healthy seas** – in the western Pacific and Indian Oceans, where the pressures are greatest. Our reach is, however, global and we are involved in scores of countries on six continents. We are putting great efforts into growing collegiate capacity in countries that are homes to seahorses, pipefishes and seadragons. This is done through mentorship, advice and collaboration. The more people who engage, the faster and farther our voyage to a healthier ocean.

We invite you to partner with us on our adventure and our successes. We are seriously effective, in large part thanks to our donors. Join us.




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**Budget**  
**\$350K p.a. for 5 years**  
**(for salaries, travel, communications)\***  
plus \$110K for a blue sky think tank in year 2  
and \$110K for a regional symposium in year 3.  
The budget can be modularized to welcome funding  
for particular salaries and other components.

## Ending annihilation trawling

We seek support for a five-year program to help end annihilation trawling in Asia. Most people – even many conservation colleagues – have never heard of bottom trawling, yet it is a highly abusive fishing practice, posing very serious conservation and equity issues around the world. We are distinct among those working to end bottom trawling, both in identifying that the practice has now worsened into annihilation trawling, and in addressing the problem.



All over the world, we have seen **bottom trawlers dragging our ocean floor and hauling up vast quantities of wildlife**. Hundreds of thousands of boats tow wide-mouth nets with heavy weights that gouge and scrape, removing most marine life in their path (including many juvenile fish that should grow into valuable human food) and laying waste to habitats. The equivalent clear cutting of hillsides and forests would never be tolerated on land. More than 80% of the seabed is trawled in some regions, most of it repeatedly, releasing masses of stored carbon and worsening climate change.

**Bottom trawling harms people, contributing to poverty and food insecurity around the world.** Bottom trawlers compete with small-scale and selective fisheries that are less damaging. Bottom trawling is unprofitable and only continues because governments provide substantial subsidies, especially cheap fuel, from public money. In another form of cost evasion - and human rights abuse - many trawl boats rely on crews of slaves or other forced labour.

Terrible though this all sounds, annihilation trawling is yet worse. We have discovered that, in many areas, **bottom trawlers now go to sea with no target species in mind, no management plan in place and no reference points that might constrain fishing effort**. They merely chase all marine wildlife, willy nilly. Landed catch may be sorted slightly for higher value species but most of it is sold undifferentiated to make feed for marine species and farmed animals. Given the bad subsidies that most governments provide, such fisheries have no end point other than ecological devastation.

**Having uncovered annihilation trawling in much of Asia – including China, India, and Thailand – we are determined to document it, highlight it, and mobilise to end it.** We are tired of watching trawlers in India disgorge enormous piles of fish and invertebrates each night, big enough to fill a city square, and then seeing them trucked away for chicken feed. Such unthinking use of marine biodiversity and valuable marine protein is inexcusable.

**Annihilation trawling makes no ecological, economic or social sense.** Most fishers, shore-based workers, front-line fisheries managers and policy-makers we have met know this and are seeking ways to make change. They suspect correctly that, as trawling ends, ocean communities will start to recover and selective fisheries will begin to flourish. At the same time, management and policy sectors worry about the immediate consequences of a ban and need strong incentives to take action.

**We are unusually prepared to mobilise change.** First, we have long worked with trawl fisheries as the biggest threat to seahorses, studying their fishing effort and landings in countries around the world. Second, we have long blended biological and social considerations in establishing marine protected areas / fisheries exclusion zones and

modifying other fisheries management. Third, we have strong expertise in policy domains, having provided key technical input to CITES since 1999 as it regulates international trade in marine fishes, while also engaging broadly with national governments and other multilateral environmental agreements. Fourth, we have spent decades working on marine conservation and fisheries issues in Asia, with practical experience in eleven countries and territories; we have ties with government, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations in all of these.

**We seek funds to initiate a five-year program to promote an end to annihilation trawling in Asia.** Our goal is to develop the analyses, alliances and actions to effect change for the region and, by extension, the rest of the world.

**We have a comprehensive plan for how to progress towards our goal, one that includes the following objectives:**

- Foundation research on annihilation trawling to document its trajectory in time and space, as well as its impacts and threats
- Analyses of quantitative and qualitative relationships that link environmental degradation, unsustainable seafood production and human rights abuses associated with trawling
- A small blue sky think tank of global experts in domains associated with bottom trawling – marine conservation, fisheries, animal and aquaculture feed, human rights, economic subsidies – as well as global communicators
- From that think tank, an action plan that identifies innovative leverage points for ending annihilation trawling in Asia
- Symposium with regional leaders to share the draft plan and consult on possibilities and obstacles for advancing the agenda
- Outreach materials and resources intended to shock the public into demanding action
- Engagement with government and intergovernmental organizations to alert them to the atrocities of annihilation trawling, with a view to mobilizing policy change
- Completion of important and urgent activities from the plan, with a focus on impact and speed

Funds will be used to expand the Project Seahorse team by hiring experts to produce analyses and communicate findings, to create a blue sky think tank of global experts who will work to uncover the leverage points and create an action plan, to consult with regional leaders, to carry out the first actions from that plan, and for related program management, travel, meetings, communications and administrative costs.

**More information:**

Project Seahorse website: [projectseahorse.org/endbottomtrawling](http://projectseahorse.org/endbottomtrawling)

Two-page briefing document  
Video



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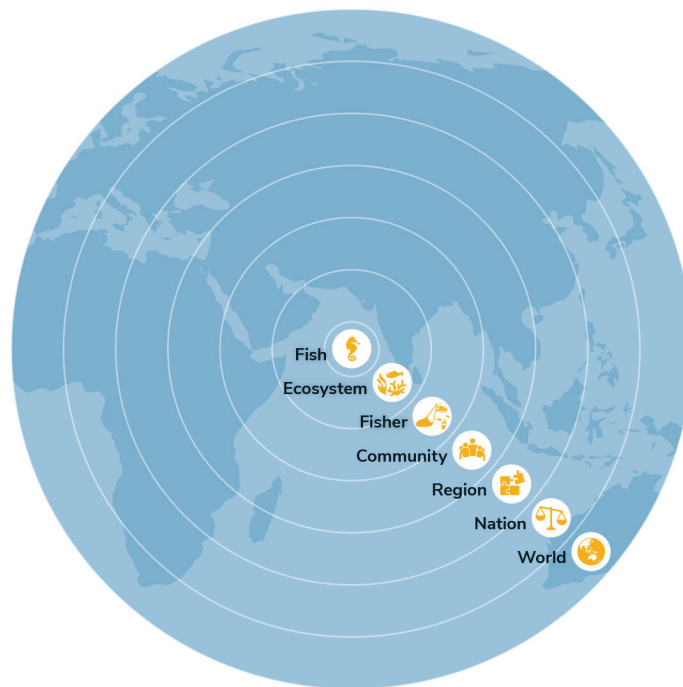
advancing marine conservation

Our vision is a world in which marine ecosystems are healthy and well-managed

This vision embraces the need to reconcile conservation and human dependency on the ocean.

Our mission statement has three elements:

1. Project Seahorse is an interdisciplinary and international organization committed to conservation and sustainable use of the world's coastal marine ecosystems.
2. We engage in connected research and management at scales ranging from community initiatives to international accords.
3. Collaborating with partners and communities, we use seahorses to focus our efforts in finding marine conservation solutions.



A schematic diagram of the many layers at which we engage in marine conservation research, management and policy. Project Seahorse has made research contributions and achieved measurable impacts in life history and ecology, marine protected areas, subsistence fisheries management, community development, national law, international trade, global policy, and public outreach. Together, these initiatives advance marine conservation.



**ZSL**  
LET'S WORK  
FOR WILDLIFE

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