



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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Moving toward legal and sustainable seahorse trade, as a model for marine fishes

We seek funding to make the first wave of global export controls work effectively for marine fishes. Project Seahorse is the lead technical advisor to the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) on regulating exports of seahorses. As seahorses were the first marine fishes for which such trade restrictions were agreed, whatever we do for them sets the pace for a host of other marine fishes later listed in CITES, from sharks to angelfish.

Seahorses (46 species) are pioneers in global regulation of marine wildlife trade and have repeatedly set precedent for other species. Under CITES, seahorses were the first fully marine fishes which countries placed on a list called Appendix II. Project Seahorse's technical knowledge and policy acumen underpinned this decision and have guided CITES in implementing this listing. All 182 member countries plus the European Union, are now required to ensure that their exports of wild seahorses do not damage wild populations, are legally sourced and carefully monitored. We also created the implementation framework by which countries can assess whether their exports are appropriate under the Convention, another first for marine fishes.

The firsts that seahorses have established for marine fishes continue, all of them informed and/or generated by Project Seahorse research, technical expertise and policy advice. Seahorses were the first marine fishes to be brought under the CITES enforcement mechanism called the Review of Significant Trade (RST). During the RST, countries are asked how they are meeting Convention requirements and prescribed remedial action where necessary. Seahorses were the first marine fish species for which CITES gave countries recommendations in response to their failure to ensure exports were sustainable. And, later, seahorses were the first marine fishes that countries banned from exporting because they did not meet those recommendations.



Top: Amanda Vincent at the 12th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties in 2002. Photo by Stanley Bayne.
Bottom: Sarah Foster at the 18th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties in 2019. Photo by Alessandro Ponzo.



As the CITES Secretariat recently noted, **getting it right for seahorses will “be helpful in addressing more generally the implementation challenges for marine species listed in the CITES Appendices”**.² We are using the seahorse example to help make CITES work for other marine fishes, promoting acceptance of the reality that **marine fishes are indeed wildlife** as well as economic commodities. In this, Project Seahorse works very closely with colleagues who support CITES export regulation for other marine fish species such as European eel, sharks and rays.

Project Seahorse seeks funding to ensure sustainable and legal exploitation and trade of seahorses. Much good work has been done to implement the inclusion of seahorses in Appendix II of CITES, but there is still huge concern about the dearth of robust decision-making at the national level and the huge volumes of seahorses currently smuggled in illegal trade.



Amanda Vincent and Sarah Foster running a CITES training workshop in Viet Nam in 2013.

New resources will make a material difference to effective implementation of CITES for marine fishes by allowing us to (i) fill critical gaps in knowledge, (ii) develop and enhance tools, and (iii) increase CITES Parties' capacity for implementation, enforcement and monitoring. Making CITES work well will help secure ocean biodiversity. It will also contribute to human livelihoods and economic development as the trade becomes more regulated and governance improves.

Budget items

- Salary for a trade program officer
- Travel costs to work with in-country CITES Authorities and experts and attend vital CITES meetings
- Communication and design

* institutional overheads to be applied on top, as appropriate

² see Secretariat comments within CoP18 Doc. 72

PROJECT SEAHORSE

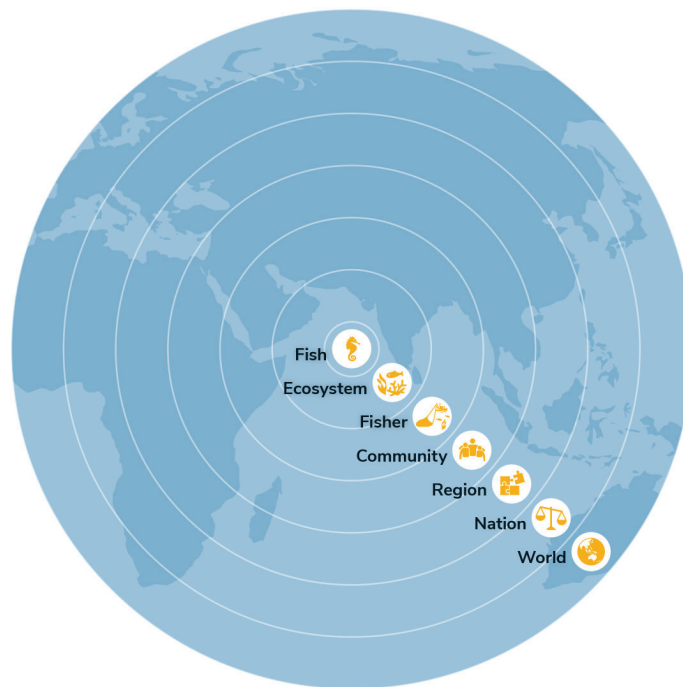
advancing marine conservation

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.



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