



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

OCEANA Protecting the
World's Oceans



OCEAN 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

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My fellow Belizeans,

In every sense of the word, 2015 was indeed a sensational year in Belize's young democracy. That's because environment-based advocacy in Belize is also rooted in economics. More than 200,000 Belizeans living in the country's coastal and island communities earn their livelihoods from tourism, which makes that industry contribute almost 25% of the country's gross domestic product. Another 15,000 Belizeans are directly dependent on Belize's fisheries for their livelihoods. Therefore, efforts to ensure the integrity of those natural resources also safeguard economic security for almost two thirds of Belize's population.

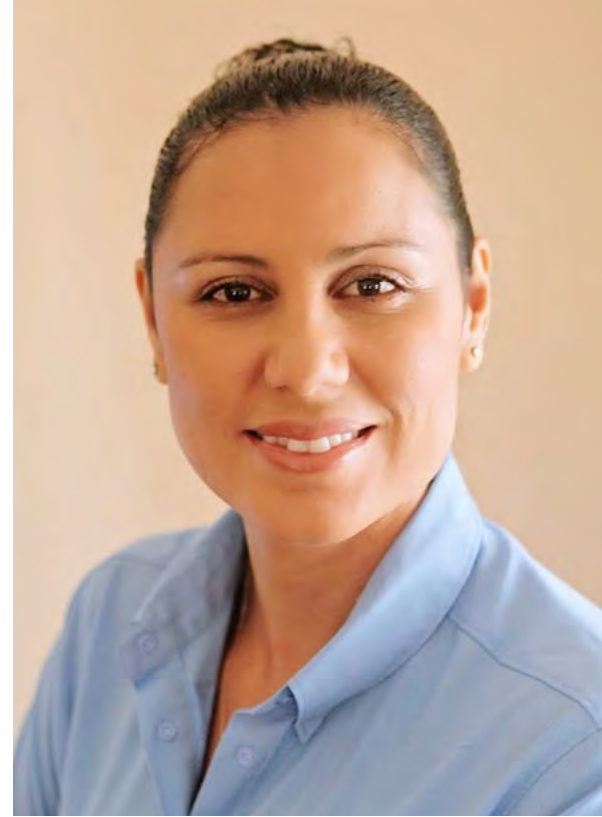
In a conch shell, that means the protection and sustainable development of Belize's marine resources is a bread and butter issue for Belizeans. And those kinds of tangible ties between Belizeans and the ecosystems that provide clean air, water, food and cultural identity has translated into persistent and public calls for national policies to reflect that reality. That's important because the hard truth is that unless we all begin to actively participate in the decision making processes that determine quality of life, livelihoods and our collective future, we'll always be between a rock and a hard place.

Since 2010 Oceana has been advocating from the position that by using smart,

science-based strategies in fisheries management to stop overfishing, stop using destructive fishing gear and protect habitat, we can help to ensure that we can fish forever. By not embarking on offshore oil development, Belizean marine resources will benefit Belizeans of today and future generations to come. By transitioning away from fossil fuels, we can ensure energy independence and help to stem global warming; countries like Costa Rica and Germany are already doing this. By continuing to be a world leader in eco-tourism development, Belize can ensure we will always have a healthy and therefore viable tourism product. By recognizing that we are interconnected and interdependent on our natural world, we can become energy and food independent.

You might ask, "How can little me make a big difference?" I promise you it doesn't take much. We need to move beyond this thing where we jump up and down saying, "Woo hoo! We have the second longest Barrier Reef in the world!" If you listen closer you might even hear some say, "Well, those other reefs are dying so we actually have the longest LIVING reef in the world!" It's okay to smile at that. But it's not okay to wait for someone else to do what needs to be done.

This thing, this love affair we have with our marine resources, it's patriotic and it's commendable. But we need to do more than just say we love Belize, we



need to act like it. You don't even have to rely on me. Do the research. Ask questions. If you get informed, you'll want to you speak up and then you'll want to stand up. And you can start small. Figure out a way to incorporate the old adage "reuse, reduce, refuse and recycle" at home, school and at the office; share educational or awareness posts on social media; go outside and dive into our beautiful Belize. If you start loving and protecting your right to a beautiful future, you can have say in what happens next. Your children and grandchildren will thank you.

Janelle Chanona

OCEANA WAS CREATED TO IDENTIFY PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND MAKE THEM HAPPEN

The good news is that we can restore the oceans to their former glory. Since its founding, Oceana has won more than 100 victories around the globe and protected more than one million square miles of ocean.

Oceana has the tools to win. We are -

CAMPAIGN-DRIVEN:

We channel our resources towards strategic, directed campaigns to achieve measurable outcomes that will protect and restore our oceans to former levels of abundance.

FACT-BASED:

We believe in the importance of science

in identifying problems and solutions for the oceans.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY AND EXPERT:

Our scientists work closely with our teams of economists, lawyers, communicators and advocates to achieve tangible results for the oceans.

SUPPORTED BY CITIZENS AND ALLIES:

Oceana has a base of close to one million supporters, including 600,000 Wavemakers globally. Our Ocean Council is a select group of academic, business, policy and philanthropic leaders who represent and support Oceana's efforts on the global stage. Locally, Oceana is supported by 4000 Belizean wavemakers.



OCEANA'S LONG-TERM VISION FOR THE BELIZE BARRIER REEF

Oceana's long-term vision for the Belize Barrier Reef is a thriving ecosystem, capable of producing abundant, healthy marine resources that support a vibrant and sustainable local economy for Belizeans. Specifically, the goals of Oceana in Belize's campaigns are by 2017 to establish:

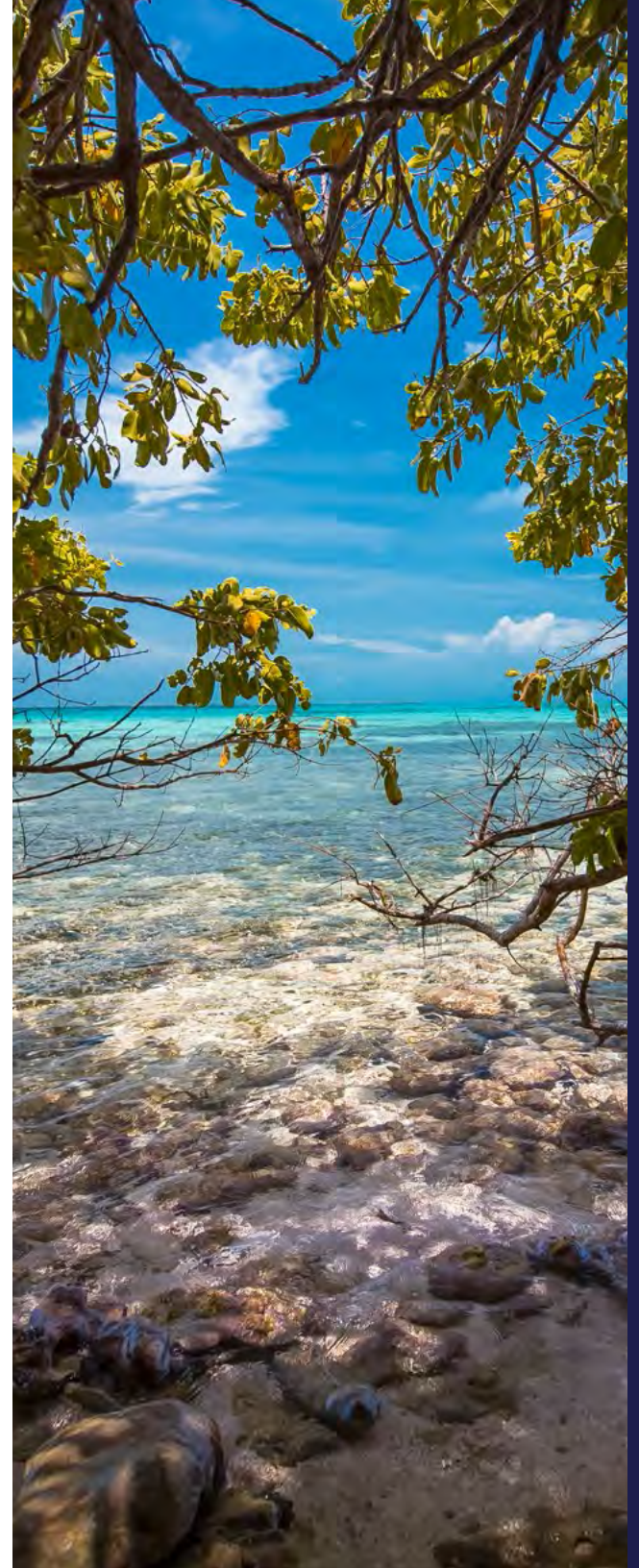
- A national ban on offshore oil exploration and drilling in Belize;
- A national ban on the use of gillnets in Belize; and
- Establish legally enforceable catch size limits for three fish species with high levels of juvenile catch rates: snapper,

grouper, and mackerel.

We have made significant progress on these goals.

In 2015, the Government of Belize announced a moratorium on offshore oil exploration in Belizean waters, and in December, a permanent ban on offshore oil exploration along the Belizean barrier reef system and within the country's seven World Heritage Sites. In the context of the moratorium, the ban means that for the foreseeable future, Belize's marine environment is protected from the inherent dangers of offshore oil. We have worked on this campaign for five years and we continue to work diligently to ensure that the government's intention becomes institutionalized.

Additionally, as a result of many years of advocacy and pressure, our campaigns to ban gillnets and increase protection for juvenile fish species has been endorsed by other conservation groups and are now part of a consolidated package of policy proposals created by Oceana Belize, The Nature Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Society. We have ensured that these proposals are supported by a broad constituency, from sports and local commercial fishers to restaurant owners.



CLEAN ENERGY

Oceana has been campaigning against offshore oil in Belize since 2010, when we and our allies discovered that massive oil exploration concessions had been granted throughout Belize – including in its marine reserves, natural monuments and national parks. Having seen the devastating effects of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill in 2010, Belizeans knew that even one accident could destroy their country's fragile marine ecosystem. Belize's marine resources provide jobs, food and cultural identity for tens of thousands its citizens, making protection of these areas a top priority. Since then, Oceana has been the consistent voice calling for a complete legislated ban on ocean oil drilling.

In January 2015, Oceana called on the Government of Belize to create policies which protect Belizean livelihoods in direct response to the Petroleum Department's draft Petroleum Exploration Zones and Exploration Guidelines. In a press release, Oceana maintained that before

any steps are taken to allow offshore exploration, the Government of Belize must ensure that tourism and fishing related jobs are protected; that an effective emergency response capacity is in place; that special places are safe from hazards and that it has provided a full, fair and public accounting, including the inherent risks involved with the oil industry, to the Belizean people.

It is also noteworthy that the Guidelines were shared during the opening sessions of a delegation from the World Heritage Centre to determine the Desired State of Conservation of the World Heritage Site that is the Belize Barrier Reef. The Belize reef is one of only 47 such natural marine sites in the entire world. For the last five years, the World Heritage Centre has listed oil as a direct threat to this universally important designation.

Additionally, Oceana submitted preliminary comments via a letter with supplemental information on the Petroleum Exploration Zones and Exploration Guidelines (Guidelines) dated September 2013. In our response, Oceana urged the Ministry of Energy to immediately withdraw the Guidelines and conduct an impartial and comprehensive review (inclusive of representatives from the tourism and fishing sectors across Belize) to initiate a meaningful and dynamic policymaking process of the risks and benefits of

offshore oil development in Belize and that such a review should be undertaken prior to any further action to authorize oil exploration in our invaluable marine environment.

Following our submission to the Ministry, Oceana along with the Belize Coalition to Save our Natural Heritage, held a press conference on April 23rd 2015 to make public the details of the draft guidelines and the zonation maps which put just about all of Belize up for potential oil exploration and eventually extraction. The environmental community contended that allowing everything from seismic exploration to actual extraction pending the usual environmental assessments, the Government risks irreparable damage to natural resources that provide thousands of jobs in tourism, fishing and other sectors, as well to Belize's vulnerable marine environment.

To complement our direct conversations with the Government officials regarding next steps, Oceana also strengthened its public and grassroots outreach with the establishment of its field representative program and public activities designed to galvanize awareness and support. When it was launched in February 2015, this initiative was a first for Belize. The program places Oceana personnel in each municipality to ensure engagement with community and business leaders as well as the general citizenry.

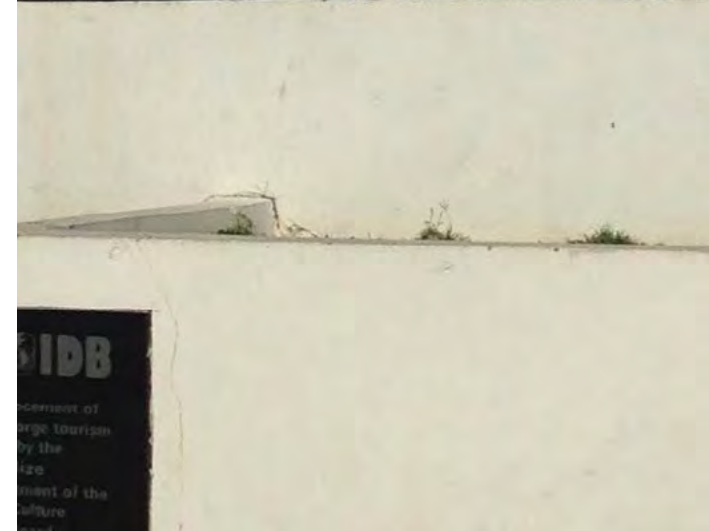
ROCK THE VOTE!

The People's Referendum, organized by the conservation community and supported by both the business sector and general public alike remains the only national poll ever taken on any issue in Belize. That is was an environmental issue—that of offshore oil—remains significant in Belize. Almost thirty thousand Belizeans voted in the referendum and the results were clear. An overwhelming majority (approximately 90%) voted no to offshore oil in Belize.

To commemorate the third anniversary of The People's Referendum, in February 2015, Oceana invited the public to enjoy a free concert showcasing the brightest Belizean musicians. The line-up was

historic as the event brought these artists together for the first time. The stellar line-up that rocked the "Rock the Vote" stage included the Garifuna Collective; Tanya Carter; Melonie Gillett; Positive Vibz; Young C; Consigo; TR Shine, Nello Player backed up by Verge of Umbra and Jacki Castillo.

These amazing artists added their voices to the tens of thousands of Belizeans who continue to say "NO" to offshore oil in order to protect Belizean jobs in fishing and tourism; quality and way of life as well as Belize's economically and ecologically significant marine resources.



HANDS ACROSS THE SAND

the world: the BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. That tragedy and other accidents in our region and around the world, continue to serve as grim reminders of just how deadly and dangerous offshore oil is and highlights the economic risks and environmental hazards posed by the activity to countries like Belize.

“This symbolic event demonstrated unwavering commitment by Belizeans to protecting our natural wealth from the inherently dirty hazards of offshore oil to ensure our collective benefit now and in the generations to come.” said Janelle Chanona, Oceana Vice President.



Every year, activists and ocean-lovers host Hands Across the Sand events round the world to “draw a line in the sand,” and say “NO” to dirty fossil fuel projects, as well as call for a shift to clean, renewable energy like offshore wind and solar power.

On May 16th at noon, Belizeans around the country joined hands on beaches, across bridges, along sea walls and in other public areas to stand in solidarity against offshore oil development in Belize’s economically important marine environment.

2015 marked the fifth anniversary of one of the worst environmental disasters in



REEF WEEK 2015

More than 200,000 Belizeans living in Belize's coastal and island communities earn their livelihoods from tourism, making that industry account for almost 25% of the country's gross domestic product. Another 15,000 Belizeans are directly dependent on Belize's fisheries for their livelihoods. Therefore, efforts to ensure protection of those natural resources ensure economic sustainability for almost two thirds of Belize's population.

Within such context, every year members of the non-governmental and environmental community as well as Government entities organize a series of events over the course of a week to

recognize the incalculable contribution of the Belize Barrier Reef System to the national economy and the nation's cultural identity. Between March 9th 2015 and March 15th, Belizeans across the country gathered to celebrate Reef Week 2015 under the theme, "Celebrate our heritage. Protect our future. Belief in the reef!"

In 2015, the Reef Week committee was proud to partner with the Belize Tourism Board, the Belize City Council, members of the business community and members of the general public whose in-kind and cash support helped to make Reef Week 2015 a success.

Organized activities included classroom presentations, field trips to marine destinations, clean up campaigns underwater and along Belize's shoreline and waterways, the annual swim across the historic English Caye Channel, a science symposium, open days, poetry, art and Instagram competitions, lionfish culling competition, a bike ride from the National Assembly building in Belmopan to BTL park in Belize City, informational fairs, morning shows broadcast live from Caye Caulker and the traditional sea carnival in the Belize City harbor.

Participating organizations included: the Toledo Institute for Research and Development, the Belize Audubon Society, Oceana in Belize, Healthy Reefs for Healthy People, MarAlliance, the World

Wildlife Fund, the Forest and Marine Reserves of Caye Caulker, Fragments of Hope, the National Protected Areas System, the Wildlife Conservation Society, Krem WUB, the Belize City Council, the Belize Coalition to Save our Natural Heritage, Blue Ventures Belize, the Solid Waste Management Authority, the Belize Fisheries Department, Hol Chan Marine Reserve, the Association of Protected Areas Managers, The Nature Conservancy, the Belize Bird Rescue, the University of Belize's Environmental Research Institute, the Southern Environmental Association, Sea2Shore Alliance, the Belize Volunteers Club, the Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association, Aldebaran and the Belize Tourism Industry Association.



CLEAN ENERGY

In our ongoing efforts against offshore oil development, Oceana's efforts have included legal action regarding the legality of concessions issued by the Government of Belize. That action resulted in legal victory but the ruling was immediately appealed by the attorneys for the Government.

Therefore, it was a milestone when, on May 27 2015 attorneys for the Government of Belize, Barrow & Company, filed a notice of withdrawal of appeal in the matter of Civil Appeal No. 18 of 2013: Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment and Oceana in Belize; Citizens Organized for Liberty and Action and the Coalition to Save

Our Natural Heritage. In this appeal, the Government had challenged an April 2013 decision issued by Justice Oswald Legall in favor of Oceana, COLA and the Coalition in their lawsuit challenging six Production Sharing Agreements allowing offshore oil drilling.

In response to this development, Oceana in Belize's Vice President Janelle Chanona stated, "We view the decision by the Government of Belize to withdraw its appeal as a demonstration of the Dean Barrow administration's commitment to safeguarding the country's marine resources. Oceana is in the process of proposing language to formalize the moratorium on Production Sharing Agreements for offshore areas which would ensure the protection of our economically important marine environment and outline clear benefits to Belizeans today and for future generations."

That withdrawal meant that Justice Legall's original ruling stood. In that ruling, Justice Legall made the following orders:

- (1)** A declaration that the six challenged PSAs were null and void because no environmental impact assessment was carried out before making the agreements (in violation of the Environmental Protection Act) and the agreements were entered into with companies who did not demonstrate appropriate capabilities (in violation of the Petroleum Act);

- (2)** A declaration that "before entering into agreements or contracts which authorize oil exploration and seismic surveys, an environmental impact assessment is required"; and
- (3)** An injunction restraining the government from carrying out the provisions of the challenged PSAs.

In addition to appealing Justice Legall's ruling, the Government obtained a stay of the injunction pending the appeal on the merits. The government's decision to file a Notice of Withdrawal of its appeal of Justice Legall's decision therefore affirms Justice Legall's April 2013 decision.

The Government's decision to withdraw the appeal was further bolstered by a statement by the Prime Minister of Belize. In a nationally televised interview, the Rt. Hon. Dean Barrow, publicly announced a moratorium on offshore exploration and referenced his invitation to Oceana to submit language to formalize said moratorium.



CLEAN ENERGY

(7News) “All I can tell you is the official position of the government. There is a moratorium on offshore exploration. In fact, I’ve been talking to Oceana, I’ve met with Ms. Chanona. She’s actually going to propose some language that could find its way into some sort of a formal document and I am perfectly happy to take that to cabinet. What I will not do, is to say that there is a proscription that forever there can and will be no offshore exploration. But I am prepared to, as I said, put in writing that there is a moratorium and that moratorium will only be lifted if conditions are right.” Rt. Hon. Dean Barrow, Prime Minister of Belize.

Therefore in June 2015, Oceana submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister its draft formalization of

the moratorium which set forth the preconditions that should be in the law before the moratorium could be lifted, including –

- A comprehensive oil spill response plan, inclusive of adequate funds for implementation;
- A detailed Environmental Impact Assessment of petroleum operations in Belize’s territorial waters;
- Detailed requirements on the qualification of companies seeking to conduct offshore petroleum operations and the safety measures that must be taken during those operations;
- A common fund which offshore petroleum operations would contribute to and which would be held in trust and managed for the sole purpose of mitigating environmental damages caused during offshore petroleum operations;
- An Environmental Pollution Control Board charged to ensure compliance with the requirements of environmental standards and the relevant laws of Belize;
- Environmental Impact Assessments for all offshore petroleum operations, including seismic tests;

- An independently conducted cost benefit analysis of offshore oil development to Belize to determine if overall benefits substantially outweigh costs,

- A referendum by the people of Belize approving lifting the moratorium. Since submission of the draft formalization of the moratorium, Oceana has continued to engage ministers and officials from the Government of Belize, in tandem with our efforts to keep the subject of offshore oil exploration in Belizean waters at the national level through consistent media outreach and relations, as well as education and awareness efforts.

Our education and awareness activities included a visit by Alexandra Cousteau, the granddaughter of famed explorer Jacques Cousteau and the person that named Belize’s own Great Blue Hole “one of the ten best places to dive in the world”. Her visit coincided with Oceana’s hosting of an academically informative and objectively provocative conference entitled “Energy of Nature, Nature of Energy”. The conference brought together national and international experts who provided insight and perspective on the national issue of offshore oil exploration in Belize.

ALEXANDRA COUSTEAU VISIT

Between December 6th to the 14th, National Geographic Filmmaker and Oceana Senior Adviser, Alexandra Cousteau, visited Belize to speak of her love and commitment for the country and her beautiful marine resources.

In very personal ways, Belize continues to figure prominently in Alexandra's life. "My husband and I fell in love in Belize and with Belize. This is where he and I took our first trip together. This is also where I taught him how to dive. Later, our daughter touched the ocean for the first time in Belize. Now, we're looking forward to bringing our newborn son to Belize. Belize is one of those places that just feels so much like home to me."

That sense of belonging speaks volumes about the Cousteau connection to Belize directly.

In the early 1970s, Jacques Cousteau (Alexandra's grandfather) brought his research vessel, the Calypso, to explore Belize's marine environment and became the first person to document and reveal the mysteries of the Great Blue Hole. For decades, this large submarine sinkhole had spawned colorful stories about what lay beneath the surface of this stunning blue jewel ringed by coral. It continues to draw adventurers and explorers from across the globe to dive and experience this truly unique underwater world.

During her stay, Cousteau met with Deputy Prime Minister Gaspar Vega to discuss sustainable fisheries; the Mayor of San Pedro town, Daniel Guerrero, Councilor Gary Greif and other tourism partners; as well as local university students and fishermen.



THE ENERGY OF NATURE VS THE NATURE OF ENERGY CONFERENCE

Belize's \$1.6 billion open economy is highly dependent on tourism. Unique, healthy and beautiful marine attractions and coastal destinations continue to ensure that Belize's tourism product is a key economic driver. Similarly, Belize's ocean abundance supports more than fifteen thousand Belizeans via commercial and recreational fishing. And just as importantly, is the cultural connection Belizeans have to the reef itself—it's a part of our self-identity. Within such context then, Oceana Belize is keen to promote informed decision-making on the issue of offshore oil exploration and drilling in Belizean waters.

On Wednesday, December 9th 2015,

Oceana Belize organized and held "The Energy of Nature vs. the Nature of Energy" conference which brought together Belizean leaders in tourism, fisheries, investment and the scientific arena to provide academically informative and objectively provocative information about the nationally important issue of offshore oil.

Featured Guest Speaker for the Event was National Geographic Filmmaker and Oceana Senior Adviser, Alexandra Cousteau, who spoke of her love and commitment for Belize and her beautiful marine resources.

The free-to-attend conference delivered panel sessions, debates, and discussion across varying themes, empowering attendees with the knowledge to stay at the forefront of the issue.

Missed it? Stay tuned, as Oceana is already working on the next conference, which promises to be bigger and better. In the meantime, check out our video of the conference at <http://belize.oceana.org/blog/energy-nature-vs-nature-energy-conference>.

In response to persistent public pressure, the Government announced on December 1st 2015, via a press release from the Government Press Office, (include photo of press release) that it intended to impose a permanent

ban on offshore oil exploration along the Belizean barrier reef system and within the country's seven World Heritage Sites.

With a moratorium on all offshore oil activity in Belizean waters already in place, this move represents a tremendous step forward for Belize and her people as, for the foreseeable future; Belize's entire marine area is protected from the inherent hazards of offshore oil.



CLEAN ENERGY

In response, Oceana issued a press release stating, "the decision taken today by the GoB reflects recognition of what the people of Belize have been asking for years: the protection of job security, food security and cultural identity. From legal, economic, scientific and cultural perspectives, Belizeans agree offshore oil is a bad idea. We remain confident that the future will continue to reveal reasons why Belizeans should never risk our outstanding and globally unique resources with this type of activity. "This progress should be seen as a major accomplishment by and for the people of Belize," says Oceana's Vice President for Belize, Janelle Chanona.

Oceana looks forward to reviewing the details of the Barrow administration's plans, especially as it relates to the status of two marine protected areas not named in the release: the Turneffe Marine Reserve and the Port Honduras Marine Reserve. Furthermore, as clarified by Prime Minister Dean Barrow via telephone, Oceana looks forward to contributing towards of the efforts of the Ministry of Petroleum's mandate to create stringent environmental mechanisms and strengthen existing frameworks to ensure that if the moratorium is ever lifted, Belize's marine resources will be protected."

And while 2015 was filled with many accomplishments, there's still more to be done. Although we have a moratorium effectively in place, it is important that that moratorium be formalized in law. The Prime Minister's April 2015 declaration that there would be a moratorium on offshore oil drilling was an oral statement to the press. The Government's announcement of intention to permanently ban on offshore oil activity in 15% of Belize's EEZ – that is, the country's seven World Heritage Sites and within a kilometer wide range on both sides of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System – was only a press release. Oceana therefore continues to advocate for legislation of both the ban and moratorium.

Oceana continues to work alongside and behalf of the tens of thousands of Belizeans who continue to support the common cause of protecting our marine resources. Belizeans must remain active and proactive in this process. That is the only way we can determine the future of the people and places that make us who we are



BELIZE PRESS OFFICE

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PRESS RELEASE

Government of Belize Bans Offshore Exploration in and around all Seven World Heritage Sites

Belmopan, December 1, 2015. Cabinet at its meeting today, Tuesday, December 1, 2015, approved a policy that will legally apply a ban on offshore exploration in areas along the Belize Barrier Reef System, and within the seven (7) World Heritage Sites in Belize.

Cabinet has agreed to specifically ban offshore exploration in all 7 World Heritage Sites:

1. Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve and National Park
2. Caye Caulker Marine Reserve and National Park
3. Lighthouse Reef Natural Monument
4. South Water Caye Marine Reserve
5. Laughing Bird Caye National Park
6. Glovers Reef Marine Reserve
7. Sapodilla Caye Marine Reserve

This effectively results in a total of 448 square miles being banned. In addition, Cabinet agreed to a ban offshore exploration within one kilometer on either side of the Belizean Barrier Reef System, resulting in an additional 868 square miles falling under the offshore exploration ban. The total area covered by the ban is 842,714 acres or 1,316 square miles.

Cabinet further agreed that areas that fall outside of the large acreages banned, would not automatically allow for seismic activities and exploration drilling without conducting the existing stringent environmental studies to determine critical habitats and sensitive zones. The required environmental studies would then further give guidance to areas outside the ban, to scientifically determine the type and nature of exploration that can occur in these explorable areas.

This decision by Cabinet demonstrates government's resolve in ensuring the continued protection of Belize's Barrier Reef System and its seven World Heritage Sites.

End.

FISHERIES CAMPAIGN

Overfishing in Belizean waters has resulted in declining fish populations. This has been caused in large part by a completely open-access fishing policy and non-discriminating fishing practices like commercial gillnets and juvenile fishing. Fishermen are also often among the poorest of the poor, and like many developing nations, Belize is not immune to the perennial problems of corruption and constantly declining regulatory budgets.

Within this context, overfishing continues to negatively affect the health of the Belize Barrier Reef system and is eroding significant sources of employment and food for the people of Belize. One of the

most destructive types of gear still legal in Belize are gillnets. Some of the fish species at the highest risk of overfishing, illegal fishing and unregulated fishing activity are keystone species including sharks and parrotfish, as well as commercially important snappers, mackerel, grouper and even sport fish species such as bonefish, tarpon and permit. Gillnets also threaten several charismatic species including dolphins, turtles and manatees. Gillnets are already credited with the regional extinction of sawfish as well as the disturbing low sightings of hammerheads.

In response to this, Oceana Belize's Responsible Fishing Campaign is advancing policy changes in Juvenile Fish Protection and is advocating for a complete ban on the use of Gillnets in Belizean waters. Our focus in 2015 has been on building public engagement as an essential foundation for these policy changes.

Oceana's gillnet ban campaign received public endorsement from two Belizean organizations, the Sea 2 Shore Alliance and the Belize Game Fish Association. The game fish "angle" of the gill net ban represents more than 2,200 direct jobs and more than BZD\$112 million dollars in revenue. Initial research conducted by the Bonefish Tarpon Trust reveal that bonefish, tarpon and permit are severely threatened by gillnets placed in key runs

to spawning and feeding sites and could cause the collapse of the entire industry.

Oceana faced challenges advancing the position taken by Belizean fishermen against gillnets within the Fisheries Department. To counter, Oceana focused our advocacy on the fishing and tourism-based communities to garner even greater public support for a ban on gillnets, through efforts including the production of a gillnet documentary and advocating for consumption of other species of fish such as lion fish.

On our juvenile fish campaign, Oceana has conducted a number of successful public awareness and outreach activities to increase public knowledge on the negative impacts of catching and consuming juvenile fish. Our team in Belize has also participated in a number of gatherings throughout Belize and globally to share data and scientific information on the devastating effect of the consumption of juveniles to fish populations. Our outreach included the support of popular, local chefs, Sean Kuylen and Jeannie Staines, who encourage chefs and cooks across the country to not purchase or use juvenile fish in the preparation of their dishes. Both chefs remain extremely supportive of this initiative and commands a large following of foodies.

FISHERIES CAMPAIGN

To build on that type of relationship, Oceana created a market-based incentive program, referred to as the Restaurant Resort Roadshow to encourage the public to both buy and consume sustainably-sourced seafood. In this regard, we have successfully engaged the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB), the Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA), chefs and cooks, other conservation groups, and restaurants as key supporters and partners.

Oceana's initiative was timely and to ensure effective implementation, the idea was embraced by other NGOs and

grew into an even more comprehensive effort under a new name: Fish Right, Eat Right. Oceana has been leading the design of this initiative and will continue to lead advocacy and marketing efforts. The Wildlife Conservation Society is spearheading technical details towards a formal certification initiative which will include establishing size limits (prominently featuring Oceana's Fish Ruler) as well as assisting in enforcement efforts and helping to address issues such as seafood fraud. For its part, The Nature Conservancy will ensure complementarity between Fish Right, Eat Right and the Managed Access program currently being established in Belize. The Fisheries Department will be responsible for spot checks of compliance. We will also use social media to check on the properties' adherence to the parameters of the program.

This initiative is designed to complement a shift in management regime from an open access fishery to managed access to fish stocks by traditional and specially licensed fishers. It will also bolster the relationship established by Oceana with the sports fishing community. The sports fishing sector injects more than US \$200 million to the local economy annually and employs more than 20,000 Belizeans. They strongly object to the legal use of gillnets because it has a big, negative impact on protected game fish species such as tarpon, bonefish and permit.

At the same time, we've also continued to build considerable rapport with government officials, including but not limited to the Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Sustainable Development.



ONLINE AND IN THE NEWS

By the end of 2015, Oceana built a supporter base of 25,000 supporters, including 4000 Wavemakers, 11,000 Facebook fans, and 6,000 Instagram followers. Oceana successfully engaged more than 21,000 of our supporters to take at least one action through grassroots and outreach initiatives and reached over 1 million people through marketing and communication activities.

Oceana was also widely featured in the media with thousands of press hits – from high-profile television appearances to recognition in prominent newspapers and websites. A few highlights: Oceana's position on Offshore Oil Exploration in Belize was covered in several topline

publications including the Vice News; Oceana's VP, Janelle Chanona, TED talk was covered by YouTube and local media outlets; advocate and ocean ambassador Alexandra Cousteau was featured on Channel 5's Open Your Eyes and Krem's Wake Up Belize Morning Vibes where she discussed her work with Oceana, generating press coverage in several different languages in different countries.

Oceana also launched a new PSA featuring local Belizeans advocating against offshore oil exploration and drilling urging our local leaders to do their part to protect Belize from the sad reality that has hurt every other country. Oceana organizational ads also continued to run throughout the year. QR Tag:



Scan QR code to see our Dear Belizean leaders PSA.

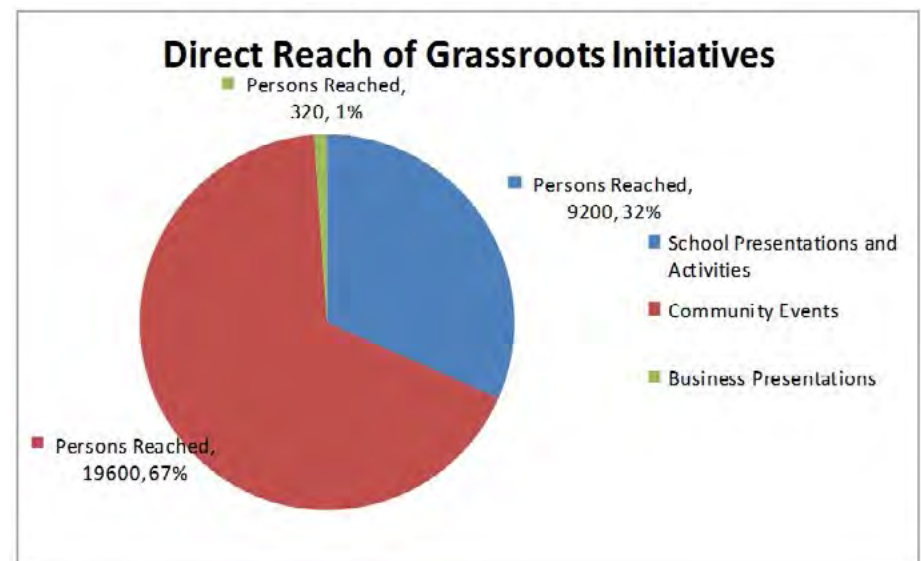


Photo courtesy TEDx Belmopan

OCEAN HERO AWARDS



Since 1997, Miguel Alamilla has been managing one of Belize's most popular marine protected areas, the Hol Chan Marine Reserve. As a part of his responsibilities, Miguel has also been leading a monitoring program in order to protect the highly vulnerable marine turtles that live and nest on the shores of Ambergris Caye. Officially declared a reserve in 1987, in February 2015, Hol Chan was expanded, largely in part from Miguel's lobbying efforts, from 21 square kilometers to include more than 131 square miles of reef, shoals, sea, lagoon and wetlands. Like the charismatic creatures he works to protect, Alamilla has been silently toiling behind the scenes in dedicated service to conservation and country. Today, the Hol Chan Marine Reserve is recognized internationally for its efforts in management, education and advocacy.



There are no words that can express the profound sense of loss felt by the passing of Captain Romauldo Badillo. Romi's friendship, leadership and seamanship has impacted numerous Belizeans. As we organized this tribute, so many people had a different story to tell; everyone wanting to help saying, "This is the least I can do for Romi." His time with us was cut short but his list of accomplishments is long...and there is no way anyone could do proper justice to them all. He gave so much of himself to Belize via the Fisheries Department; the tourism industry; support for scientific research; and in channel marking and navigation. As a nation, we must live with the regret that we never got the chance to say a proper "Thank you!" Romi deserves so much more than this award but we hope that Anna, Romito, Roanne, Chloe and the entire Badillo family will accept this Ocean Hero award as a heartfelt gesture of gratitude for everything your husband, father, grandfather, brother and uncle did for Belize and her marine resources.

Oceana has celebrated Ocean Hero Awards since 2009 as a way to recognize and honor leaders in ocean conservation, education, and advocacy from around the world. Past Belizean Ocean Heroes include marine biologists Dr. Melanie McField and Lisa Carne as well as manatee protectors Lionel "Chocolate" Heredia and Jamal Galves. On September 26, at a ceremony held in Caye Caulker, Oceana recognized two Belizeans, biologist Miguel Alamilla and Captain Romauldo Badillo, for their selfless commitment to the country's marine environment.

OCEANA CLEANUPS

Oceana, in conjunction with the Belize Scouts Association (BSA), held a coastal clean-up effort in observation of the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Clean-up. Over 100 volunteers participated despite the heavy rains. At the time of this publication, the results of the 2015 clean-up had not yet been published, but indications are that the results are bigger than the year before. Last year, over 1,700 volunteers cleaned 33 miles of coastal and river areas and picked up 11,729 pounds of trash.

In addition to the International Coastal Clean-up, Oceana also spearheaded seven other clean-ups countrywide and consistently supports other clean-up efforts by providing garbage bags and gloves.



WAVEMAKER OF THE YEAR

for their work. He encouraged them to continue to empower their fellow Belizeans by sharing information about the country's natural wealth.

Oceana also garnered additional publicity after the event with a prime time appearance on the popular local morning talk show, Open Your Eyes. Our Communications Director, Belize City Field Representative, and 2015 Wavemaker of the Year were invited to talk about the event and Oceana's work.



On October 24, Belizeans from across the country gathered in Belmopan at the George Price Center to participate in the annual general meeting of Oceana's supporters, known as Wavemakers. Held annually, the event gives Oceana the opportunity to recognize active and engaged members from each district for their work encouraging the conversation and management of national assets.

The 2015 Wavemaker of the Year title went to Amber Rivero for her unwavering dedication to Oceana's campaign goals. The event also featured a guest speaker, renowned Belizean chef Sean Kuylen, who reiterated his support for Oceana's goals and commended the Wavemakers



FISHING FOR A FUTURE

Fishing tournaments are a highlight for avid sports and recreational fishermen. But every year, it means bringing fish to scale, and therefore their unnecessary deaths, in order to obtain competition points. But organizations like the Belize Game Fish Association have been working towards ensuring as little impact as possible on fish populations as a result of their tournaments.

In November, Oceana partnered with the BGFA for its 7th annual Blue Water Classic Fishing Tournament based out of Belize City. Oceana sponsored the launch of a new category of points, the Catch and Release points, where each species of billfish was allotted a set number of

points for a catch and release.

Given that this is a new concept to many anglers, the BGFA has included an option for a boat to bring a billfish to a scale if the fishermen are unsure of how to release a fish, although fewer points are allocated to fish that are killed. Since the introduction of this new rule, the BGFA's anglers have released 7 of the 8 sailfish caught during its last two tournaments as well as the only Blue Marlin.





PLEASE GIVE TODAY TO HELP US REBUILD OCEAN ABUNDANCE

Each of us has the power to help save the oceans and feed the world. The support of people like you allows Oceana to carry out targeted campaigns to end overfishing, limit bycatch, protect habitats and curb ocean pollution.

With your help, Oceana can win victories that will help to restore the ocean's biodiversity and abundance for generations to come. Become part of a growing circle of ocean advocates by joining Oceana today.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT OCEANA

You can support Oceana financially by sending us a check at the address below or by credit card. Please call us or visit www.oceana.org/donate. Credit card donations may be made on a sustaining basis by designating a monthly, quarterly or annual contribution.

Oceana appreciates your ongoing support and understands that you may cancel this contribution at any time. You may also contact us concerning gifts of stock, matching gifts and gifts made through workplace giving programs.

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