



Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Photographer: Robert Schwemmer, NOAA

Today, June 8, 2020, marks World Oceans Day. The [official UN site](#) carries the theme “Innovation for a Sustainable Ocean.”

The oceans give our blue planet its character. More than 70% of the earth’s surface lies under oceans. They hold 99% of [the planet’s habitable space](#).

Yet they have often been effectively invisible. Much less is known about our ocean spaces and ecosystems than about the terrestrial world. Threats from overfishing, conventional pollution, and now climate change have been too easy to ignore.

Perhaps the most important contribution of this formal celebration of the oceans is to remind us of all they do for us, and of their fragility. Today, [less than 8%](#) of the world’s oceans enjoy any form of protection. It’s a good time to reflect on what it would take to achieve the [global goal of protecting 30% of the oceans by 2030](#). Ironically, the Trump administration is moving in the opposite direction, announcing

last week [its intent to allow commercial fishing in a major marine national monument.](#)