2022

IMPACT REPORT

SAVE THE WAVES COALITION

This Impact Report covers the activity and progress of Save The Waves Coalition in 2022.

Cover Photo:
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LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Dear Save The Waves Supporter,

Thanks to the dedication of advocates like you, the Coalition has never been stronger.

Personally, I have never been prouder. This phenomenal group of people has rallied behind our mission to protect surf ecosystems and is responsible for shaping so much change across the globe.

In 2022, Save The Waves and our partners introduced surf protected areas in the Azores and Costa Rica. We stepped up efforts in Oaxaca, siding with locals and taking on one of Mexico's biggest coastal infrastructure projects at Punta Conejo.

We sought out innovative responses to climate change, including creating the world's first insurance policy for surf ecosystems and leveraging our App data to find solutions to coastal issues in real-time.

From preemptive protection to defense against rising threats, we know firsthand that the coastline needs, and always will need, passionate wave savers to take action and protect the places they love.

We've spent the last two decades preserving surf ecosystems around the world, but our work is not done yet.

Wave by wave, mile by mile: we're fulfilling our promise to protect 1,000 waves by 2030.

Sincerely,

Nik Strong-Cvetich, CEO of Save The Waves

North Devon World Surfing Reserve ©N And M Photography
Photo Right: ©Ryan Craig

VICTORIES AT A GLANCE

2022

Dedicated Playa Hermosa, Costa Rica as the first World Surfing Reserve in Central America, implementing protection for 8 kilometers of coastline and stewardship projects around water quality, coastal erosion, urban planning, and environmental education.

Continued our efforts to save Punta Conejo, raising the alarm about a PEMEX oil spill and calling for protected areas around three surf spots and 1,100 hectares of mangrove wetlands.

Presented at the UN Ocean Conference in Portugal and Our Ocean Conference in Palau, representing surfers and securing commitments to include surf breaks in conservation efforts.

Expanded the Save The Waves App by 25% with 8 new partnerships in our data sharing program to tackle coastal issues in real time.

Created an innovative scheme for the world's first surf ecosystem insurance, winning the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance Project prize.

Nominated North Devon as the 12th World Surfing Reserve, expanding conservation for over 8 spots and 30 km of coastline in the UK.

Conducted outreach to Azorean communities across 6 islands, informing the Marine Spatial Plan to protect 98 surf ecosystems across the archipelago.

Advocated for waves across The Maldives, providing input to the government and our partners on the countries' first Surf Management Plan to preserve two of the best waves on Thanburudhoo island.

Celebrated Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve's 10th anniversary, opening the door for efforts to create a network of surf protected areas in California.

Started work to create national Surf Protected Area Networks throughout Costa Rica, establing key partnerships with governmental agencies and local communities in two regions, with support from Conservation International and the World Surf League.

ABOUT SAVE THE WAVES COALITION

Save The Waves Coalition (STW) is an international nonprofit that works with diverse organizations dedicated to protecting surf ecosystems.

WHO WE ARE

Launched in 2003, we are the only international organization solely dedicated to protecting surf ecosystems around the world.

OUR MISSION

Save The Waves' mission is to protect surf ecosystems across the globe.

WHAT WE DO

We build coalitions to protect, steward, and defend surf ecosystems through a unique combination of protected area creation, stewardship and grassroots mobilization.

OUR VISION

Our vision is a world where surf ecosystems are valued and where surfing provides a proactive vehicle for long-term coastal conservation.

THE COALITION

We are a Coalition - it's in the name. We work with organizations and individuals at a grassroots level on an international scale – enabling local surf breaks to be protected by the communities that cherish them the most.

OUR CLIMATE PLEDGE

Climate change is having an increasing impact on our daily lives. We're seeing a rapid escalation in fires, drought, sea level rise, and floods. The changing climate also greatly affects oceans and coastlines...

The places we love are poised to be drastically altered in real time with events like permanent high tide, coral reef destruction, erosion and flooding. We must initiate both mitigation and adaptation to ensure resilience in our coastlines to meet the challenge.

We will add climate vulnerability to all of our analyses – such as Surf Conservation Indices, Regional Profile and Surfonomics – to prioritize where we work and add further value to a surf ecosystem.

We will add climate vulnerability and resilience in our site selection for World Surfing Reserves, Surf Protected Area Networks and Endangered Wave campaigns.

We will add climate resilience planning to our WSR and SPAN management planning processes.

We will add specific climate resilience projects to our stewardship strategy, with a focus on restoration, green infrastructure and creative non-development solutions.

We will actively seek to reduce and eliminate our own emissions within our operations.

We will partner with Coalition members who can add muscle and strategy to seriously reduce emissions.

We will support partners and communities who are most vulnerable to the effects of the changing climate.

© Ryan Craig

PROTECT

We protect surf ecosystems by creating well-managed protected areas in high priority coastal zones that overlap with high quality surf.

WORLD SURFING RESERVES (WSR)

Our flagship program proactively identifies, designates and preserves outstanding waves, surf zones and their surrounding environments across the globe. The World Surfing Reserves program is the model standard for preserving wave breaks by recognizing and protecting key environmental, cultural and economic attributes in coastal communities.

WSRs represent a global network of designated surfing reserves that are managed, implemented and protected by local communities.

SURF PROTECTED AREA NETWORKS (SPAN)

The Surf Protected Area Network (SPAN) program is a new approach for marine and coastal conservation that combines the legal protection of ecosystems with sustainable community development.

Our SPAN program establishes a systematic approach to conserving large numbers of surf ecosystems that can scale quickly. This approach follows a six-step process to identify, implement, and locally manage Surf Protected Areas around the world.

PROGRAM LOCATIONS

- World Surfing Reserves
- Surf Protected Area Networks

- Bahía de Todos Santos, MX
- Ericeira, PT
- Gold Coast, AUS
- Guarda do Embaú, BR
- Huanchaco, PE
- Malibu, CA, USA
- Manly Beach, AUS
- Noosa, AUS
- North Devon, UK
- Playa Hermosa, CR
- Punta de Lobos, CL
- Santa Cruz, CA, USA
- Azores SPAN
- Chile SPAN
- Costa Rica SPAN (SCP)
- Fiji SPAN (SCP)
- Indonesia SPAN (SCP)
- Mexico SPAN

* *All locations reflect both completed and ongoing work*

** *Surf Conservation Partnership projects are labeled with 'SCP'*

Photo Left © Ryan Craig

WORLD SURFING RESERVES

Real results, local impact: a spotlight on 3 of our 12 Reserves. Together, they protect and steward over 45 waves.

SANTA CRUZ

CALIFORNIA

The Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2022! As the backyard and hometown of Save The Waves' headquarters, we were thrilled to mark the occasion and reignite the reserve's place in the hearts of our community with a summit and public celebration.

The Santa Cruz World Surfing Reserve actively preserves and advocates for over 26 waves and 7 miles of coastline.

What did Santa Cruz focus on in their 10th year?

WATER QUALITY: For the third year in a row, Cowells Beach remained off the "Beach Bummer" list of California's dirtiest beaches.

TRASH REDUCTION: Reduced trash at Main Beach and beyond by advocating for lidded garbage cans, single use bans, and zero-waste event ordinances.

ADAPTATION WITH THE CITY: Informed and advocated for Westcliff Adaptation and Beach Management Plans.

BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE: Improved key access and entry points at Steamer Lane and other West Cliff locations.

ERICEIRA

PORTUGAL

In 2022, the Local Stewardship Council (LSC) collaborated with Ericeira Surf Clube, Salvem O Surf and AABC to complete a comprehensive impact report based on a large survey of locals and tourists to understand the WSR's influence.

This report will help the WSR refocus its Stewardship Plan and help establish legally protected zones to ensure the waves and natural resources are protected as Ericeira's population as a tourist destination continues to grow.

The Local Stewardship Council has recently worked with the Municipality to protect several kilometers of coastline and eventually create a protected public park zone.

What will this public park project accomplish?

LEGAL PROTECTION: Several kilometers of the World Surfing Reserve will be protected by the city

PLANT RESTORATION: Placement of native vegetation in the coming years will revitalize natural coastal habitats

CLIMATE RESILIENCE: The preservation of the coastline will serve as a buffer and help diminish the impacts of sea level rise and climate change.

PLAYA HERMOSA

COSTA RICA

On June 12, 2022, Costa Rica's Playa Hermosa was dedicated as the newest World Surfing Reserve, designating Garabito's famous surf break as the first in Central America.

Playa Hermosa is well-deserving of its new title. Its coastline has a variety of consistent surf breaks – with over 15 spots from punchy A frame peaks, to rocky point breaks and rivermouth peelers – in addition to an incredibly biodiverse ecosystem that is home to over 61 threatened species and the renowned Punta Mala Wildlife Refuge.

What stewardship projects did Playa Hermosa implement in its first year as a WSR?

PLANT RESTORATION: The WSR began their work restoring critical watersheds by planting native vegetation and trees.

PUBLIC EDUCATION: They designed a public education program on the importance of protecting coastal watersheds. These small rivers have a direct impact on wave quality and the surf experience as they produce and move the sand that creates the powerful waves at the beaches.

> *"AS SURFERS, WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT OUR FAVORITE WAVES AND SHORES.*
>
> *PLAYA HERMOSA IS ONE OF THE BEST WAVES IN COSTA RICA AND IS LOCATED IN A BIODIVERSE REGION THAT IS IN DANGER OF POLLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT. THIS PROJECT WILL SUPPORT CONSERVATION ACTIONS WITH LOCAL PARTNERS TO HELP CONSERVE THIS BEAUTIFUL AREA.*

Brisa Hennessy
WSL Championship Tour Surfer

Photos: Left & Middle © Ryan Craig | Right: © Laura Zumbado

SURF PROTECTED AREA NETWORKS

COSTA RICA

Working with our partners from Conservation International, we have launched a SPANs program in Costa Rica.

Currently, there are very few Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Costa Rica that effectively integrate surfing into management. Incorporating the concept of surf ecosystems and their conservation will generate a solid tool to improve the management of the areas and the coordination with local groups related to the sport, tourism, and conservation.

The project will be implemented in key surfing areas in Costa Rica where the protection of important biodiversity and critical ecosystems can reinforce blue economy benefits for local communities, creating a positive feedback loop for increased ecosystem management and motivateing further ecosystem conservation. We will provide approaches and tools for decision-makers, local community members and other key stakeholders, allowing them to fully harness conservation and blue economy benefits from surf ecosystems.

Lesson sharing and capacity building will have special attention in order to replicate project approaches in regions and protected areas across Costa Rica. This includes locations such as Santa Rosa National Park and Baulas National Park in Costa Rica, which have outstanding waves and globally significant biological diversity.

Top © Dixiana Salas | Middle & Bottom © Ryan Craig

Azores © Ryan Craig

PROTECTING WAVES IN THE AZORES

The goal of the Azores Surf Protected Area Network project is to integrate a network of surf sites into the marine spatial planning process championed by Blue Azores (a partnership between the Regional Government of the Azores, the Oceano Azul Foundation and the Waitt Institute) to protect biodiversity and enhance the blue economy.

Save The Waves has completed the first steps of this process for the Azores archipelago, including community outreach, the creation of specific tools necessary for surf ecosystem conservation, building a coalition with surf communities, NGOs and government stakeholders, and has actively participated as a partner in the Blue Azores program.

As part of our outreach activities with surf communities in the different islands, Save The Waves and our local partners completed seven additional workshops to explain surf ecosystems, the MSP process and discuss major threats to these areas. Some of the participants include The Associação Açores de Surf and Bodyboard, Associação Nadadores Salvadores Costa Norte, members of the fishing community, surfing community (athletes, coaches, free-surfers, environmentalists), as well as high school and university students.

IMPACT OF OUTREACH

In 2022, we completed a scoping analysis of the Azores' surf economy. This "Surfonomics" study shares key information on surf travel and tourism value, the risks (social and environmental) of tourism, and the opportunities surf tourism presents in financially supporting Surf Protected Areas.

What the report includes:

100 **SURVEYS**

7 **WORKSHOPS**

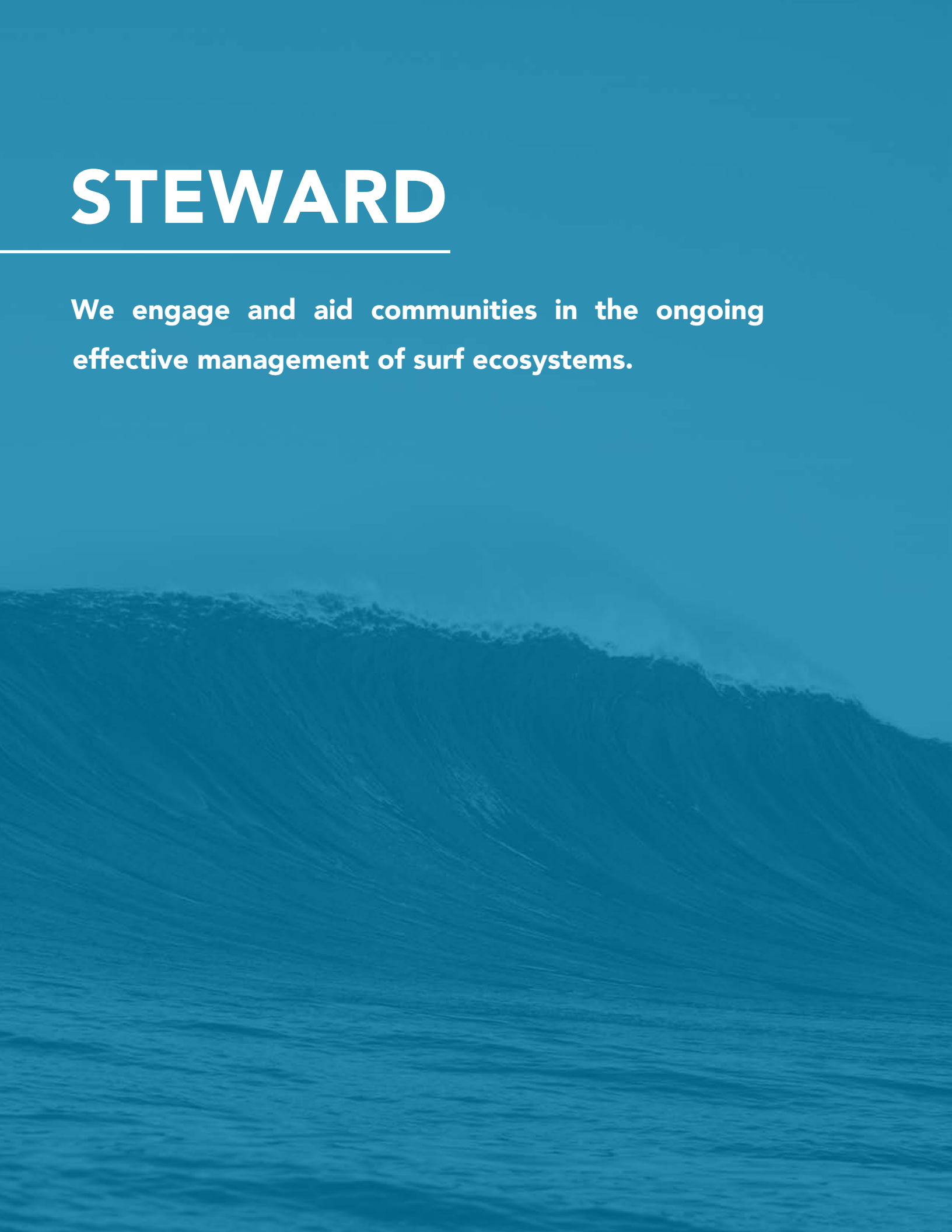
What the report can help protect:

98 **SURF BREAKS**

6 **ISLANDS**

STEWARD

We engage and aid communities in the ongoing effective management of surf ecosystems.



SAVE THE WAVES APP

We expanded our App audience and users with a special focus on building our data sharing program to respond to reported coastal issues.

26%
INCREASE IN DOWNLOADS

40%
INCREASE IN REPORTS

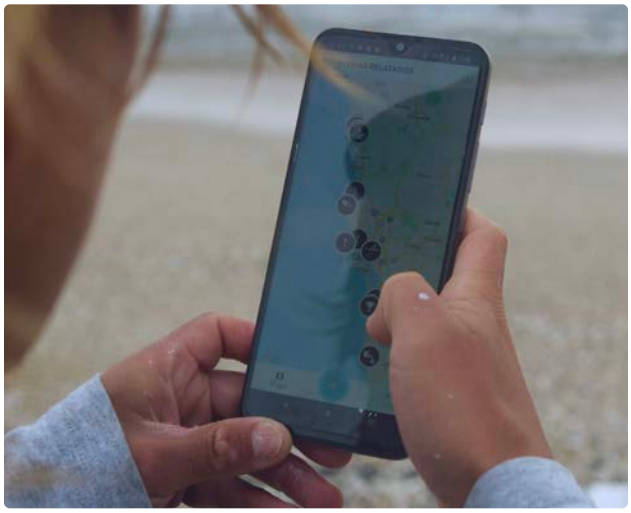
991
INDIVIDUALS TRAINED

67
COUNTRIES ACTIVE IN 2022

APP IN ACTION: REAL-TIME ALERTS

Through posts from App users, our new real-time alert system and the effort of our local partners, we helped remove a 70kg trawl net from an inaccessible part of the coast in the UK, plus connected users with the tools and partners to support water quality campaigns in Italy and the UK.

Save The Waves also helped respond to two oil spills with local partners in Mexico and Peru. We helped map out the extent of the initial oil spills, and continue to receive reports about their lingering impacts on these vital surf ecosystems.



> IT IS IMPORTANT TO COLLECT DATA THROUGH CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION TO UNDERSTAND THE MAGNITUDE OF THE SPILL'S IMPACTS. OIL SPILLS CAN TAKE MONTHS TO YEARS TO CLEAN UP, AND THE IMPACTS WILL CONTINUE TO BE NOTICEABLE ALONG THE PERUVIAN COAST FOR A LONG TIME, EVEN ONCE THE MEDIA ATTENTION WANES.

Gino Passalacqua
Oceanographer and STW Scientific Advisor

Left © Ryan Craig

DEFEND

Save The Waves mounts international campaigns to defend surf ecosystems under threat and inspire the public to take action.

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHT:
THE MALDIVES

Waves all across the Maldives are being threatened and outright destroyed by rapid coastal development and infrastructure.

This international campaign - spearheaded by local group and Coalition partner, Save Our Waves Maldives - has two primary goals: the first is to restore the wave at Chickens and the second is to create legal protection for Maldives surf ecosystems across the island chain.

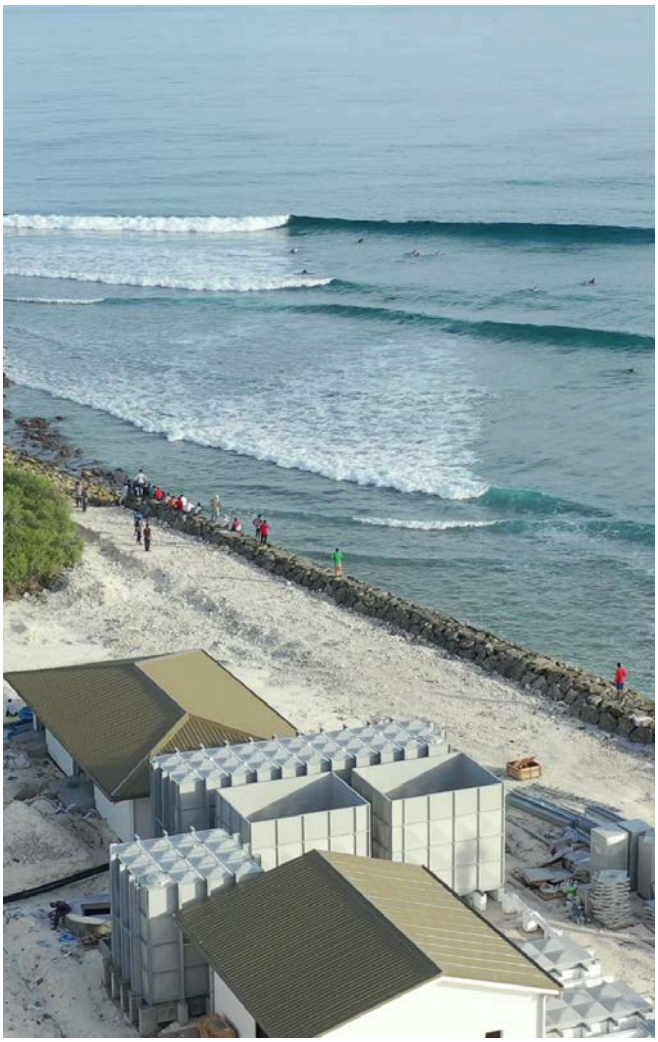
In 2022, coastal scientist and Save The Waves advisory member Ed Atkin traveled to the Maldives to meet with our local partners and conduct some initial wave modeling research at Chickens and other surf spots.

Both of these studies will contribute to our ongoing conversations with the Maldivian Government, which includes the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Environment, to ensure a durable solution for Chickens.

At a regional level, our partners at Save Our Waves Maldives continue to advocate for protection of surf spots within the marine spatial planning process through the Noo Raajje program.

We are also collaborating closely with the Ministry of Environment on a surf management plan for the island of Thurumbadhoo which contain the famous surf spots Sultans and Honkeys. This work will ensure that the potential protection and management strategy for these waves is durable and can be extended to the myriad of other waves across the islands.

The road to conservation is long, but we're not slowing down.



Above © Ahmed Aznil
Left © Ryan Craig

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHT:

PUNTA CONEJO, MEXICO

Punta Conejo is an internationally recognized surf break located in the municipality of Salina Cruz in Oaxaca on the Pacific Coast of Southeast Mexico.

Salina Cruz is part of a region with a great diversity of flora, fauna and coastal ecosystems, making this entire area an attractive destination for ecotourism and adventure tourism. Punta Conejo, together with the Salinas del Marques lagoon, Playa Brasil, and Playa Azul, is a unique ecosystem with endemic and endangered species, including the leatherback and olive ridley sea turtles.

Wetlands like the lagoon of Salinas del Marqués also protect and improve water quality, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide ecosystem services to the local community, and have a great socio-economic value for the local population.

Save The Waves is working with Wildcoast and the local community of Playa Brasil to designate this area as a Ramsar Site and a Protect Area. Our work will result in a Protected Area that will preserve biodiversity, five surf breaks, 1,100 hectares of wetlands, and the traditional livelihoods of four communities.

Learn more at savethewaves.org/puntaconejo

> *PUNTA CONEJO IS SURROUNDED BY BEAUTIFUL BUT VULNERABLE COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS. THIS AREA IS NOT ONLY THE HOME TO MANY SPECIES, INCLUDING THE LEATHERBACK AND OLIVE RIDLEY SEA TURTLES, IT IS ALSO HOME TO MANY PEOPLE WHOSE LIVELIHOODS DEPEND ON THE COASTAL RESOURCES.*

Dr. Mara Arroyo
STW Conservation Programs Manager

© Ryan Craig

A STAKE IN THE FUTURE OF PUNTA CONEJO

At the heart of this struggle and the campaign is one of our local partners. Meet friend, activist and defender of Punta Conejo: Uriel Camacho.

Uriel is originally from Salina Cruz, one of the towns nearest to Punta Conejo. One of the first locals to ever surf, Punta Conejo was where Uriel and his friends learned to ride waves almost 30 years ago.

Despite the six kilometer walk from the nearest bus stop, it was the only break he paddled out to for years. At the time, there were no tourists in the area and only a few local surfers like Uriel who surfed the magical point break.

He has seen firsthand how the natural beauty of the coastline has benefited the community: the small local markets are thriving due to the visitors and surf guide services provide a sustainable revenue. Surf tourism has also positively impacted the younger generations, with a new wave of surf fever among the local community.

Today, Uriel is a surf guide and surf photographer in the area. He is helping lead the local effort to protect Punta Conejo and the surrounding environment.

"I am very concerned about the threat of destruction of our Punta Conejo. Our livelihoods depend on this ecosystem. Punta Conejo is part of our lives. We love this place with all our hearts."

With two daughters, Uriel has already taught his eldest to surf Punta Conejo and hopes the point can be enjoyed for future generations.

Punta Conejo © Jesus Monroy Camacho

SURF & THE GLOBAL STAGE

Our Ocean Conference: Palau

Save The Waves was invited to speak at Our Ocean about the unique intersection of land and sea that surfers occupy and our power to address the effects of marine pollution as a global community.

Notes from Nik: "It was humbling to address such a diverse, influential and well respected group of dignitaries, NGO leaders and conservation practitioners with our message of protecting surf ecosystems. This experience was a powerful reminder that while our challenges are great, our collaborative potential is immense.

Overall, the conference was an amazing opportunity for Save The Waves to showcase our cutting-edge work, and engage with partners with whom we have not seen in person for two years."

CEO Nik Stronh-Cvetich presenting at the Our Ocean Conference and speaking with John Kelly.

UN Ocean Conference: Lisbon, Portugal

Save The Waves participated in high level discussions surrounding coastal protected areas, the importance of surfing in the blue economy, plastic pollution, and other topics critical to the success of our mission.

Our team was selected to give an intervention during the plenary dialogue where we highlighted the importance of protecting surf spots around the world and how the work of our Coalition will contribute significantly to the global goals of protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030. STW staffer, Mara Arroyo, officially addressed the United Nations, where our call for protecting surf breaks was heard by the international community and heads of ocean conservation for various governments around the world.

Our team additionally organized and led an official UN Side Event entitled "Surf Protected Area Networks: An Innovative Approach to Harnessing the Power of Surfing in the Blue Economy."

STW Staffers Trent Hodges and Mara Arroyo with Azores Coordinator Andre Avelar and Ambassador Miguel Blanco at the UN Ocean Conference.

The Msldives © Ryan Craig

CLIMATE INNOVATION: INSURANCE FOR SURF ECOSYSTEMS

In October 2022, Save The Waves was one of five finalists in a global competition which identifies and nurtures financially innovative, community-led projects that build coastal resilience and reduce ocean risk.

With support from the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA), our organization will work with local surfing communities and economies to incentivize the protection and conservation of surf ecosystems, while creating an innovative insurance model.

This insurance model would financially sustain communities for loss of revenue due to coastal development or climate disaster that affects the ecosystem and its ability to produce surf breaks.

We will use the local surfing economy to create a surf ecosystem insurance fund to support communities in improving and protecting their coastal resources, as well as to provide economic resilience in the face of climate and anthropogenic threats.

> *"OUR GOAL IS TO HELP GIVE COASTAL COMMUNITIES THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO BE EFFECTIVE IN VALUING, PROTECTING AND MANAGING THEIR OWN NATURAL RESOURCES. THIS SUPPORT WILL HELP US PARTNER WITH MORE COASTAL COMMUNITIES IN KEY AREAS AND HELP REDUCE THE RISK AND LOSS CAUSED BY CLIMATE-RELATED EVENTS.*

Nik Strong-Cvetich
CEO, Save The Waves

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

STAFF

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Conservation Programs Manager
Trent Hodges
Conservation Programs Manager
Diego Sancho Gallegos
Data Coordinator
Lauren Parrino
Communications Manager
Mikaela Osten
Operations Manager
Susan Coffey
Finance Manager
Shaun Burns
Santa Cruz WSR Coordinator
Emmett Balassone
Marketing Specialist
Andre Avelar
Azores SPANs Coordinator
Laura Zumbado
Costa Rica SPANs Coordinator

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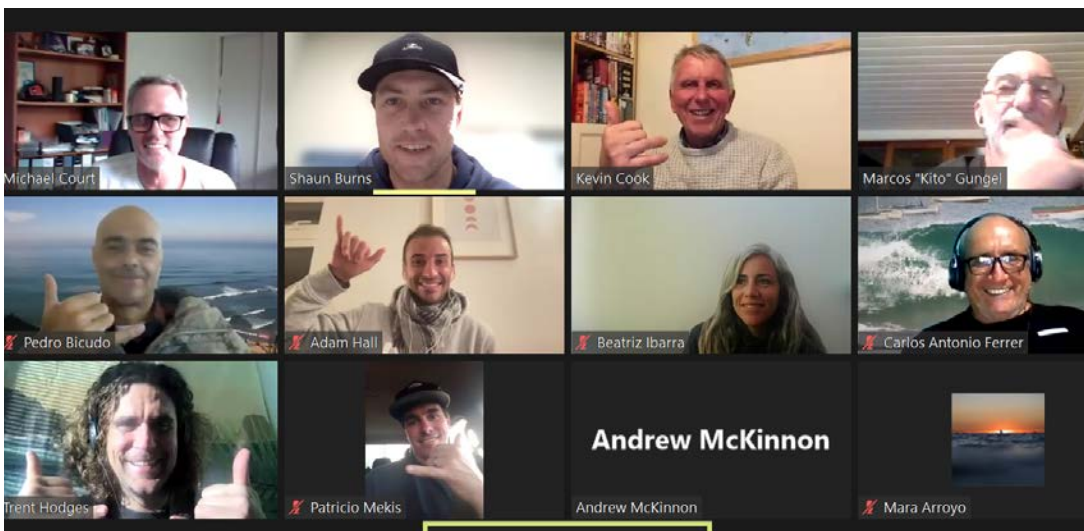
Playa Hermosa Reserva Mundial de Surf
Preservar
Respetar
Celebrar
Playa Hermosa
Reserva Mundial de Surf
Playa Hermosa
World Surfing Reserve

A CRUZ
RFING RESERVE
THE WAVES
COALITION
O'NEILL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Shaun Burns
Kevin Cook
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Adam Hall
Beatriz Ibarra
Carlos Antonio Ferrer
Trent Hodges
Patricio Mekis
Andrew McKinnon
Andrew McKinnon
Mara Arroyo

2022 DONORS & PARTNERS

50,000 +

Al and Christine Ramadan
Conservation International Foundation
Fossil Group / Skagen
Kona Brewing Company
MOTHER
Ocean Risk Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA)
Schmidt Marine Technology Partners
Stichting The Flotilla Charitable Foundation

10,000 - 49,000 +

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Foothill Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc.
Google
HS Family Foundation
Klean Kanteen
LUMEN Wines
Mark and Meghan Thomas
Mighty Arrow Family Foundation
O'Neill
Paddle Logger
Patagonia
Peak Design
Rickshaw Stop
The Porterfield Family
The Surfer's Journal
YETI

100 - 2,499 +

Adventure Out LLC
Adventure Sports Unlimited (ASU)
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Lise Getoor
Matthew Pebley
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Michael Benoit
Minnie Ingersoll
Moonstone Beach Surfcamp
Mountains Wave Marketing
Onderdonk Family Fund
Pacific Wave
Patrick Williams
Rachel Strader
S&A Publishing
Sam Bird-Robinson
Samantha Malone
Sanford & Haubach Charitable Gift Fund
Santa Cruz County Bank (SCCB)
Slowtide
Stephen M McCabe
Steve Krafft
Steve Merrill
Susan Daly
The Ascher Family
The Co Household
The Hodges Family
The Perrone Family
theFrontSteps
Thermal Travel
VMWare Foundation
Wendy Chan
Yang Wei
Zach Weisberg

Photo Right: Playa Hermosa World Surfing Reserve © Ryan Craig

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