



**Khaled bin Sultan
Living Oceans
Foundation**



GLOBAL REEF EXPEDITION

2015 Annual Report

Message From the Executive Director

2015 marked an important milestone in our Foundation's life – completion of the field-work for our Global Reef Expedition (GRE). We circumnavigated the globe on the GRE, engaged with 15 different countries and surveyed 97 islands and over 1,000 individual reefs. However, the project is far from over as we bear down on the ominous task of analyzing the many terabytes of data we collected in five years.

In January, we surveyed Palau's coral reefs aboard our research vessel, *M/Y Golden Shadow*. Palau is a small island nation in the western Pacific Ocean with a land area smaller than New York City but surrounded by immense marine resources. What attracted us to Palau is their political will to conserve their marine environment. We hope that our Palau expedition contributed to the efforts leading up to the legislation championed by President Remengesau designating a huge marine reserve (500,000 square kilometers). Well done, Palau! President Remengesau stated that "Creating this sanctuary is a bold move that the people of Palau recognize as essential to our survival." Palau is on the right track.

In March and April, we conducted the final and longest mission of the GRE (six weeks total) to survey the coral reefs of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), an overseas territory of the United Kingdom (also referred to as the Chagos Archipelago). In April, 2010, the British government established the Chagos Marine Protected Area as the largest no-take marine reserve in the world. This collection of islands and reefs in the central Indian Ocean represent some of the healthiest reef systems in the cleanest ocean waters of the world far from human population. All of that being said, even the most remote reefs are feeling the effects of climate change as we observed (and documented) an active coral bleaching event on some of the BIOT reefs during our research expedition.

As we get to the hard work of analyzing data from the GRE, we are continuing to expand our Education and Communications programs. One of the most exciting developments in 2015 was the creation of a Coral Reef Ecology Curriculum, an incredible resource for science teachers around the world. The Communications Department was also busy filming for our newest blockbuster documentary "The Missing Fish." Stay tuned for that film to be released!

Thanks for your interest in our work to protect and restore the world's oceans!



CAPT Philip G. Renaud, USN (Ret.)

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Global Reef Expedition

For the past 5 years, the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation circumnavigated the globe aboard the research ship *M/Y Golden Shadow* surveying and mapping coral reefs on the *Global Reef Expedition*. From 2011-2015 the Expedition conducted 22 month-long research missions throughout the Caribbean, Pacific, and Indian Ocean to collect much-needed baseline research on the health and resiliency of coral reefs.

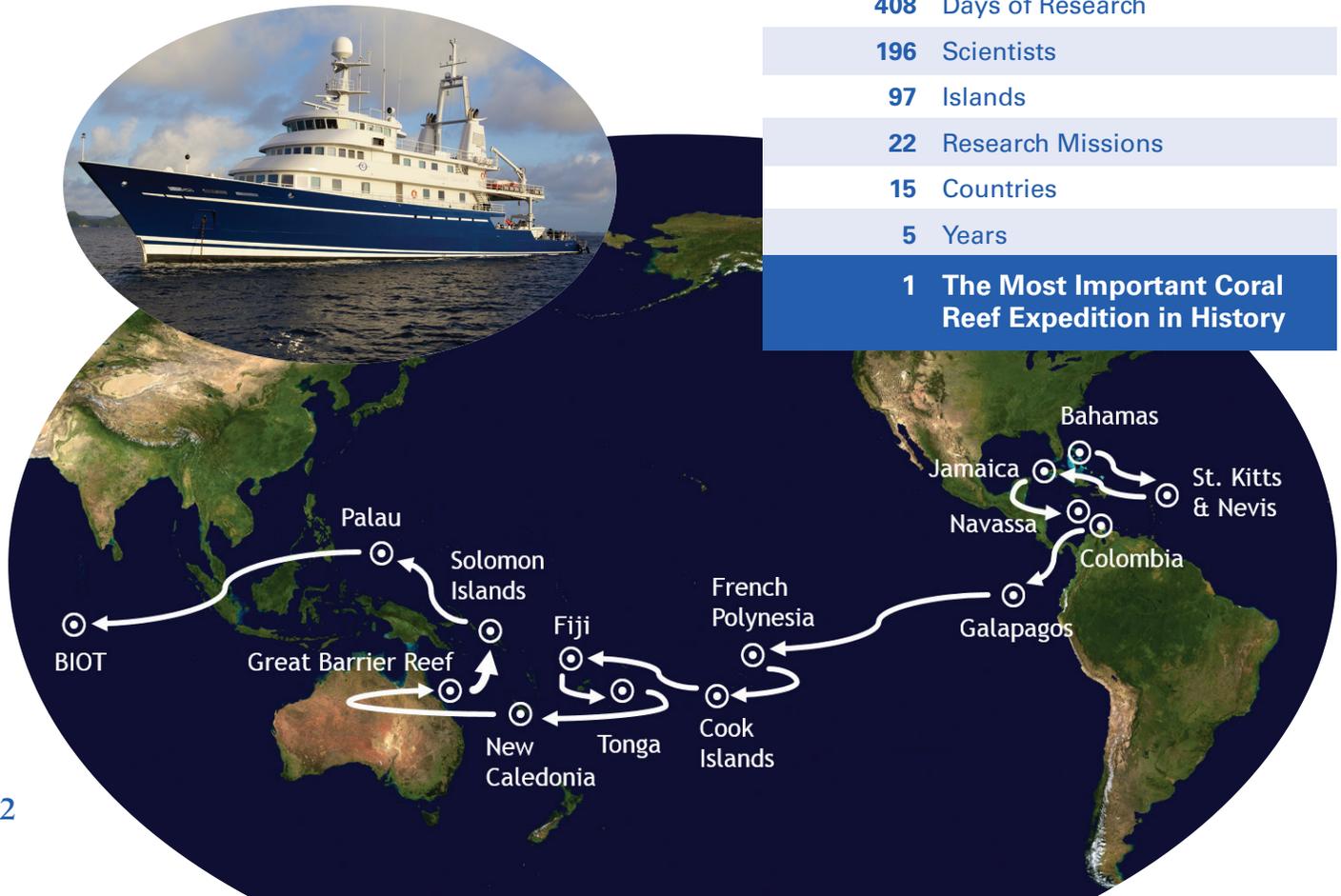
The *Global Reef Expedition* embodies the Foundation's motto, *Science without Borders*®. On each mission, the Foundation brought students, local experts, and world-renewed scientists aboard the *Golden Shadow* to study remote coral reefs and assess their ability to resist threats and survive major disturbance events. Together, they surveyed and mapped coral reefs on 97 islands in 15 countries, spending nearly 13,000 combined hours underwater in the process.

This massive undertaking collected an unprecedented amount of scientific data that is now being analyzed. Scientific reports and atlases form the first leg of the *Global Reef Expedition* have already been published and made freely available on our website. Like all research findings from the Expedition, they are shared with local governments and institutions to help them preserve and protect their coral reefs.

GRE By the NUMBERS

- 50,435** km Traveled (1.25 times around the world)
- 35,000** km² of Coral Reefs Mapped
- 12,995** Hours SCUBA Diving (541 days underwater)
- 9,190** COTS Collected
- 7,313** Fish Surveys
- 7,309** Dropcam Videos
- 6,902** Education Seminar Attendees
- 5,911** Coral Samples Taken
- 5,740** Coral & Phototranssect Surveys
- 5,500** Benthic Surveys
- 1,066** Dive Sites
- 1,460** Fish Species Recorded
- 1,004** Coral Reefs Studied
- 486** Coral Species Recorded
- 408** Days of Research
- 196** Scientists
- 97** Islands
- 22** Research Missions
- 15** Countries
- 5** Years

1 The Most Important Coral Reef Expedition in History



Research Missions

Palau

The Global Reef Expedition kicked off 2015 with a mission to Palau in January and February. This world-renowned dive destination is recognized for vibrant healthy reefs teeming with fish. They did not disappoint. We were glad to have Keith Ellenbogen from the International League of Conservation Photography (iLCP) join us on the Expedition to capture the diversity and abundance of life on Palau's reefs. Our science team was also joined by local experts from the Palau International Coral Research Center (PICRC) and the Coral Reef Research Foundation.

The first stop on the mission was to Palau's iconic Rock Islands, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Surveying the reefs there gave us a chance to assess the health of the reef inside the marine protected area, and provided UNESCO's Marine Programme with essential data. Over the course of five weeks we dove with giant Emperor Wrasse, snorkeled in Jellyfish Lake, and surveyed 85 reefs in Palau. No two reefs were the same, and the diversity was astounding. The dominant coral species, reef structure and health, and fish communities varied greatly among reefs, even those that were fairly close to each other. Many of the reefs were thriving, with healthy populations of top predators and herbivorous fish, and 60-90% of the bottom covered in a diverse assemblage of branching, plating, and massive corals while other reefs were in the process of recovering from previous disturbances.

Many of the reefs hit by the devastating 1998 bleaching event had bounced back from the brink of death. They were now dense thickets of branching staghorn corals, needle corals, and table acroporids. Other sites had virtually no living coral, the reef reduced to rubble by two of the most powerful typhoons to hit Palau in recent

memory. But even here, among the coral rubble and mats of cyanobacteria, there were signs of new life. Fragments of coral pulverized by the storm were still alive and beginning to regrow, coral recruits had settled across the reef forming small colonies. The substrate was free of macro-algae so juvenile corals have space to grow. These are all signs of the unusually high resilience of Palau's coral reefs.

There have been a number of other large scale disturbances affecting Palau's reefs in the recent past, but what we saw is a remarkable resilience and recovery. Given Palau's small population, limited human development and extensive conservation initiatives, these precious places in Palau should be expected to continue to flourish for many years to come.



Chagos Archipelago

The Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation concluded the Global Reef Expedition with two missions to the Chagos Archipelago in the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). BIOT is home to some of the most remote and pristine coral reefs on Earth – 95% of which have yet to be explored. All of the islands and reefs we surveyed are part of the Chagos Marine Reserve, which at the time was the largest no-take marine protected area in the world. Scientists from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Nova Southeastern University and the Chagos Conservation Trust joined us on the Expedition. The award-winning wildlife cameraman Doug Allan also joined us to film the final Global Reef Expedition field mission.

The vital coral reefs in the Chagos Archipelago were seemingly untouched by man and flourishing with life. Huge schools of snapper, jacks, surgeonfish and other fish swarmed the reef—its waters thick with fish that sometimes made it hard to see the corals. The biomass of reef fish in BIOT was the highest we recoded anywhere on the Global Reef Expedition, at least 6 times higher than seen anywhere else in the Indian Ocean, and possibly the highest reef fish biomass ever recorded. These coral reefs were in a remarkable state of health given past bleaching events. Shallow water reefs had exceptionally high coral cover (60-80%). The coral communities were dominated by giant table corals, many of which were over 2m wide. Even the deep reefs had healthy and dense coral communities of massive frame-building corals that often continued well beyond the depth of our deepest surveys (100ft deep).

Because of its remote location, BIOT was the perfect place to study global issues that threaten the long-term health of coral reefs. A major component of our research was to determine the resilience of coral reef communities to stressors, particularly ocean warming events and ocean acidification. Towards the end of our mission, we

witnessed the onset of a major bleaching event first-hand. After nearly a month of warm temperatures and unusually calm conditions the reef began to bleach in a startling array of colors, as corals turned cotton-candy shades of pink, blue, and white. Fortunately, cooler waters returned within a week, allowing most coral colonies to recover.

As we wrapped up our research, we had a chance to reflect upon the incredible array of life we witnessed on the Global Reef Expedition. Of the 22 sites we surveyed during the Global Reef Expedition, the reefs of BIOT were unparalleled. In a rapidly changing global environment, where human pressures continue to grow and stressors from climate change are predicted to worsen, BIOT may be a final frontier for coral reefs of the Indian Ocean. This is the only place in the Indian Ocean with a near absence of human threats. Coral and fish species that have exhibited unprecedented declines elsewhere still remain robust and of a size reminiscent of bygone days on many other reefs. As a repository for threatened and endangered species and a storehouse of biodiversity, it is critical that these reefs continue to be protected. By working together, we can safeguard BIOT's precious coral resources and ensure these majestic coral reefs and their associated marine life continue to flourish for generations to come.



COTS Removal in Aitutaki

In 2013, the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation surveyed the reefs of the Cook Islands on the Global Reef Expedition and came across an outbreak of deadly crown of thorns starfish (COTS). Our scientists decided to intervene, removing hundreds of COTS from the reef by hand before they could eat their way through the reef. They also attempted our first large-scale removal of COTS from the entire atoll of Aitutaki. Upon hearing reports of another COTS outbreak in the island, Foundation scientists returned to the island in July 2015 to eradicate the remaining starfish.

Scientists also revisited survey sites from 2013 to evaluate the status of coral recovery from the initial COTS outbreak. Returning to Aitutaki two years after our initial COTS removal effort we were able to document the extent of the damage, progression of the outbreak, ongoing coral mortality, and early signs of recovery. Over the course of two weeks, we successfully removed 95% of the starfish remaining on the island.

The starfish caused considerable damage to the reefs of Aitutaki. Live coral cover on the outer reefs had been reduced from 30-80% to 1-2%. The COTS had eaten almost all of their preferred species of coral and had moved to feed on corals in the lagoon. Although the loss of coral was high, a few healthy patches of reef remained, and new colonies of coral were already beginning to settle and grow on bare patches of substrate.

With this mission to Aitutaki we proved that removal efforts can make a difference in a COTS outbreak. For small island nations, it is possible to remove most of the animals from the reef and save the remaining coral from these voracious coral predators.

Through collaboration with the Ministry of Marine Resources, Aitutaki's Traditional Leaders, Aitutaki Conservation Trust, and the Aitutaki Marine Research Centre, we hope to prevent additional impacts to Aitutaki's

reefs, while raising awareness of these deadly starfish. For now, Aitutaki's reefs are out of danger and the reefs are beginning to rebound.

Maldives

In the fall of 2015, the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation launched a novel partnership with tourist resorts in the Maldives to combat an outbreak of Crown of Thorns Starfish (COTS). In October and November, a small science team flew to the Maldives to assess the condition of the reef and the amount of damage caused by the starfish. The team removed COTS from the reefs, and trained resort staff on best practices for controlling an outbreak.

Crown of Thorns Starfish are a significant threat to coral reefs in the Indo-Pacific region. Unless COTS outbreaks are controlled quickly, the voracious starfish often consume all the coral in one area and spread to neighboring reefs. Severe outbreaks of COTS are capable of destroying an entire reef system in a matter of weeks, and reefs may require decades or more to recover. Luckily, the team arrived in time to remove the majority of COTS from the Maldives reefs before the global mass bleaching event occurred.

Over the course of 3 weeks, the Foundation's science team worked with resort staff to remove an astounding 7,396 coral-eating starfish from the reefs in the Maldives. Many of the reefs had been decimated by COTS, the starfish eating through their preferred food—fast-growing branching corals—before moving on to eat slow-growing reef-building corals. However, pockets of healthy reefs remained that can help repopulate the reefs decimated by the Crown of Thorns Starfish outbreak.

Crown of Thorns Starfish infected every reef we surveyed in the Maldives, but the worst damage occurred near the local tuna processing plant – the most likely source of the outbreak. Tuna fins and carcasses dumped in the channel increased the nutrient load in the water creating ideal conditions for an outbreak. Tube feet collected from COTS for genetic analysis will help the scientists determine how the predatory starfish reached the Maldives and map their pattern of spread through the Indo-Pacific region.



Communications

The Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation is committed to communicating coral reef science and the value of coral reef conservation to communities around the world. We believe that helping people to connect with marine life in an emotional way, as well as boosting their understanding of it, is vital for lasting ocean conservation. Examples of the Living Oceans Foundation's communications accomplishments in 2015 include:

In June we held our annual film screening in partnership with the Annapolis Maritime Museum. We played our award-winning documentary *Mapping the Blue*, which was followed by a question and answer session with the star of the film. Kevin Iro, who joined the event live from the Cook Islands to talk about his role in establishing the Cook Islands Marine Park. Earlier in the year, *Mapping the Blue* took home the prestigious Grand Remi Award at the WorldFest International Film Festival.

The Foundation celebrated World Oceans Day with the launch of *360° Solomon*, a short film about how XL Catlin Seaview Survey teamed up with the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation to collect imagery and data from coral reefs in the Solomon Islands. XL Catlin Seaview Survey, in conjunction with Google, simultaneously launched a virtual dive of Penguin Reef in the Solomon Islands on Google Street View, the imagery for which was collected on the Global Reef Expedition.

In November, the Living Oceans Foundation continued an ongoing partnership with the International League of Conservation Photographers (iLCP) by sharing spectacular photographs at WiLDspeak. The Foundation also participated in a WiLDspeak panel discussion about the role of photography in conservation with award-winning iLCP photographers Michele Westmorland and Keith Ellenbogen. Both of these renowned photographers joined the Global Reef Expedition, Keith in 2015 and Michele in 2013.

News of the Foundation's important research is circulating in the U.S. mainstream media. A story on the Crown of Thorns Starfish crisis appeared in the Washington Post, one on coral bleaching in BIOT was covered by CBS News, and Seven Seas magazine featured a compelling article about our *Global Reef Expedition* to Palau. Worldwide coverage of the Foundation's collaborative research with Dr. Will Robbins of Wildlife Marine on shark feeding behavior was featured in Discovery, the Daily Mail, and ABC News.



CORAL REEFS OF THE WORLD



Awards and Recognition

Emmy Award

This year one of our films received an Emmy for excellence in broadcast television at a gala event in Florida. Our film, *Mysteries of the Coral Canyon*, features the work of the Foundation’s science team in French Polynesia. The film highlights a spawning aggregation of groupers preyed upon by a very large number of reef sharks, and underlines that both species are highly dependent on healthy reefs. The film award reinforces our belief that media plays an integral role in conservation efforts.



International Superyacht Society (ISS) Fabien Cousteau Blue Award

On November 4th, our Executive Director (CAPT Phil Renaud) attended the International Superyacht Society (ISS) Design Awards Gala in Fort Lauderdale, Florida to accept a very prestigious “award of distinction” on behalf of the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation.

The *ISS Fabian Cousteau Blue Award* celebrates stewardship of marine ecosystems and the nomination requirements include environmental leadership, global oceanic conservation and resource preservation.

This award was inspired by Fabian Cousteau, the grandson of the famous oceanographer, Jacques-Yves Cousteau.

Although Fabian Cousteau could not attend the gala due to a scheduling conflict, his father (Jean Michel Cousteau) presented the award to CAPT Renaud which was a very special surprise. The Living Oceans Foundation is extremely honored by this award.



2015 Education Highlights

Coral Reef Education Portal

The Foundation launched the Coral Reef Ecology Curriculum in October 2015 for beta testing, a multimedia package of teaching and learning tools. This innovative course will engage and excite students while they learn about coral reefs. Currently, it includes 11 units related to coral reefs with another 12 units in the process of development. The Foundation is using the beta testing period to test the online curriculum with various user groups, fix any bugs or issues, and address feedback from users before formally launching the Coral Reef Ecology Curriculum in 2016.

Mangrove Education and Restoration Program

During the 2014-2015 school year, the Foundation piloted the Mangrove Education and Restoration Program. The Foundation developed a curriculum on mangrove ecology that includes hands-on, collaborative activities for students and teachers to help learn about and restore the mangrove ecosystem. The initial program, Jamaica Awareness of Mangroves in Nature (J.A.M.I.N.), was implemented in two high schools near Falmouth, Jamaica. The Foundation partnered with the University of the West Indies—Discovery Bay Marine Laboratory to execute this program.

In the fall of 2015, after much success with J.A.M.I.N., the Foundation implemented a second Mangrove Education and Restoration Program called Bahamas Awareness of Mangroves (B.A.M.). The Foundation partnered with Friends of the Environment to implement this program in two high schools in Abaco, Bahamas.



Tonga Coral Reef Education Pilot Program

In October, the Foundation returned to Tonga for the second installment of the Coral Reef Education Program. The Foundation continued to work with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Ministry of Education in Vava'u, and the Vava'u Environmental Protection Association (VEPA). During this trip, the Foundation provided a Retention and Knowledge to Action Survey. This survey was distributed to students who learned of the coral reef seminar during the first installment of the program in June 2014. The Foundation will use the results of this survey to assess how well the coral reef educational program knowledge is being retained. Additionally, the survey will reveal whether students have changed any of their behaviors based on learning how local threats can endanger coral reefs.



Science Without Borders®

The Living Oceans Foundation embraces *Science Without Borders*® in all facets of its operations. *Science Without Borders*® is registered to the Foundation for financial sponsorship of marine conservation programs and scientific research and to promote public awareness of the need to preserve, protect and restore the world's oceans and aquatic resources. The Global Reef Expedition has embodied the purposes of this trademark through both an unprecedented level of collaborative scientific research and an ambitious education and outreach program. Through the Foundation's scientific work, local resource managers and scientists from countries around the globe are receiving critical scientific information and tools to inform the management and conservation of their marine resources. Additionally, local scientists work side-by-side with internationally acclaimed coral reef scientists. The international team of scientists aboard the research vessel, *M/Y Golden Shadow* map and survey coral reefs to close critical gaps in scientific knowledge. The Foundation also trains local scientists and resource managers to continue environmental monitoring long after the *Golden Shadow* departs the region. Upon completion of the field work in each region, the Foundation and its partners compile and analyze comprehensive coral reef data, satellite imagery, photos and video and use the knowledge to guide development of regional and global conservation tools and tactics to counter the most serious threats impacting the health of coral reefs.

Note: First use of this service mark by the Living Oceans Foundation in the United States was recorded on December 3rd, 2000. The service mark "Science Without Borders®" was officially registered on September 9, 2003, with the United States Patent and Trademark Office under Reg. No. 2,760,882. The registration was renewed for a ten-year period on January 3, 2013. The mark is also registered with the Registrar of Trade Marks in Australia as Trade Mark No. 1092400 and with the European Community as Trade Mark Reg. No. 4756797. Protection of the trademark is also registered in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the registration No. 1236/21. The purpose of the mark is to provide financial sponsorship of marine conservation programs and scientific research and to promote public awareness of the need to preserve, protect and restore the world's oceans and aquatic resources.

Science Without Borders® Challenge

The *Science without Borders*® Challenge contest was developed to get students and teachers around the world more involved and interested in ocean conservation through various forms of art. This annual international contest inspires students to be creative while using different types of media to promote public awareness of the need to preserve, protect, and restore the world's oceans and aquatic resources; thus, contributing to the overarching motto of the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation—*Science without Borders*®.

The theme for this year's *Science without Borders*® Challenge was *Reef Relationships*. Typically, the Challenge has been for high school students (14-19 year-olds). This year the Foundation expanded the reach of the project to middle school students (11-14 year-olds). Overall, the Foundation received 152 submissions from 16 states throughout the United States and 18 different countries.

Middle School Winners:

First Place: Rachel Shen, Age 13

Ontario, Canada; Preserve to Survive the Struggles

Second Place: Jonathon Xu, Age 12

Ontario, Canada; The Precious Ocean Jewels

Third Place: Chime Rosaldes, Age 12

Manama, Bahrain; Eye of the Ocean



High School Winners:

First Place: Michelle Huang, Age 17

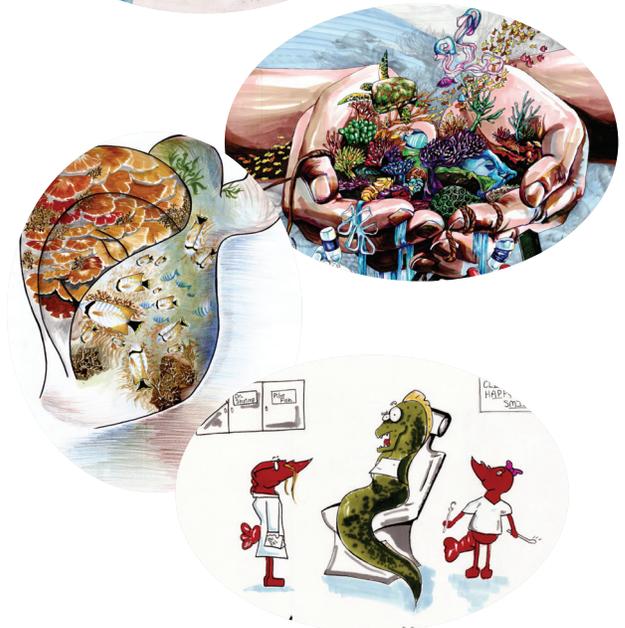
Texas, USA; Treasure Reef

Second Place: Sukanya Wattal, Age 15

Jammu, India; Coral for a Fish, as Mother for a Child

Third Place: Morgan Herrmann, Age 17

New York, USA; The Eel and the Cleaner Shrimp





The Living Oceans Foundation's New Headquarters

In October, the Foundation relocated our headquarters to Annapolis, Maryland. Today, Annapolis is widely known for being the capital of Maryland and home to the United States Naval Academy, among many other distinctions. Annapolis was the country's capital during the Revolutionary War and all four Maryland signers of the Declaration of Independence lived in Annapolis. The Chesapeake Bay, America's largest estuary, envelopes Annapolis and we feel right at home surrounded by this grand body of water.

Our move to Annapolis was driven by our desire to interact with a vibrant maritime community and we have been thrilled with the outpouring of support since our arrival here. Our office is located in the Eastport community of Annapolis which takes great pride in calling themselves "The Maritime Republic of Eastport: an enlightened democracy." It's a fun, engaged community of maritime professionals and we're looking forward to contributing to the enhancement of ocean literacy through our outreach and education programs. Come visit us! Our new address is 130 Severn Ave, Annapolis MD, 21403.



Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation Staff

Executive Director

Captain Philip Renaud, USN (Ret.)

Chief Scientist

Andrew Bruckner, Ph.D.

Director of Communications

Alison Barrat

Director of Education

Amy Heemsoth

Coral Reef Ecologist

Alexandra Dempsey

Communications Manager

Elizabeth Rauer

Education Programs Specialist

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Office Manager

Patricia Allen

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Shawn McLaughlin, Ph.D.

Sam Purkis, Ph.D.

In Memory of Douglas Parks Baldwin

Oct 22, 1936 – Jan 2, 2016



Doug Baldwin was a beloved advisor on the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation Board of Directors and we miss him dearly. Doug was working as Prince Khaled's Public Affairs Advisor in the mid- 1990's when the Prince first had the notion of establishing a foundation for ocean conservation. With great passion for the topic, Doug was instrumental in developing the concept and forming the corporation.

When the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation was incorporated in 2000, Doug's interest grew in step with the Foundation's growth and he always provided mature, insightful advice on matters of importance. The success of the Foundation in those formative years can be attributed, in large measure, to Doug's leadership.

Doug is survived by his loving wife, Janet, who resides near Seattle, Washington. One of the best things Doug brought to the Living Oceans Foundation was his wife, Jan. Jan was Doug's business partner and she loved the Foundation as much, if not more, than Doug. Jan's photography skills were put to great use in archiving all of the Board Meetings held since the inception of the company. With Doug's passing and Jan's retirement, we lost a "power couple" but they will always be considered part of our "family."

Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2015

ASSETS	2015
Current Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 392,423
Investments	221,457
Prepaid expenses	36,817
Contributions receivable	50,000
Total Current Assets	700,697
Furniture, equipment and improvements net	224,985
Other Assets:	
Investments restricted for endowment fund	1,729,436
Deposits	-
Total Other Assets	1,729,436
Total Assets	\$2,655,118

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities	
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 156,826
Grants payable	52,500
Total Current Liabilities	209,326
Total Liabilities	209,326
Net Assets:	
Unrestricted	
Undesignated	436,590
Board designated—endowment	221,457
Board designated—operational contingency reserves	8,309
	666,356
Temporarily restricted	50,000
Permanently restricted	1,729,436
Total Net Assets	2,445,792
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,655,118



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