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## At U.N. Ocean Conference, Panama and Global Fishing Watch Forge Landmark Partnership to Boost Ocean Protection

*The agreement will harness technology and transparency to strengthen surveillance of marine protected areas and safeguard biodiversity*

**NICE, France** — Global Fishing Watch, an international nonprofit organization advancing ocean governance through transparency of human activity at sea, and Panama's Ministry of the Environment (MiAmbiente) have announced a new partnership aimed at promoting transparency, strengthening ocean governance and conserving marine biodiversity within Panama's marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), the two parties confirmed today.

The partnership, launched at [the third United Nations Ocean Conference \(UNOC3\)](#) in Nice, France, amid the signing of a memorandum of understanding, will see Panamanian authorities and Global Fishing Watch collaborate to enhance the management, surveillance and environmental enforcement of Panama's protected waters through the increased use of cutting-edge technologies such as [Global Fishing Watch's unique open source tools](#). In addition, the collaboration will work to accelerate protection of vulnerable species and marine ecosystems in line with the 30x30 goals — the sustainability pledge aimed at effectively conserving 30 percent of the world's land and ocean by 2030.

"Having achieved its 30x30 objectives well ahead of time, Panama is fast becoming a champion of good ocean governance," [said Tony Long, chief executive officer of Global Fishing Watch](#). "We are proud to partner with Panama's Ministry of the Environment as they seek to put in place proper management of designated MPAs that represent more than 50 percent of their exclusive economic zone."

"When safeguarding marine biodiversity we not only preserve a healthy ocean ecosystem but also support the wellbeing of societies and economies who rely on the ocean for their livelihoods, their nutrition and their cultural identity," Long continued. "This collaboration represents a critical step forward in advancing good ocean governance and ensuring our ocean is protected and sustainable for generations to come."

The agreement between Global Fishing Watch and MiAmbiente is the latest chapter in a series of collaborative efforts between the international organization and the Latin American country aimed at strengthening marine protection and enforcement across the country's waters. Since 2019, the government of Panama has [publicly shared the vessel monitoring system, or VMS, data of its international fleet with Global Fishing Watch](#) — a move that has contributed towards



the timely identification of unauthorized ships and vessels with non-compliance records and elevated the country's commitment to transparency.

Now, with the new memorandum of understanding, Panama will also provide updated data on MPAs and conservation zones. For its part, Global Fishing Watch will provide satellite monitoring tools, geospatial data, technical training and a dedicated online platform to support MPA management, patrols and policy planning. The initiative is expected to boost transparency, improve institutional capacity and advance protection of marine ecosystems and biodiversity.

"The defense of the oceans demands urgent action, starting with immediate protection measures, transparency and cooperation. The partnership with Global Fishing Watch brings cutting-edge technology to Panama's efforts to strictly protect its marine areas, strengthen monitoring and firmly confront illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing," said Panama's Minister of Environment, Juan Carlos Navarro.

"Panamanians have already met and exceeded the global commitment to conserve at least 30 percent of our oceans by 2030, as we have protected 54 percent of our jurisdictional waters—consolidating effective ocean governance and reaffirming Panama's leadership as a global blue leader committed to the future of the planet," he added.

Bolstered by a commitment to embrace innovative technology and open data, the Government of Panama has recently intensified its efforts to further integrate transparency into its marine management operations. At the Our Ocean Conference (OOC), held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in April 2025, [Panamanian authorities raised the bar on good ocean governance](#) by committing to establishing clearer and more accessible vessel ownership records through improved data collection and digitization processes. The announcement signaled Panama's ambition towards achieving ultimate beneficial ownership (UBO) transparency and ensuring increased accountability of its fleet and better ocean governance. Moreover, earlier this year the government of Panama adopted [a new policy document slated to help authorities improve controls of the country's international service fleet](#) and boost transshipment oversight as part of a move to secure increased compliance with national and international regulations.

"We are thrilled to formalize this important agreement, which deepens our collaboration with Panama and supports the country's bold efforts to implement and manage coastal and large marine protected areas," [said Mónica Espinoza Miralles, Head of Latin America at Global Fishing Watch](#). "These marine areas safeguard vital, transboundary resources that connect Panama with its neighbors in the Eastern Tropical Pacific. Monitoring such remote oceanic ecosystems is no small task, but technology has become a powerful ally in enabling cost-effective surveillance and enforcement. By embracing open data and strengthening institutional capacity, Panama is not only protecting its marine heritage but also contributing to the shared global goal of ocean conservation."

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### PRESS CONTACT

Andrew Zaganelli Giacalone

[andrew.giacalone@globalfishingwatch.org](mailto:andrew.giacalone@globalfishingwatch.org)