

NEWS

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High Seas Gems in the Spotlight

Barcelona, Spain, 9 October 2008 (MCBI): Today at the IUCN World Conservation Congress a joint initiative has been launched to highlight special places in the least protected place on Earth: the high seas. The centerpiece of which is a brochure showcasing 10 “gems” of the high seas.

The publication, launched by an unusual partnership bringing the Chantecaille Beauté company together with IUCN, World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), and Marine Conservation Biology Institute (MCBI), features sites such as the Ross Sea in the Southern Ocean, the Emperor Seamount Chain in the Pacific Ocean, the Sargasso Sea and Charlie-Gibbs Fracture Zone in the Atlantic Ocean, and the Saya de Malha Banks in the Indian Ocean.

The 10 sites exemplify the range of habitats in the world’s oceans. “International efforts to identify and protect significant high seas places are in their infancy,” says **Jeff Ardron of MCBI**. “This booklet should encourage collaborative scientific analysis of high seas ecosystems in need of conservation.”

Currently, less than one percent of our oceans are under any kind of protection, and nearly all of that one percent is located close to shore.

“Unlike national parks on land, most people have never visited these high seas gems, so they have no idea of the richness and staggering beauty of what lies down there,” says **Alex Chantecaille, who is Director of Sales Promotion at Chantecaille Beauté** and helped oversee this project.

High seas are the open ocean and deep seabed areas outside individual nations’ jurisdiction and make up nearly half of the Earth’s surface and almost two-thirds of the ocean. They provide feeding grounds for great whales, are traversed by imperiled bluefin tunas, and are home to deep-water corals that are thousands of years old.

“Despite the size and importance of the high seas, they are the least protected part of our planet,” says **Kristina Gjerde of IUCN**. “This brochure is designed to help people see and understand the importance of these remote places to galvanize action at the international level for the first time.”

“The Chantecaille Beauté company has a long history of working towards environmental conservation,” says **Sylvie Chantecaille, the owner and founder of the company**. “When MCBI and IUCN came to

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us with their concerns about the high seas, we felt that this was an extraordinary opportunity for us to help these places come alive in the eyes of the public.”

“As the great African conservationist Baba Dioum noted 40 years ago at the IUCN's General Assembly, we will only conserve those places that we know,” says **Elliott Norse, MCBI's President**. “We can thank Chantecaille Beauté for helping make these places more widely known, for these are magnificent places that are very much worth saving.”

Printed copies are available at the World Conservation Congress or on-line by visiting www.mcbi.org or www.iucn.org.

Marine Conservation Biology Institute (www.mcbi.org) is a US-based nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the science of marine conservation biology and securing protection for the world's marine ecosystems. Founded in 1996, MCBI is headquartered in Bellevue WA, and has offices in Honolulu HI, Glen Ellen CA and Washington DC.

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice. The world's oldest and largest global environmental network, IUCN is a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists and experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. IUCN's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, in Switzerland. www.iucn.org

The **World Commission on Protected Areas** (WCPA) is one of six Commissions of IUCN and is the world's leading global network of protected areas specialists. The activities of the WCPA-Marine program are conducted on national, regional and global levels and are intended to increase the capacity of management institutions and practitioners while building a sustainable network of globally-representative marine protected areas.

Chantecaille's philanthropic initiatives have supported monarch butterfly, coral, ocean and tiger conservation through product proceeds and consumer, industry and media education. The family-owned company believes that nature can speak the language of beauty, and that their role as catalysts for change is best served by staying ahead of the curve. That means developing fashion-forward color in healing treatments and innovating luxurious, highly-effective skincare that respect nature, people and the environment. www.chantecaille.com.

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