Our world, a deep dive

Conservation and Wildlife Rehabilitation Report 2024

Contents

Ocellaris Clownfish (*Amphiprion ocellaris*)

Foreword

“Underwater, cold, and looking into the dark gloom, I’m holding onto a giant catch bag, I see a grey nurse shark turn towards us… it’s her!

“She has three large hooks attached to her eye and mouth. We as an aquarium team have been asked to catch the shark before it gets entangled and to remove the hooks. An iconic but critically endangered species in Australia, it’s hoped that this young female will go on to breed. It’s moments like this that I realise it has been a privilege to work with SEA LIFE for 25 years, seeing first-hand the impact we have.

Hooks removed from shark, Sydney

“A few months later and I am underwater again, this time releasing endangered White’s seahorses into the wild. Born in the aquarium, each one has been carefully cared for over the last six months as part of a pilot conservation programme. Both experiences demonstrate one of the most important roles of our aquariums. Complex marine animal rescues and delicate breeding programmes are only possible if you have specialists with the experience and knowledge to be able to manage them.

“SEA LIFE has an incredible team of more than 550 animal experts who are continually working to advance welfare, conservation and science. We also partner with some remarkable organisations that make this conservation work possible.

“The most powerful moments are often with our individual guests sharing some of these stories with them, connecting people with the underwater world and inspiring marine biologists for the future.

“Through our aquariums we provide amazing discovery experiences for our 20 million guests.

“Releasing endangered zebra sharks in Indonesia, restoration work with corals in Florida, nursing sick seals back to health in Europe and the global team effort of rescuing marine turtles across four continents!

“I am excited to share this conservation and wildlife rehabilitation report which highlights some of the amazing work we have done in 2024.”

CHRIS BROWN

Global Head of Conservation, Education and Science

SEA LIFE

Chris Brown

Grey nurse shark (*Carcharias taurus*)

Action by numbers
Conservation and Wildlife Rehabilitation Report, 2024

SEA LIFE

Our aquariums welcomed **20 million guests** in more than **20 countries** across the globe, inspiring a love for the ocean and its animals.

Our mission for conservation is to:

- **Protect endangered species**
- **Rescue, rehabilitate and release animals in need**
- **Restore habitats**

Through our conservation programmes, we have brought people together to care for wildlife and learn about the environment. We will continue to act and make positive changes to protect our ocean and freshwater habitats.

To learn more, read our full report.

640

animals rescued including:
171 marine and freshwater turtles, 9 seals, 55 fish, 300 corals, 100 invertebrates

Over 12 tonnes

of litter removed from our waterways

8

endangered species bred
as part of rewilding programmes

38,166 hours

dedicated to conservation and wildlife rehabilitation

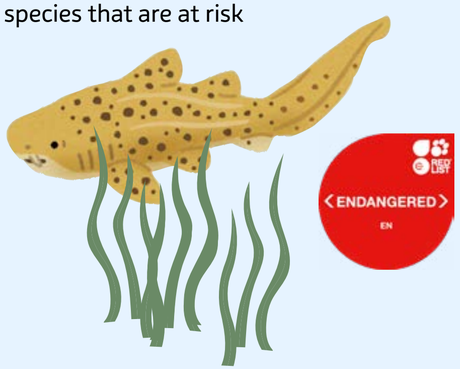
52

SEA LIFE
aquariums worldwide

We worked towards protecting

44

species that are at risk



We built a community of

377

partners
to deliver conservation

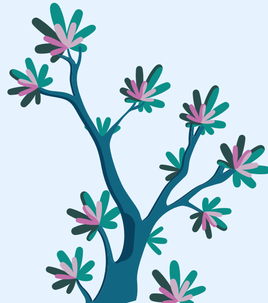
SEA LIFE TRUST
Protecting Our World's Oceans

55,000

inspiring talks

100

conservation projects



Our Mission

We at SEA LIFE inspire a love for the ocean and its animals, encouraging people to conserve them for the future.

SEA LIFE Bangkok team, Seagrass restoration project, Thailand

With 52 aquariums and more than 130,000 animals, we offer an unparalleled connection to the ocean. Our aquariums across 20 countries and four continents create a global network, which works collaboratively in partnership with external organisations to help find solutions to global problems.

We aim to inspire future generations to preserve our ocean and the incredible animals that live within it.

Our projects add value to the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are the "blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet".

"After living for nearly a hundred years on this planet, I now understand that the most important place on Earth is not on land, but at sea."

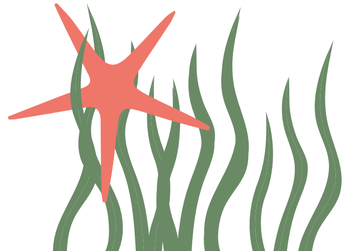
Oceans with Sir David Attenborough

Our efforts in conservation and wildlife rehabilitation work towards specific SDGs including:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In this report, we share the story of our actions throughout 2024, showing the conservation output that at SEA LIFE we have achieved through our global network.

We are driving meaningful change for the future protection of our oceans, freshwater environments and the animals that call these ecosystems home.



We are committed to safeguarding the ocean through:

1 Protecting endangered species

Rescue, rehabilitation and release animals in need 2

3 Restoring habitats

Together, with our guests and partners, we will continue to act and make positive changes to protect our ocean and freshwater environments.

Our Locations

One world

We inspire a love for the ocean and its animals, encouraging everyone to conserve them for the future. We work together to protect our oceans, rivers and lakes for future generations.

52 SEA LIFE

SEA LIFE operates **52 aquariums** worldwide and supports the vital work of **two SEA LIFE TRUST sanctuaries**. Each of our locations, marked with a dot on the map, plays a unique role in our global conservation mission.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Click on the icons above to reveal the case studies.

Conservation, Education and Research

Conservation, education and research aren't just part of what we do, they're the driving force behind what SEA LIFE stands for.

Together, they empower us to protect marine life, inspire future generations and uncover the knowledge needed to safeguard our oceans.

Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)

Conservation

SEA LIFE plays an important and often unique role in conservation, taking action to save animals and their habitats whilst bringing these stories to life in our aquariums.

Drawing from our 550+ aquarium specialists and wider supporting teams across the world, we can actively participate in conservation that helps protect these animals in the wild. SEA LIFE plays a key role in collaborative conservation efforts by offering and supporting educational outreach programmes to explain and raise awareness. We also provide scientific support and specialist skills to contribute to conservation. Utilising every day skills learnt at the aquarium has proven essential for direct conservation action.

Techniques such as how to safely handle a shark underwater are vital when removing fishing gear from entangled individuals in the wild; providing the appropriate care for an endangered turtle when it is found lost and in cold shock is essential for rehabilitation and release; or applying breeding techniques to repopulate endangered seahorses is key as part of a breed-to-release programme.

SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast, turtle release

We maintain strong relationships with a diverse group of stakeholders to help achieve conservation outcomes.

Iona the loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) Scarborough SEA LIFE, UK

Education

SEA LIFE aquariums play an important educational role providing a unique learning environment where guests can engage in both formal and informal experiences.

Through this platform, we contribute to efforts in informing on conservation projects, scientific research, building on our ocean literacy delivery, and encouraging pro-environmental behaviours.

Aligning with the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) and the International Zoo Educators Association (IZE) global strategy, we are continuing to develop our inclusive and diverse educational provisions, expanding opportunities both internally and externally. We deliver training to our teams and support the sharing of best practice amongst aquariums across all regions to deliver 'wow' moments to our guests.

We are building on community engagement programmes and working collaboratively with schools and academic institutions (colleges and universities).

In 2024, we were able to offer work-based opportunities and career insights for students to gain further experience bridging the gap between school and industry. At SEA LIFE Kelly Tarlton's Aquarium, New Zealand, the team organised and delivered the Ocean Youth Programme for 13-16-year-olds over eight days. The group took part in activities with industry partners and local organisations, building skills and career opportunities and gaining experience in the marine sector.

SEA LIFE delivered more than **55,000 inspiring talks** and presentations to our guests around the world and ran a range of workshops including Sea Creatures, Sea Defenders and Habitat Explorers. Our online 'Conservation Classroom' has also broadened in its curriculum-linked resources for teachers with the release

School visit, Blackpool SEA LIFE

of 'Friends of the Sea'. SEA LIFE Blackpool (UK), in collaboration with Girl Guiding Northwest England, created the first Sea Savers Ocean Conservation badge with 2,000 badges achieved.

More than 650,000 teachers and students visited our aquariums across the world to engage in our school activities and workshop programmes.

We see these moments as important opportunities to connect, share stories and knowledge regarding conservation, research and aquatic ecosystems. By doing so, we are contributing to conservation efforts through teaching and learning.

KEY OUTCOMES:

Providing inclusive opportunities for guests to gain new perspectives and build connections with nature

Raising awareness of environmental issues affecting aquatic ecosystems

Providing guidance and encouraging pro-environmental behaviours

Research

Research underpins all activities in conservation and wildlife rehabilitation. It is a crucial part of our work at SEA LIFE to help us improve our conservation efforts and expand our knowledge for wild and in the aquarium management.

We continue to develop the best ways to work with marine species and the environment. By using our expertise and working with partners, we have successfully contributed to new scientific research to expand knowledge of species and improve biodiversity.

Together, with the SEA LIFE TRUST, **21 projects presented their latest developments in conservation, education and research** to multiple congresses, symposiums, conferences and local communities. We participated in workshops to support with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Specialist Groups and zoo and aquarium associations.

We are continuing to advance technology to assess changes in species populations, biodiversity and habitats for conservation and wildlife rehabilitation.

We worked with **35 universities and five research centres** to deliver multi-level research, from educating and inspiring students to advancing knowledge through conservation-led studies.

We donated scientific funding to support conservation research at the University of Derby and Bangor University. Additionally, SEA LIFE has awarded PhD funding for important research in better understanding how we protect endangered species.

We continue to explore more research opportunities to work towards solving global problems for conservation and wildlife rehabilitation.

SEA LIFE Bangkok team member, Thailand

Protecting Endangered Species

Biodiversity is key for healthy environments. We are committed to protecting endangered species, helping recover populations and reducing risk of extinction.

For SEA LIFE, protecting endangered species means taking action to prevent the extinction of plants and animals that are at risk due to human activities. Some of these activities include habitat destruction, climate change, pollution, overfishing and illegal unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU). Marine and freshwater ecosystems are some of the most challenging places to work, however they are also the most important to focus efforts on.

Zebra shark (*Stegostoma tigrinum*)
Credited to M.V. Erdmann, StAR Project

CASE STUDY:
WHITE'S SEAHORSE, AUSTRALIA

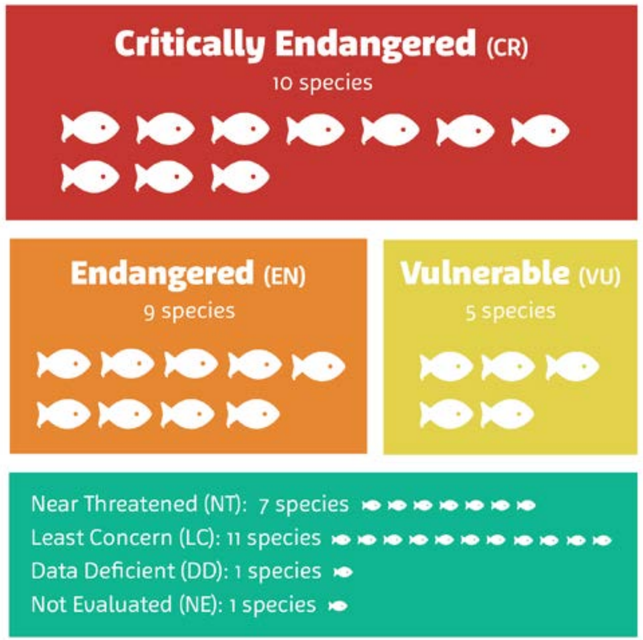
CLICK HERE

We have helped protect marine species, including mammals, sharks, rays, sea turtles, seabirds, crabs, seahorses, and corals from threats such as habitat degradation, plastic pollution, rising ocean temperatures, and overfishing. We have also worked towards protecting endangered freshwater animals such as crayfish, amphibians, fish and turtles.

By creating conservation programmes to protect endangered species, we aim to conserve biodiversity, which is essential for all life on Earth. Without a diverse range of plants, animals and microorganisms, our ecosystems would collapse, negatively impacting everything from the air we breathe to the food we eat.

In 2024, our aquariums around the world participated in a variety of projects that support the Protecting Endangered Species programme. This involved 44 species as part of those action plans, recovery programmes and rescue and release initiatives.

A breakdown of our projects:



Infographic on the distribution of the IUCN Red List of threatened species SEA LIFE have been working to protect in 2024. Threatened categories include Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) and Vulnerable (VU).

African penguins, Cape Town, South Africa

KEY OUTCOMES:

55%

of the species we worked with in this programme are classified as threatened with extinction by the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species

All species

were under regional management to reverse declines

CASE STUDY:
ZEBRA SHARKS IN AUSTRALIA

CLICK HERE

The loss of a species can have devastating ripple effects, disrupting food chains and weakening entire marine ecosystems. Around the world, we have specialised teams and facilities to rear animals for release into the wild, and rehabilitation centres to help wild animals recover for release. These are particularly important when protecting endangered species.

Our main conservation efforts to protect endangered species were:

- **Rescuing endangered animals in need of help,** and provide the best opportunity for successful release through rehabilitation.
- **Breed-and-release endangered species** to recover wild populations.
- **Scientific research** for improving conservation and increasing knowledge of species such as **tagging programmes.**
- **Educational activities and displays** to raise awareness of issues and actions.
- **Advisory positions** to a range of conservation bodies, working towards protecting species through initiatives such as action plans.

We worked in marine protected areas, and on sustainable fishing regulations, pollution control, and rehabilitation programmes to safeguard marine biodiversity. By protecting endangered species, we help maintain the ocean and freshwater health, to support human communities and the planet's overall wellbeing.

White's Seahorse (*Hippocampus Whitei*)

Breed and rearing for release

Of the eight species we have bred as part of rewildling progammes, five of these species were released in 2024.

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
EMYS ORBICULARIS

COMMON NAME: **EUROPEAN POND TURTLE**

THREAT LEVEL: **CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (FEDERAL NATURE CONSERVATION LAW 2002)**

SITE: **SEA LIFE SPEYER**

BRED: **150**

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
MELANOTAENIA FLUVIATILIS

COMMON NAME: **MURRAY RIVER RAINBOWFISH**

THREAT LEVEL: **THREATENED (FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE ACT 1988, STATE OF VICTORIA)**

SITE: **MELBOURNE SEA LIFE**

BRED AND RELEASED: **373**

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
HIPPOCAMPUS WHITEI

COMMON NAME: **WHITE'S SEAHORSE**

THREAT LEVEL: **ENDANGERED (IUCN RED LIST, PROTECTED UNDER CITES II)**

SITE: **SYDNEY SEA LIFE AQUARIUM**

BRED AND RELEASED: **702**

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
HYNOBIUS LEECHII

COMMON NAME: **KOREAN SALAMANDER**

THREAT LEVEL: **RARE (NATIONALLY PROTECTED, CHINA, CLASS II WILD ANIMAL)**

SITE: **SEA LIFE BUSAN AQUARIUM**

BRED AND RELEASED: **97**

Our breed-and-release programmes work with local government and key stakeholders and follow specific licensing and regulations. Utilising resources such as the IUCN guidelines for reintroductions and other conservation translocations, we aim to have 20 breed-and-release programmes by the year 2030.

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
POECILIOPSIS OCCIDENTALIS

COMMON NAME: **GILA TOPMINNOW**

THREAT LEVEL: **ENDANGERED (ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE)**

SITE: **SEA LIFE ARIZONA**

BRED AND RELEASED: **316**

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
MOGURNDA ADSPERSA

COMMON NAME: **GUDGEON FISH**

THREAT LEVEL: **ENDANGERED (NSW FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ACT 1994, AUSTRALIA)**

SITE: **MELBOURNE SEA LIFE**

BRED AND RELEASED: **590**

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
NANNOPERCA AUSTRALIS

COMMON NAME: **SOUTHERN PYGMY PERCH**

THREAT LEVEL: **ENDANGERED (NSW FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ACT 1994, AUSTRALIA)**

SITE: **MELBOURNE SEA LIFE**

BRED: **257**

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
STEGOSTOMA TIGRINUM

COMMON NAME: **ZEBRA SHARK**

THREAT LEVEL: **ENDANGERED (IUCN RED LIST)**

SITE: **SYDNEY SEA LIFE AQUARIUM**

BRED AND RELEASED: **16**

Additionally, we conducted a headstart programme at SEA LIFE Hannover, Germany, where we raised 20 Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) from fry to young adults as part of the Liene Lachs partnership. By raising them in a controlled facility, we improve the chance of survival and educate the public through our displays. All 20 individuals reared in our aquarium were released back into Leine River to bolster their population.

Wedgefish (*Rhynchobatus australiae*), image provided by M. Erdmann

Tagging animals to protect endangered species

In 2024, SEA LIFE tagged animals to understand more about their movements in the wild and how well individual animals recover after a rescue. In Florida, USA, we tagged Kelpy and Shelby, two adult female loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*), in partnership with the SEA LIFE TRUST and Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge. The data is managed by the Sea Turtle Conservancy to provide evidence to the government of the importance of protecting these vulnerable species and the refuge which they rely on to nest. Our partnerships through Australian SEA LIFE aquariums have enabled 71 sharks and rays to be tagged, such as the critically endangered bottlenose wedgefish (*Rhynchobatus australiae*) as part of the Lifeboat Species Programme 2024.

The role of action plans in protecting endangered species

Protecting species through action plans often involves animals from different vulnerability classes. An example of this is protecting endangered coral reefs.

Globally, SEA LIFE aquariums have collaborated with partners on projects such as SECORE, Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project (FRTRP) and Coralpalooza, to work towards action plans on restoring coral reefs. For example, in Associations of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project, of the **11** coral species, five are threatened with extinction, of which three are critically endangered globally as listed by the IUCN Red List.

We recognise that, to protect an endangered species, we must also consider all the other species in its habitat to help promote healthy and thriving ecosystems.

Other action plans we are involved with include: White's seahorse (*Hippocampus whitei*) as part of the 2022-2032 Threatened Species Action Plan by the Australian Government; bird recovery action plans such as the yellow-eyed penguin (*Megadyptes antipodes*); marine turtles including the Sea Turtle Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) Progamme Plan 2024-2028; elasmobranchs including the zebra shark StAR Project action plan and the bowmouth guitarfish (*Rhina ancylostomus*), an ex situ conservation assessment.

KEY OUTCOMES:

8 We successfully have **eight species in breed-and-release programmes** to help recover and protect wild populations

We contributed to protecting

24 species

at risk of extinction, classified by the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species

We dedicated

30,532

hours to activities aimed at protecting endangered species

Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release

We are dedicated to saving injured, sick, lost and confiscated animals, providing a sanctuary for recovery, and when possible, returning them to their natural habitats.

Animal rescue efforts are a critical part of SEA LIFE's conservation and wildlife rehabilitation work, focusing on the recovery and safe return of injured and stranded marine animals.

Our rescue efforts start when aquatic animals, such as sea turtles, seabirds and seals, are found in distress often as a result of human impacts. This could be due to pollution, disease, malnutrition, entanglement in fishing nets, if an animal is orphaned, or if an animal has been confiscated due to illegal practices.

Harbour seal (*Phoca vitulina*)

CASE STUDY:
KELLY TARLTON'S TURTLES

CLICK HERE

Once animals are deemed fit and healthy enough to return to the wild, we carry out a careful release process, ensuring they are reintroduced to environments where they can survive and thrive. In the rare situation that an animal cannot be released back into the wild, they are given a safe and secure home in our aquariums and cared for by our world class veterinarian team.

We believe we have a moral obligation to rescue, rehabilitate and, where possible, release wildlife. We provide an expert team of staff and external vets, and specialised facilities in our aquariums to save sick, injured, abandoned or confiscated wildlife around the world. From seals to turtles, we aim to protect species and conserve them for generations to come.

In 2024, we continued our global effort of **rescue, rehabilitate** and, where possible, **release of wildlife back to their homes.** We have rescued **640** animals; each rescue involved an urgent triage assessment with veterinary support to determine the best welfare action for the animal. When possible, we rehabilitate animals back to full health for their return home. Despite our best efforts some animals may succumb to their injuries or may never fully recover. Where release into the wild is not feasible, animals are provided with a secure and enrichment-focused environment within our facilities to support their long-term welfare. In 2024, we successfully **released 578 animals back to their homes** within the year and some animals remain in our care for further rehabilitation for potential release in 2025.

Some of our aquariums provide the only facilities and legal requirements for rescue, rehabilitation and release in their region, such as seal rescue at SEA LIFE Blankenberge, Belgium, and turtle rehabilitation at Kelly Tarlton's Aquarium in New Zealand. As well as providing the right facilities, we have expert teams which can rehabilitate species back to health.

SEA LIFE working with SANCCOB, South Africa

Our work also extends to assisting other organisations. In New Zealand, we helped Dunedin Wildlife Hospital to rescue, rehabilitate and release 180 endangered yellow-eyed penguins (*Megadyptes antipodes*) and in Iceland we helped the SEA LIFE TRUST rescue, rehabilitate and release 65 Atlantic puffins (*Fratercula artica*).

To protect endangered species we rescued animals such as:

197 reptiles including the yellow-bellied sea snake (*Hydrophis platurus*), **171 turtles such as the critically endangered hawksbill turtle** (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), the **endangered green sea turtle** (*Chelonia mydas*) and **44 fish species, such the vulnerable Johor betta fish** (*Betta persephone*).

Without these rescue efforts, these endangered animals would have succumbed to their injuries or been unable to survive in their damaged home.

We are reinvesting in our rescue, rehabilitation and release facilities.

We have made improvements to our facilities, for example on infrastructure for seal rescue at SEA LIFE Scarborough, UK, in 2024.

We are training.

By sharing our knowledge between aquariums to improve our practices in rescue, rehabilitate and release. For example, SEA LIFE Charlotte, North Carolina, and San Antonio, Texas, USA, are being trained to respond in mass stranding events by shadowing our rescue teams such as at SEA LIFE Grapevine.

We are rescuing together.

We work with governments, charities, other zoos and aquariums and local community groups to respond, rescue, rehabilitate and release as many animals as possible. For example, the local turtle volunteer group has provided invaluable effort to bring injured turtles for rehabilitation at the SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast, Australia.

We are standing up against illegal trade.

We collaborate with governments to rescue animals found in illegal trade such as confiscations at airports, providing a safe sanctuary and educating the public on the issues and risks to endangered animals. At SEA LIFE Helsinki, Finland we helped rescue species such as the Silver arowana (*Osteoglossum bichirrosum*), which was confiscated by officials.

We are providing a sanctuary.

By providing ark aquariums (a new home away from the threat) to headstart the restoration of species in the wild. At National SEA LIFE Birmingham, UK, we have rescued 100 crayfish in 2024 to provide an ARK for future populations.

For our projects, rescue, rehabilitation and release also encompass other efforts such as:

- **Monitoring:** observing individuals in the wild prior to a potential rescue, examining their behaviour and health from a distance to confirm intervention is necessary.
- **In the wild relocations:** removing individuals who have found themselves in an area dangerous to their health but have no indication of other required intervention.
- **Saved on-site:** rescuing individuals in the wild as their injuries do not require rehabilitation.

Seal rescue, SEA LIFE Hunstanton

At our Scarborough and Hunstanton SEA LIFE aquariums in the UK, and SEA LIFE Blankenberge, Belgium, we responded to hundreds of calls regarding seal pups. This involved either monitoring the pups and their parent seals or relocating pups whose welfare was compromised or at risk in their current locations.

The success of these projects is not only measured by the animals' recovery but by understanding how the species impacts the conservation of entire ecosystems. By addressing issues like habitat loss and human impact on marine life, our efforts can play a vital role in maintaining biodiversity and promoting healthier oceans globally.

SEA LIFE TRUST
Protecting Our World's Oceans

Supporting the SEA LIFE TRUST Sanctuaries

In 2024, our expert teams from SEA LIFE London and SEA LIFE Loch Lomond UK, went to the Vestmannaeyjar Islands, Iceland, to help care for the largest wild Atlantic puffin colony in the world.

Unfortunately, some puffin chicks known as Pufflings can become confused and disorientated, landing in the local town, rather than in their natural environment.

Led by the SEA LIFE TRUST, we have been taking part in their Puffling Patrol to care for these confused birds, along with other injured puffins.

SEA LIFE team releasing puffins, Iceland

The 2024 Puffling Patrol saw an increase in severely injured birds, but a decrease in underweight, downy and oiled birds. Other conditions included exposure to paint, parasites, lesions and ingestion of foreign objects. When found, the puffins are brought to the SEA LIFE TRUST Puffin Rescue Centre at the Beluga Whale Sanctuary where they are cared for until they can be released back into the wild.

In 2024, SEA LIFE London and SEA LIFE Loch Lomond assisted in the rescue by contributing 334 hours of labour.

Atlantic puffin (*Fratercula arctica*)

In total, 65 Puffins were released back into the wild with the help of SEA LIFE and only three pufflings needed longer rehabilitation due to their injuries.

They have since become cherished residents of the sanctuary, receiving the utmost care from the SEA LIFE TRUST's team of professional animal welfare experts.

KEY OUTCOMES:

We rescued
640 animals
including 197 reptiles such as the yellow-bellied sea snake and 171 endangered sea turtles

We spent
21,972 hours
on rescue, rehabilitation and release

Restoring Habitats

Our ocean plays a vital role in regulating climate and providing food, oxygen, and economic resources for millions of people across the globe, highlighting the importance of protecting these vulnerable habitats.

Freshwater ecosystems are also essential for biodiversity, to support clean water systems, and sustain both wildlife and human communities. We aim to conserve nature through restoring habitats, ensuring ecosystems remain balanced and healthy of future generations.

Seahorse hotels, Sydney Australia

We are helping degraded ecosystems to recover from biodiversity loss, habitat destruction and fragmentation. Our aquariums around the world participated in projects that improve habitats for wildlife.

Most of our effort to restore habitats was focused on removing plastic and unnatural materials from the environment, such as litter and discarded fishing equipment. **To remove litter and restore our environment, we went out in kayaks, we searched under the waves by scuba diving, we scoured our shores and rivers, we sifted through sand and even installed a Seabin.** We worked independently, with local organisations, and with the SEA LIFE TRUST to engage and inspire guests and the community to get involved around the globe.

Restoring habitats is more than litter picks.

We also removed invasive species, reintroduced plants, trees and seaweeds, worked towards restoring a habitat to its natural state, implemented artificial environments such as reefs and seahorse hotels to promote regeneration of the habitat, and carried out landscaping and remodelling to return to a natural environment.

SEA LIFE Bangkok, habitat restoration

Our aquariums are restoring land habitats to benefit freshwater and marine environments and animals. In Porto, Portugal, we have created a conservation pond to increase local wildlife and educate our guests on the importance of terrestrial habitat for freshwater species.

In Orlando, USA, we have worked to restore native wildflowers to increase native pollinators. In Weymouth, UK, we run a ‘spotted on site’ project in association with the British & Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) which encourages guests to report wild species they see on their visit to better understand local biodiversity levels in all species.

Rewilding is a progressive approach to ocean conservation that our aquariums are driving forward around the world.

Rewilding enables ocean ecosystems to repair and restore back to their natural state by actively restoring habitats or providing the space for natural recovery. We are dedicated to exploring this advancing method of conservation and better understanding its impact in restoring habitats.

Team member with a seahorse hotel, SEA LIFE Sydney

Seagrass and kelp restoration

For more than three years, SEA LIFE Busan, South Korea, has been working locally to restore seagrass habitats. Working with local authorities, common eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) has been grown in our aquarium and transplanted back into the ocean to restore habitats. At SEA LIFE Bangkok, we have worked with Project SEAGONG to understand the challenges facing local seagrass meadows.

Similarly, in the UK, we work with the University of Salford carrying out seagrass research and support Project Seagrass in its education and conservation programmes. We have installed eco-moorings with the Seahorse Trust and Studland Bay Marine Partnership, Dorset, UK.

Worldwide, there are more than 72 seagrass species, and they are the only flowering plants growing in the ocean. Seagrass meadows provide vital habitats producing oxygen, storing carbon and stabilising our coastlines.

Eelgrass project, Busan, South Korea

However, this habitat is under threat, and it has been estimated that worldwide we have lost around one third of our seagrass meadows. The loss of kelp is less known. Since 1987, kelp beds in Sussex, UK, have declined by 96%, impacting local marine life, reducing water quality and increasing coastal erosion. The team at SEA LIFE Brighton are cultivating sporophytes with the aim of releasing them back in the wild to restore these lost kelp habitats.

Artificial reefs

Artificial reefs play an important role in restoring habitats along our coastline and in the ocean. In Scarborough, UK, as part of the Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership, we developed vertical habitat on coastal sea defences to restore rockpools and give new opportunities for intertidal species to thrive.

In Weymouth, UK, we are working with Sea Cadets to install sea hives, and educating our guests about why they are important. Sea Hives are artificial structures, made from recycled fishing nets, that are suspended from the local piers to create habitat for a different range of species, from small invertebrates to fish fry.

In Sydney, Australia, we have helped build and install seahorse hotels to create artificial reefs to support the recovery of the White's seahorse (*Hippocampus whitei*).

Team member at Coralpalooza, USA

CASE STUDY:
SECORE

CLICK HERE

Coral restoration

In the USA, five of our aquariums have committed to working with the AZA Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project (FRTRP). Many of our USA-based aquariums are also conducting work with the Coral Restoration Foundation (CRF) during their yearly Coralpalooza event. Corals have been on the planet for more than 450 million years and a recent assessment conducted by the IUCN shows that 44% of warm water corals are at risk of extinction. This is down to increasing sea temperatures, disease and rising sea levels putting corals at risk. The team at SEA LIFE Konstanz have also been helping restore coral reefs through SECORE, which uses scientific knowledge to translocate higher tolerant species to restore coral habitats.

Invasive species removal

Our SEA LIFE Arizona's Green Team, USA, have been removing invasive species of apple snails of the genus Pomacea, which have been illegally introduced through the pet trade. They adapt well to the freshwaters of Arizona and outcompete native snail populations. Because they are larger, apple snails have no predators in Arizona, meaning their populations are rapidly expanding.

Similarly, in the UK, Birmingham National SEA LIFE Aquarium is helping native crayfish populations by monitoring invasive signal crayfish, which have been increasing in numbers in the UK since being introduced in the 1970s.

Invasive plant removal, Helskini SEA LIFE, Finland

We also work to remove invasive plants, such as beach rose (*Rosa rugosa*) and Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) in Helsinki, Finland or alder trees (*Alnus glutinosa*) in Great Yarmouth, UK, which are reducing our native biodiversity and impacting our freshwater and marine ecosystems.

Reducing pollution

By removing litter from our shores, we create opportunities for habitats to restore. It also reduces the probability of plastic ingestion which can cause starvation and death in marine species. Sea animals can become trapped in marine litter such as inside containers or entangled in discarded fishing nets and rope.

Microplastics are of great concern in our oceans accumulating up through the food chain. It is estimated that 358 trillion microplastic particles are now floating on the surface of the ocean, with an unknown amount within the water column below. Around 80% of litter from the land will end up in our rivers and seas. Our efforts not only focus on the oceans but the direct land and water bodies that feed into these precious ecosystems.

In 2024, our aquariums conducted waterway and beach cleans on our marine and freshwater shores and collected 12,329kg of rubbish. This work was conducted by aquariums every month and includes the annual SEA LIFE TRUST Global Beach Clean. The material collected the most in these litter picks was plastic. Research conducted by the IUCN estimates that 14 million metric tons of plastic enter our oceans annually with a significant increase expected by 2040.

Hunstanton team members, UK

SEA LIFE invasive species removal, Arizona, USA

CASE STUDY:
THE SEA LIFE TRUST GLOBAL BEACH CLEAN

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> “Discarded improperly, plastic waste pollutes and harms the environment, becoming a widespread driver of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.”
>
> IUCN, Issues Brief, May 2024

We have invested in new technology to help fight this global pollution problem, such as in Sydney Harbour, Australia, where we have worked with the Seabin Project to implement Seabin™ Smart Technology. A submersible pump that skims the surface water into a floating bin to remove plastics, microplastics, fuel oil and other harmful contaminants.

SEA BIN, Sydney

Beach clean, Brighton SEA LIFE, UK

KEY OUTCOMES:

Through litter picking, we removed over

12 tonnes

of rubbish which is equal to nearly **2,000 rubbish bags** to restore natural habitats for conservation in 2024

SEA LIFE aquariums spent

11,383 hours

on restoring habitats in 2024

SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium Seabin submersible pump captured

754KGS[2]

of marine litter

in 2024 by filtering 229 million litres of water, equivalent to 92 Olympic swimming pools. We estimate that to be more than 200,000 pieces of microplastics removed from our oceans

Closing Remarks

"Since joining SEA LIFE some 35 years ago, I have been on a journey, continuing to grow our strong principles in animal welfare and conservation. Our conservation action started through our rescue programmes and making the case for policy changes in support of protecting marine animals.

Early in my career at SEA LIFE Blackpool, I dreamt of one day making a real difference for our oceans. Now, three decades later, we are working **across four continents, to deliver conservation on a global scale.**

With the unprecedented threats our oceans now face, it is critical that we as society take action. **SEA LIFE offers more than just a window into the underwater world**, we are positioned to make a difference, not only by protecting marine life, but by engaging our communities around the globe, sparking curiosity, and creating positive change.

We have made an amazing impact by growing our global network, and I am so proud to see the passion and drive in our teams to deliver great welfare, inspiring educational experiences and critical conservation initiatives at a local level.

As we look to the future, we will continue to protect endangered species; rescue, rehabilitate and release aquatic animals in need; and restore habitats, all whilst inspiring millions of guests to care and take action.

Our people — from Sydney to Scarborough — are the heart of this mission and I thank them for their contribution towards SEA LIFE's conservation efforts in 2024."

ROB HICKS

Vice President Global Conservation, Welfare and Education

R. Hicks

"We have been caring for corals at our SEA LIFE as part of the Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project, and it's been rewarding to nurture these corals with our own hands before we transition to species recovery in the wild. I love this project because it allows us to make a difference for corals in the wild and lets us be a part of their future success."

Kellie Cadenas, Curator, SEA LIFE Orlando, USA

"I'm proud to lead a program dedicated to conserving salamanders. We have engaged with children and the local community, raising awareness of the challenges salamanders face and the importance of protecting them. It's been a truly meaningful experience and I'm honoured to contribute to SEA LIFE's broader conservation mission."

Namho Son, Lead Aquarist, SEA LIFE Busan, South Korea, educating children

"The ability to help maintain and grow wild populations on our doorstep to preserve a species for the next generation is an incredibly rewarding part of being able to participate in such amazing conservation projects."

Amy Langham, General Manager, National SEA LIFE Centre Birmingham, UK

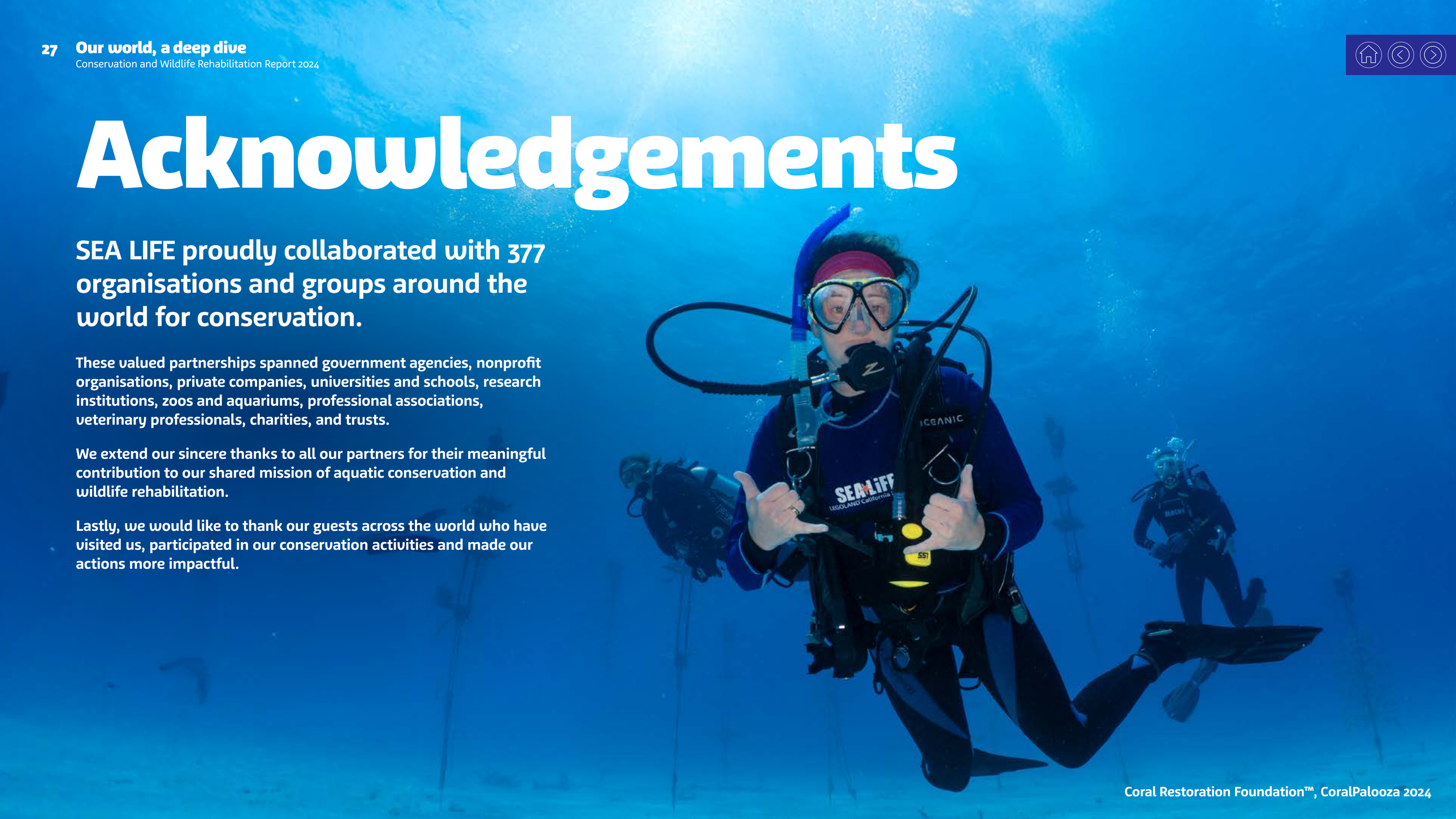
Acknowledgements

SEA LIFE proudly collaborated with 377 organisations and groups around the world for conservation.

These valued partnerships spanned government agencies, nonprofit organisations, private companies, universities and schools, research institutions, zoos and aquariums, professional associations, veterinary professionals, charities, and trusts.

We extend our sincere thanks to all our partners for their meaningful contribution to our shared mission of aquatic conservation and wildlife rehabilitation.

Lastly, we would like to thank our guests across the world who have visited us, participated in our conservation activities and made our actions more impactful.



Coral Restoration Foundation™, CoralPalooza 2024

Recommended reference:
SEA LIFE (2025). Our world, a deep dive: Conservation and Wildlife Rehabilitation Report 2024. London, UK: Merlin Entertainments.biz.

For further information:
visitsealife.com/conservation

Visit any of our global SEA LIFE aquariums and sanctuaries to learn more and witness first hand our amazing animals and habitats.

For further information on our partner charity the SEA LIFE TRUST:
sealifetrust.org/en/
Registered Charity no. 1175859

In the interest of conservation, research and educational study, this report may be downloaded from the SEA LIFE website. Published June 2025.