

OCTOBER-DECEMBER
2021

SCALING
UP OUR
IMPACT

HEADLINE UPDATE AND ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENTS,
FROM THE PERIOD **OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2021** (QUARTER TWO FY22)

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The new year marks the halfway point for Blue Ventures' financial year FY22. This update looks back on some of the highlights and key developments over the last quarter, from October to December 2021.

In keeping with tradition, we ended 2021 with an online retrospective looking back on highlights of the year at Blue Ventures. [Shifting Gears](#), our latest interactive tour, focuses on the increasing emphasis we've placed on advocacy over the course of 2021, championing the rights of coastal fishers.



IMPACT CHALLENGE UPDATE

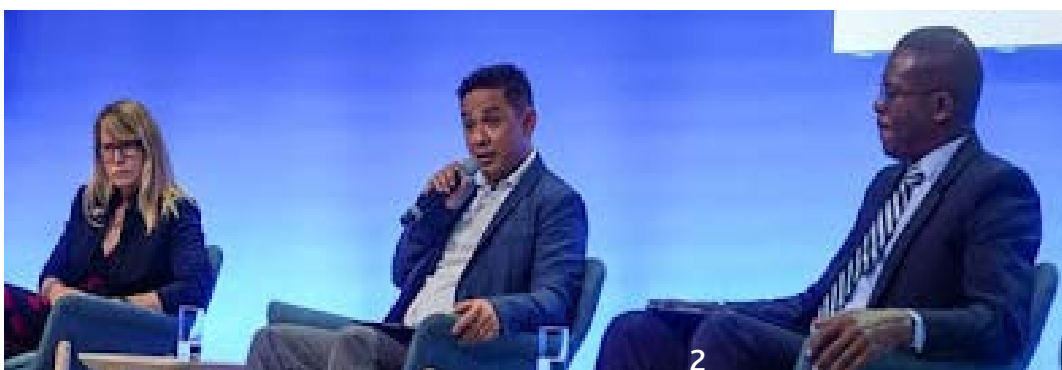


COP26

At COP26 in Glasgow we brought together community leaders, government ministers and civil society groups to raise awareness of the ocean climate nexus. We supported attendance at COP of marine conservation leaders from Madagascar, Costa Rica, Kenya, Seychelles, Cambodia, Philippines and Maldives, including Madagascar's Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Dr Vahinala Baomiatotse Raharinirina.

Our Coastal Blue Carbon panels in the public green zone and the official blue zones highlighted the vital role of mangroves for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The panel discussions explored strategies for improving the efficiency and fairness of blue carbon markets. Recordings of the events, 'The vital role of mangroves for climate change mitigation and adaptation', can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

We convened a [panel discussion](#) entitled 'Bottom trawling and a zero-carbon future: what needs to change?', exploring the impacts of industrial bottom trawling on the climate crisis. The event, [covered in UK media](#), brought together fishers and perspectives from west Africa, the Caribbean and Scotland, presenting the latest evidence regarding bottom trawling and climate, and exploring the benefits of bottom trawling restrictions.



Blue Ventures' Madagascar Director of Conservation, Dr Hajaniaina Ratsimbazafy, sharing a community perspective on Ocean Day at COP26 in Glasgow.

PROGRESSIVE FISHERIES REFORMS IN MADAGASCAR

The appointment of Hon. Mahatante Tsimanaoraty Paubert to the position of Minister of Fisheries and the Blue Economy has brought a community-focused perspective to the influential position. Coinciding with a new collaboration with Blue Ventures looking to increase transparency across the fisheries sector, the Minister's appointment has energised the sector, with the Ministry committing to combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing as a national priority, and engaging proactively with civil society partners to turn words into action.

In September, the government joined the [Fisheries Transparency Initiative](#) (FiTI) and in November the Ministry of Fisheries and the Blue Economy signed a new agreement with national anti-corruption agency [Bianco](#). The new Minister has convened a national secretariat to oversee progress towards adherence with the FiTI standard, with a formal launch planned for February. Blue Ventures is supporting this secretariat with office equipment and technical assistance. Additionally, Blue Ventures is co-chairing a Working Group on IUU fishing with the Ministry, bringing together civil society, donors, and experts to support the fight against IUU fishing.



Fisheries Transparency Initiative website.

New legislation passed in July established a ban on inshore bottom trawling within 2 nautical miles of the coast. The ban, featured in media [here](#) and [here](#), is a progressive step for the country, which has seen growing activity from destructive industrial fisheries in recent years. Madagascar's shallow inshore waters are home to globally important marine biodiversity and carbon rich seagrass beds, underpinning small-scale fisheries for hundreds of thousands of coastal fishers. If implemented effectively, the new trawling ban could enable ecological regeneration of these critically important ecosystems across Africa's largest seabed.

FIELD UPDATES



The Federal Republic of Somalia has the longest coastline in continental Africa, yet decades of conflict have weakened the country’s capacity for marine and fisheries management, leading to pervasive IUU fishing. Despite its extensive and diverse marine habitats, the country has limited interventions related to small-scale fisheries, and marine conservation is nearly non-existent. In November we welcomed three Somali organisations to visit existing locally led fisheries management efforts in Kenya’s Kwale County. [During a five day visit](#) the partners – [Adeso](#), [Somali GreenPeace Association](#) and [Secure Fisheries](#) – experienced first hand community-led conservation initiatives, learning local experiences in governance, data management, monitoring and surveillance.



Our work in Kenya has seen the expansion of our partnership with COMRED, supporting 10 community groups to develop eco-credit schemes within five beach management units in Kwale county. Eco-credit groups integrate village savings and loans in local marine management efforts, with participation in conservation a condition of access to credit. A new partnership between Blue Ventures, [COMRED](#) and [Greenfi](#), and building on Greenfi’s successful eco-credit model developed on Tanzania’s Pemba Island, this is the first project of its kind in coastal Kenya.



In December, our sister Indonesian organisation Yayasan Pesisir Lestari (YPL) brought together representatives of all our Indonesian partner organisations for YPL's first in-person partner forum since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic. The week-long meeting in Bali convened 40 leaders from 17 partner organisations. These partners are collectively supporting local marine conservation and fisheries management efforts across 49 sites, from as far afield as Aceh and Maluku. The meeting, also attended by representatives of the Government and fishing industry, shared experiences and lessons learned from the different management models now being adopted by coastal communities across Indonesia.

BLUE VENTURES' PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-LED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION IN INDONESIA



Forum attendees in Bali, Indonesia.



Safety at Sea course.

With the lifting of Covid restrictions in September we hosted long-awaited community learning exchanges to respond to growing community interest in marine conservation. These included an exchange between women representatives from four communities focusing on community-based fisheries monitoring and data literacy training for 20 students from the National University of Timor-Leste in marine ecological monitoring. We also hosted a week-long Safety at Sea course for fishers from three communities, prompted by a series of fatal accidents involving fishermen in recent months.



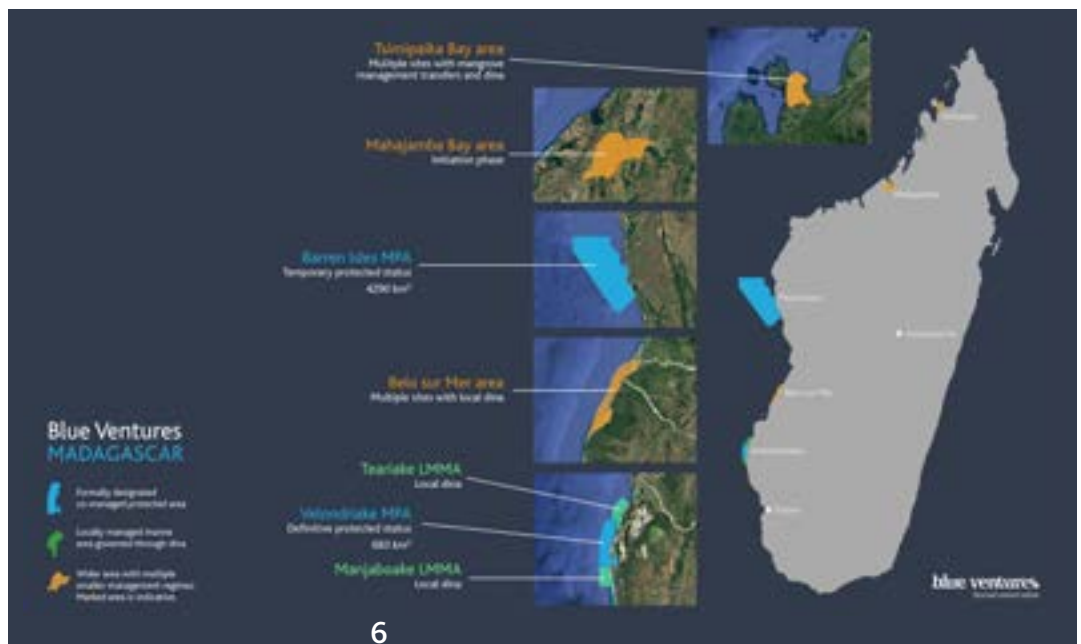
Mangrove reforestation in Ambanja.

Mobile monitoring for fisheries using the Kobo app was successfully trialled in Tsimipaika Bay, the Southwest and Belo sur Mer, while custom fisheries monitoring app Monitor is now in development for use in the Southwest too, in partnership with [Abalobi](#).

In Ambanja, new fish smoking techniques got underway in Nosy Faly, while 13 crab fishermen were trained on the new, more sustainable 'garigary' fishing gear. Mangrove reforestation continued apace with 10 new villages engaged, taking total replantings to 250ha and on track for our 2022 target of 400ha.

Meanwhile in Mahajamba, new fisher cards have been introduced to help regulate responsible fishing, with 80% uptake by association members so far. New storage facilities were also introduced for crab catches to help reduce post capture losses.

In the Southwest, no-take zones were expanded from 32ha to 50ha, the new all-local ecological monitoring team is now fully up and running, and the revised management plan for Velondriake is now finalised. In mangroves, cutting decreased 80% on the previous year thanks to measures by the Velondriake Association to tackle the 2020 spike from the pandemic, while 3,000 alternative fuelwood trees were planted to ease cutting for charcoal. The team also produced media on sea cucumber farming (October), the national octopus closure (November) and how mangroves are generating revenue for schooling (December).





Our work in Belize focuses on improving engagement by the country's fishermen in the management of Belize's network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). One of the ways we achieve this is by training and supporting fishers to carry out monitoring and control efforts tackling invasive lionfish – a serious threat to the health of Caribbean reefs.

We completed surveys of invasive lionfish throughout the Northern Belize Coastal Complex (NBCC), a vast area encompassing four large MPAs, collectively covering an area exceeding 500 km² and Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve (TAMR). This work was carried out by NBCC and TAMR control teams comprising Marine Reserve managers, representatives of the Belize Fisheries Department and members of the community; all of whom have been trained by Blue Ventures on the principles of invasive species monitoring, the Lionfish Focused Search (LFS) method, and Fish Identification. All control team members were also dive-trained by Blue Ventures and are now PADI Advanced Open Water divers and Emergency First Responders. Data will inform continued lionfish control in TAMR and provide crucial information for the first NBCC lionfish control plan and prioritisation of the control sites, due for launch in April 2022.

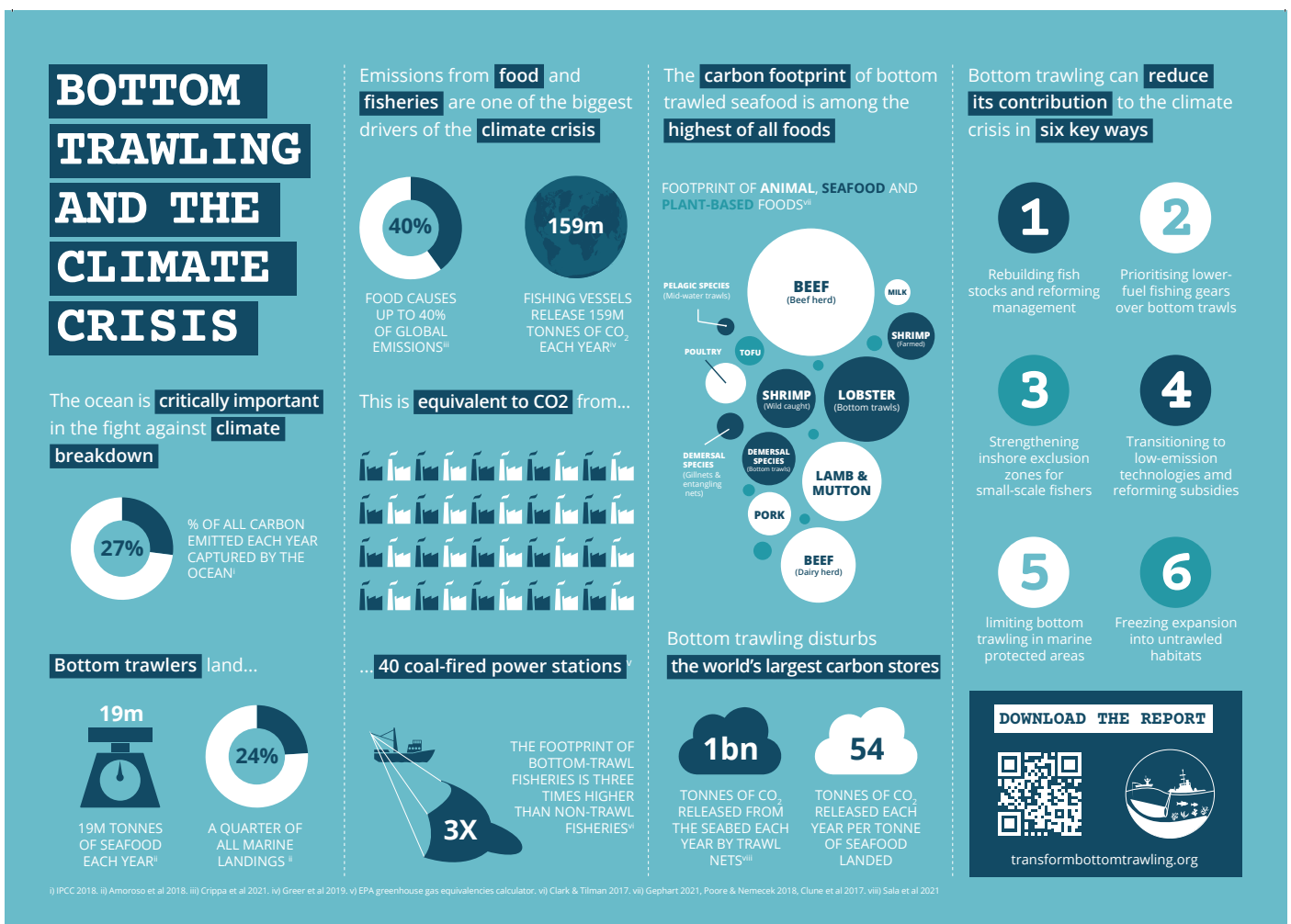


Invasive lionfish – a serious threat to the health of Caribbean reefs.

PUBLICATIONS

TRANSFORM BOTTOM TRAWLING COALITION

The Transform Bottom Trawling Coalition, hosted by Blue Ventures, published a [new report](#) showing that some types of seafood may have carbon footprints larger than all other foods. In some cases, fish caught by bottom trawlers may have a larger carbon footprint than lamb and beef. Coastal states globally need to urgently tackle bottom trawling if they are to meet CO₂ targets. Our [summary document](#) and [press release](#) provide more information.



Visual summary of the Bottom Trawling and the Climate Crisis report.

We co-authored a [new report](#) on the global scale, context and impacts of bottom trawling launched. The findings of this work advance our understanding of the impacts of bottom trawling on critical coastal habitats and small-scale fisheries, and are critical to support the advocacy of the Transform Bottom Trawling Coalition.

BLUE CARBON FINANCE FOR COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Also in Glasgow we released a new report detailing recommendations for policymakers in accelerating [blue carbon finance for coastal communities](#). The report is based on our ten-year experience supporting communities to develop incentive-based approaches to mangrove conservation and restoration in Madagascar.

HOW TO ACHIEVE AN EQUITABLE AND JUST “30 BY 30”

Our new publication '[How to achieve an equitable and just “30 by 30”](#)', authored by Senior Technical Advisor Dr Steve Rocliffe, makes the case that the best way to protect nature is to protect the human rights of those who live among it and depend upon it. We shared this perspective at the [Coastal Quest virtual conference](#) 'Achieving 30x30 for our coasts, oceans and communities' in November.

IN THE MEDIA



We've seen [growing media interest](#) in the Transform Bottom Trawling Coalition, with coverage including Too Big To Ignore's celebration of Blue Justice on World Fisheries Day, which platformed videos exploring Liberian artisanal fishers' perspectives on [bottom trawling](#), the [six-mile limit](#) and their [fishing livelihoods](#). We produced a similar film exploring the origins and impacts of a bottom trawl ban in Belize.



The UK's leading fishing industry newspaper Fishing News featured our OpEd [making the case for reducing the carbon footprint of bottom trawling](#), and documented [our COP26 forum](#) exploring the climate impacts of trawling.



Publications across the world including [Le Monde](#) and [Phys.org](#) covered the report "[Bottom Trawling: New perspectives on an old fishing practice](#)", which we developed in collaboration with coalition members and world-leading fisheries scientists. The report calls for constructive pathways forward to tackle the impacts of bottom trawling, the most pervasive, contentious and environmentally damaging of global fishing practices.



When interviewed by British school children about the current state of UK fisheries, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson called bottom trawling [indiscriminate, disastrous and against the interests of sustainable fisheries](#). Pledging to move away from bottom trawling (a significant departure from the UK government's fisheries policy) the Prime Minister's comments illustrated the scale of growing opposition to this inherently destructive fishing practice.



The Bond international development network published our [OpEd](#) making the case that putting communities first is key to an equitable and just 30x30.



Our work pioneering new approaches to conserve blue carbon-rich ecosystems was featured in [Pioneers Post](#). Our short film Kokoly featured in the [climate crisis film festival](#) at COP26.



We spoke at the Wildscreen [Communicating COP26 event](#) in Bristol, sharing an ocean perspective of the conference's outcomes.



Our Indonesian partner Yayasan Planet Indonesia introduced its [new initiative](#) supporting locally led marine governance within the remote Karimata archipelago in the Java Sea – Kalimantan's largest marine protected area.



In Madagascar, Tahiry Honko, the world's largest community-led mangrove carbon conservation project, won the 2021 [IUCN Pathfinder Award](#). Announced during COP26, the award celebrates innovative, integrated approaches to protected and conserved area management that successfully conserve nature while making development gains.



Our regular Hooked newsletter focused on [COP26](#) and the topic of [fisheries and advocacy](#), sharing important highlights from the Glasgow negotiations and spotlighting how grassroots movements have catalysed global action.



In addition, our weekly blogs focussed on telling stories from the field, including how fishers are [shifting away from destructive gears](#) in Indonesia, to how [seaweed farming is providing alternative incomes](#) for communities in Madagascar.



Jenny House, a PhD student at Charles Darwin University, joined the Wild About Conservation podcast hosts to [discuss her work](#) with Blue Ventures and the Timor-Leste team on community based fisheries management.

TEAM

We've welcomed over 20 new colleagues to the Blue Ventures family over the quarter, including some of the new faces below.

TIMOR - LESTE



Fidel de Castro Guterres,
Fisheries and Livelihoods
Coordinator



Ashlee Gross, Ocean Advocacy
and Strategy Advisor



Danielson Elyse Razafindralaka,
Administration and Finance Assistant

MADAGASCAR

BELIZE



Keri-Le Vaughn,
Operations and
Administrative Officer



Galento Galvez,
M&E Coordinator



Joshua Borland,
Programme officer



Hipolito Novelo,
Partner Support Technician

U K



Minty Buckingham,
Development and
Grants Manager



Olivia Wordsworth,
Development and
Grants Manager



Sarah Hunt, Finance
Business Partner

IN MEMORIAM



Despite the welcome expansion of our team, this quarter has been marked by profound sadness, after the tragic death of our colleague Nisa Syahida in November. Nisa was communications manager of our sister Indonesian organisation Yayasan Pesisir Lestari, and led YPL's work documenting communities' experiences of marine conservation. We remember Nisa for her enormous contribution to our mission, in particular for her passion and creativity. Her gift for supporting compassionate, human centred storytelling made a huge impact in sharing the experiences of communities involved in marine conservation across Indonesia.