

2017 OCEAN AWARDS

January 13, 2017

The 2017 Ocean Awards gathered the ocean conservation and superyacht communities on Wednesday 11th January to celebrate individuals and projects that have made outstanding contributions to the health of the ocean.

The winners of each category were announced at [Restaurant Ours](#) in London's Knightsbridge by Charles Clover, executive director of Blue Marine Foundation, and Sacha Bonsor, editorial director of Boat International.



Charles Clover and Sacha Bonsor introducing the 2017 Ocean Awards

The winners were:

SCIENCE AWARD: Prof Daniel Pauly and Dr Dirk Zeller from the *Sea Around Us* project at the University of British Columbia for their monumental work of analysing the world's wild fish catch, which revealed that it was 50 per cent greater than official estimates have recorded over the past 60 years. Worryingly, catches are now declining at a rate three times faster than the official record suggests.

Prof Pauly and Dr Zeller delivered the Alan Turing lecture the following night at the Zoological Society for London on their findings.



Daniel Pauly and Dirk Zeller collecting their 'Science Award'

POLICY AWARD: Claire Nouvian from BLOOM for her tireless efforts over eight years to ban hugely destructive bottom trawling in the deep sea. She succeeded and a ban became reality in all European waters from Jan 12 as well as in international waters in the Eastern Central Atlantic.



Claire Nouvian collecting her 'Policy Award'

VISIONARY AWARD: The late Stuart Beck, who died in February last year. Following a visit to study coral reefs in 1976, Beck, a New York lawyer, adopted the tiny island nation, helping Palau gain its independence and writing its constitution. He became Palau's ambassador to the United Nations. In this role he secured UN resolutions prohibiting bottom trawling in sensitive areas of the high seas and creating the world's first shark sanctuary. Finally, he championed the creation of a fully protected marine reserve covering 80 per cent of Palau's waters, an area of half a million sq kms. His wife, Tulik, has succeeded him in the role of ambassador and collected the award.



Tulik Beck collecting the 'Visionary Award' on behalf of her late husband Stuart Beck

SPECIAL AWARD: Louis Bacon, as a philanthropist willing and able to make a quick decision that changed the course of history in creating a reserve around Ascension.

PUBLIC EDUCATION: Ian Urbina, whose groundbreaking reporting in the New York Times revealed the extent of lawlessness on the High Seas. His chilling series of articles has not only spurred criminal prosecutions and class-action lawsuits but also alerted governments to the fact that slavery, human rights abuses and even murder are going unpunished at sea.



Ian Urbina collecting his 'Public Education Award'

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS AWARD: The Industry Group Agreement to Cod fishery in the Northern Part of North-East Atlantic, This was a pledge by an industry and its clients that they would not trawl for cod in Arctic waters exposed by melting ice, caused by climate change, from Svalbard northwards to the North Pole. The participants included the largest operators in the Russian fishing fleet and household names such as McDonald's, Marks and Spencer, Morrisons and Tesco.

INNOVATION: The Nature Conservancy, for devising the innovative debt swap between the government of Seychelles and its creditors, which created a marine reserve of more than 400,000 square kilometres – the second largest in the Indian Ocean. This was a real first and an example to the world.

LOCAL HERO AWARD: Dennis Bryan Bait-It, Project Sharklink. who has brought together the diving community, the fishing community and local government to create the first shark sanctuary in the Philippines.

SEAFARERS' AWARD: Ben Ainslie Racing (Land Rover BAR) for doing the right thing in an insanely competitive sport by having the best sustainability strategy among the America's Cup teams this year and therefore having a truly global influence. Among other things, Land Rover BAR, created a virtual chase boat which meant that a real boat did not need to exist, thereby saving 10,000 litres of diesel each year, and trialled a new technique as part of Blue's project to reintroduce native oysters to the Solent of suspending oysters in cages under their pontoons.



Dr Susie Tomson, Sir Ben Ainslie, Tim Glover and Dr Joanne Preston lowering oysters into the Solent.
Image by Alex Palmer

Link: <http://www.blumarinefoundation.com/2017/01/13/2017-ocean-awards/>