

June 12, 2025

Aquatic Life Institute's Written Input For the 2025 UN Ocean Conference

Aquatic Life Institute (ALI) welcomes the opportunity to contribute written inputs to the 2025 UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3), supported by the Aquatic Animal Alliance, a coalition of over 155 organizations. As a global coalition working to improve the welfare of aquatic animals raised and caught for food, we aim to highlight the urgency of safeguarding marine biodiversity, transforming aquatic food systems, and integrating animal welfare into the broader sustainability agenda.

The theme of the Conference “Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean” provides a crucial platform to address a long-overlooked dimension of ocean sustainability: the sentience and welfare of aquatic animals. In fact, as the world turns increasing attention to marine conservation and blue food systems, we emphasize the urgent need to include aquatic animal welfare in international ocean governance.

Today's aquatic food systems are expanding rapidly, yet continue to rely on practices that undermine both ecological and ethical goals. Industrial fishing and aquaculture, often promoted as solutions to overfishing or food insecurity, can instead fuel further environmental degradation, harm vulnerable species, and reduce long-term system resilience. These trends are particularly concerning given the lack of binding international welfare standards for aquatic animals, despite robust scientific evidence of their capacity to feel pain, fear, and stress.

If we are to truly accelerate action for the ocean, we must:

- Expand the definition of sustainability to include the wellbeing of aquatic animals;
- Shift food system investment and innovation toward ecologically sound, welfare-friendly alternatives; and
- Elevate animal welfare as a core pillar of ocean resilience and justice.

To ensure truly sustainable and ethical ocean use, we urge UNOC3 and its stakeholders to consider the following recommendations:

- Integrate [aquatic animal welfare into global ocean policy frameworks](#), including the post-2025 Biodiversity Framework, FAO guidance, and national ocean plans. Aligning marine conservation and sustainable use efforts with the recognition of animal sentience

strengthens both ecological and moral accountability. This includes applying a One Health/One Welfare lens and upholding the precautionary principle.

- Support a just transition in aquatic food systems by encouraging investment and innovation in high-welfare, low-trophic food alternatives such as seaweed, which offer significant nutritional and environmental benefits with fewer welfare concerns.
- Phase out harmful practices such as the farming of species with complex cognitive and behavioral needs—such as octopuses—for which no humane methods of production exist. These practices are inconsistent with the precautionary principle and run counter to SDG14’s intent to conserve marine life.
- Advance science-based standards for fish welfare in aquaculture and fisheries by supporting species-specific guidelines and mandating humane slaughter, as well as recognizing fish welfare in fisheries impact assessments and certifications.
- Promote transparent and accountable ocean subsidies by phasing out support for environmentally and socially harmful practices (including subsidies to high-emission fisheries and intensive aquaculture) and redirecting public finance toward equitable, welfare-aligned solutions.

ALI and the signing 155 Aquatic Animal Alliance members believe that true ocean conservation requires more than economic tools and carbon metrics. It requires inclusive, ethical leadership that reflects evolving scientific understanding and public values. Leaving aquatic animals out of ocean policy undermines legitimacy, sustainability, and justice.

As part of the global stakeholder community, we urge the UN and its Member States to recognize aquatic animals as sentient beings whose wellbeing matters, and that ensuring animal welfare unequivocally contributes to the health and resilience of the ocean itself. We stand ready to contribute our expertise and collaborate with aligned partners to advance this essential agenda.

Signatories

Aquatic Life Institute
Acción Océanos
Action for Protection of Animals Africa
Action For Dolphins
AEL Advocacy
African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization
Alexandria Turtle And Wildlife Rescue



Alliance for Human Animal Coexistence
Angolan Vegetarian Association
Anima International
Anima Naturalis
ANIMAL
Animal Action Greece
Animal Advocacy Africa
Animal Advocates International
Animal Empathy Philippines
Animal Equality
Animal Friends Croatia
Animal Justice Canada
Animal Interfaith Alliance
Animal Kingdom Foundation
Animal Law Focus
Animal Law Italia
Animal Libre
Animal Nepal
Animal Rights Center Japan
Animal Rights Initiative
Animal Society e.V.
Animals Aotearoa
Animals Don't Speak Human
Animal Welfare Advocates Association the Gambia
Animal Welfare and Environment Network for Tanzania
Animal Welfare Concern
Animal Welfare Institute
Animal Welfare Observatory
Animals Australia
Animals Now
Apon Welfare
ARAF-PLATEAU DOGON
ARBA
Arusha Society for the Protection of Animals
Aware
Better Food Foundation
BC SPCA
Catholic Concern for Animals

Congo Basin Conservation Society CBCS-Network
Coalition of African Animal Welfare Organisations
Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation
Crustacean compassion
The Dark Hobby
Depana
Deutscher Tierschutzbund
Dharma Voices for Animals
Dieren Bescherming
Djurens Rätt
Dyrenes Alliance
Environmental and Animal Society of Taiwan (EAST)
Education for African Animals Welfare
Environmental and Animal Rights Consultants Pakistan
Essere Animali
Estonian Union for the Protection of Animals (MTÜ Eestimaa Loomakaitse Liit)
The European Institute for Animal Law & Policy
Ethical Farming Ireland
FAADA
fair-fish international
Farmállatvédelem
Feedback Global
Fish Welfare Initiative
La Fondation Droit Animal, Éthique et Sciences (LFDA)
Fórum Animal
F.R.E.E
Frente Animal
Friends of Phillip
Fundación Abogados Por Los Animales APLA
Fundacion defensa y derecho animal
Fundación Veg
Future For Fish
Ghana Animal Welfare Society
Humane Africa Trust
The Humane Global Network
The Humane League
Humánný pokrok
In Defense of Animals
Institute of Animal Law Asia
International Centre for Animal Rights and Ethics (ICARE)



Invisible Animals (Nevidimi Zhivotni)
Kitwe Animal Welfare Society
Kurdistan Organization for Animal Rights Protection
KYMA sea conservation & research
L214
Lady Freethinker
The Last Cage
Lever
Life of Pachamama
Lilongwe Society for Protection and Care of Animals
Luv 4 all: Uganda
Meru Animal Welfare Organization
National Council of SPCAs
Nepal Animal Welfare and Environment Society (NAWES)
Nepal Animal Welfare and Research Center (NAWRC)
New Roots Institute
Nurture Imvelo Trust
Nuru Animal Welfare Organization
Oikeutta eläimille
OIPA - International Organization for Animal Protection
One Health and Development Initiative
ONG Sante Animale Afrique (SAA)
Podrska foundation
PlantBased Treaty
Plataforma ALTO
Planet For All
Protección Animal Ecuador (PAE)
Proyecto ALA
PAZ
RENTAS
Rwanda Animal Welfare Organization (RAWO)
SAFCEI
SAFE (Save Animals from Exploitation)
Samayu
Seastemik
Sentience
Sentient Media
Shellfish Network
Shrimp Welfare Project



Sibanye Animal Welfare and Conservancy Trust
Sinergia Animal
Somali Animal Welfare Society (SAWS)
Sống Thuần Chay
SPCA Montreal
SPCA New Zealand
SPCA Selangor
Tanzania Animals Protection Organization
Tanzania Animal Welfare Society (TAWESO)
Te Protejo
Terranimal Ecuador
Teuluu Sustainability Foundation
Tikobane Trust
Todos Somos Animales
Tourists Against Trophy Hunting
University of Guilan
Uganda vegan society
Utunzi Animal Welfare Organization
Vegan Planet Africa
Vege zajednica
Vissenbescherming
Vivamar Society
Voices for Animals
Voters for animals rights
We Animals
Welfare Footprint Project (Center for Welfare Metrics)
Welfarm
West Africa Centre for the Protection of Animal Welfare (WACPAW)
World Animal Justice
WTS