

## SEA HOPE. SEA CHANGE. SEA FUTURE.

My name is Ghislaine Maxwell. I am passionate about the ocean, the deep sea and the wild animals that live There.

It became a focus after one of my first submarine dives. I was nervous going to 1,500 feet. So excited hoping to see a mythical, never seen before creature. I flew through the darkness, arrived, and switched on the lights, ready to be amazed. I didn't see an exotic creature. I didn't see a fish. I didn't see a coral. I saw a ^ plastic hanger.

I was devastated.

I was sad and became angry. I decided there and then to focus my life on bringing attention to the ocean. I've gone around the world since, joining expeditions, diving in some of the last remaining pristine areas, places teeming with life, and places known as dead ^ spots .

The ocean covers 71% of the earth's surface and 64% of the ocean lie outside of any country's jurisdiction. That means each of us co-owns 64% of the ocean which is an open-access, common area for everyone referred to as The High Seas,

International waters or the Global commons. An area not governed by a single entity. It's a mess of laws, unenforced laws and no laws.

Oceans are essential to life on earth as we know it. When we take a deep breath and exhale it's the ocean that produces more than half of that oxygen-rich breath. It cycles over 1/4 of the CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. It plays an integral role in our climate and weather patterns. Is vital to our global economy. 90% of global trade moves by ship making the ocean the biggest transport highway in the world. Under the sea is the seabed, and trillions of dollars of mineral wealth.

But we don't know much about the ocean and even less about the High Seas.

We spend approximately 150 times more exploring space, looking for life, than we do exploring the oceans. Less than 1% of the deep sea has been explored.

Each new dive reveals astonishing discoveries.

A little over a decade ago hydrothermal vents, known as the Lost City, were discovered. Some believe similar vents from an early earth to be the birthplace of all life on the ^ planet. A ghostly

white snailfish was found just last year in the South Pacific a staggering 4 ½ miles below the surface. New Life!

So how come we never talk about the High Seas – the 64% that we co own? Why aren't the High Seas the hot topic over dinner...as we eat our fish?

We can change our relationship to this half of our planet. We can start by realizing we actually own it. Our ownership stems from the Public Trust Doctrine which can be traced to ancient Roman law, the Institutes of Justinian, that declared: "By the law of nature these things are common to mankind—air, running water, sea". England incorporated this doctrine into its earliest laws, and US courts determined that upon independence, the thirteen original colonies inherited the law. In 1982, The Law of the Sea Convention, ratified by 164 countries, declared the seabed area, its mineral resources, as the common heritage of mankind. This law requires all activities on the seabed to be carried out for the benefit of ALL - making it our common resource. The current law of the sea however is based on this outdated belief that 'although serving some, it suffices for the common use of all others'. This means resources that belong to us are going to a few.

So, what's happening in our commons, in the half of our planet where most activities go unregulated and un-monitored?

Some scientists are predicting a total collapse of commercial fisheries within the next 50 years unless changes are made. Destructive fishing practices, like bottom trawling, are destroying habitats. Areas that have just been trawled look much like the devastated Rockaways after Hurricane Sandy. The largest fishing net can fit 12 Boeing 747s in its mouth and take out entire schools of fish.

Discarded trash and plastic can be seen swirling in different currents the size of countries. What we discard on land eventually ends up in the sea.

Take the 1 trillion plastic bags we use and discard worldwide annually. They end up sooner or later, in some form, in our oceans.

What was once thought impossible – fishing out the high seas, is now ^ possible. Mining is also becoming a reality. The UN is busy selling mining concessions in our commons. Minerals on seabed are at the center of disputes. Countries are

lobbying and politicking to extend their "national waters" further, in the hope of taking control of those resources – our resources. And where are we, the citizens of the global commons, in this process? Do we want countries divvying up our Commons? Do we want subsidized fleets to take all the fish?

We can change business as usual in our Commons. Here are 6 things that we can do.

1. We can demand the application of the public trust doctrine, for the sea as well as the seabed. The High seas and all marine living resources could be held in a public trust. This would recognize all citizens, present and future, as beneficiaries with States as trustees and international bodies having the duty to monitor and oversee it. Countries at last years Rio+20 committed to restoring productivity and resilience to our oceans. Now we, citizens of the Commons, can tell our governments that we need them to follow through.

2. We could have more Marine Protected Areas, where marine species can thrive. Roughly 12% of land is protected whilst a miniscule less than 1/2% of the High Seas are.

3. We could adopt practices that produce more revenue. When shark finning was banned in Palau, a thriving dive tourist industry took its place. Sharks, that were killed for their fins alone, which sold for around \$200, became hugely valuable alive worth instead \$1.9 million over a lifetime.

4. We could ban wasteful fishing practices. Some fisheries, the worst being shrimp, catch 1kg of target fish to 15kg of unwanted catch.

5. We could fish sustainably. The Japanese take approximately 80% of the Tuna. A Bluefin just sold for over a million dollars. 90% of Tuna are gone – no wonder 1 fish cost so much! Meanwhile predator fish such as Tuna are pivotal to ocean health and resilience.

6. We can come together and create a sense of citizenship around the High Seas. We can create a dedicated ocean community for the global commons. Whilst today's technologies have made it easier to strip the ocean of their riches it's also now easier to come together and reclaim our oceans!

In the hyper-connected world, change starts with awareness. Connected citizens armed with knowledge and information can create change. In

2012, I founded The TerraMar Project, which is addressing many of these important issues. TerraMar citizens have an education platform, Ambassadors, a daily newspaper, weather reports, a flag and passports.

We can reclaim our half of the planet by building a large, educated, vested community that can be heard. Don't we owe the next generation the certainty of a productive ocean and a better picture than a plastic hanger? Thank you