

Plastic Odyssey and UNESCO Join Forces to Restore Marine World Heritage Sites Threatened by Plastic Pollution



Plastic pollution is on the rise—and even the world’s most protected marine ecosystems are not immune. On the occasion of the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice, Plastic Odyssey and UNESCO announce a landmark collaboration to clean up and restore the 50 UNESCO marine World Heritage sites. This initiative also receives support from the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France.

The cooperation agreement between Plastic Odyssey and UNESCO, signed this Tuesday, June 10, 2025, aims to replicate [the operation carried out on Henderson Island](#) at other marine World Heritage sites—among the most inaccessible and fragile on the planet. Each mission will focus on removing waste, collecting scientific data, developing educational programs, and establishing sustainable, income-generating waste-management chains.

In the Whale Hall at UNOC in Nice, Audrey Azoulay opened her speech with a strong message of support for Plastic Odyssey, whose work she has followed for several years:

« Thanks to this new partnership, Plastic Odyssey and UNESCO will act together to reduce plastic pollution in marine World Heritage sites. During these expeditions, we will also support the creation of recycling channels that benefit local and indigenous communities » – **Audrey Azoulay, Directrice Générale de l’UNESCO.**



[Watch the official announcement video](#)

The collaboration is also backed by France: Jean-Noël Barrot, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, attended the signing ceremony and co-signed a symbolic panel marking the partnership.

CHARTING THE COURSE AHEAD

In 2024, Plastic Odyssey carried out an unprecedented cleanup on Henderson Island, an UNESCO-listed marine World Heritage site in the South Pacific, collecting 9.3 metric tons of waste for processing. That mission sparked the birth of this new partnership.

Other sites are under growing pressure—such as Aldabra Atoll in the Seychelles, where the next on-the-ground mission is slated and where more than 500 metric tons of plastic are estimated. In October 2025, a Plastic Odyssey team, supported by UNESCO staff, will travel there for a scouting and test phase: precise mapping of waste deposits, trials of extraction methods, and development of scientific monitoring protocols. This pilot campaign will lay the groundwork for larger-scale operations beginning in 2026.

« This marks a turning point in the fight against ocean plastic. For the first time, we're teaming up with UNESCO to launch unprecedented cleanup missions in some of the most remote and fragile marine sanctuaries on Earth. These sites are ecological treasures—and plastic traps. It's time to bring global attention and resources to places the world can't afford to ignore. » – **Simon Bernard, co-founder & President, Plastic Odyssey.**



ABOUT PLASTIC ODYSSEY

Plastic Odyssey is an NGO committed to combating plastic pollution. Since 2022, its namesake vessel has sailed the world's oceans, promoting local recycling solutions in coastal regions hardest hit by waste.





Plastic Odyssey is now seeking €50 million to fund these new actions over the next ten years—about €10 for every kilogram of plastic collected at these critically endangered sites.

More information: plasticodyssey.org.

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