

FACT SHEET

What is blue carbon and why is it important?

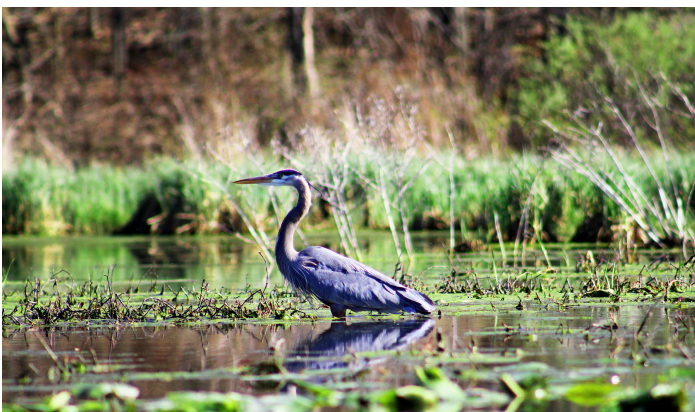
Blue carbon is carbon that is stored in mangroves, tidal marshes and sea grasses (also known as blue carbon ecosystems) that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere and increase global warming.

Protecting blue carbon has become an international priority because:

- scientists have shown blue carbon ecosystems store, or 'sequester', between two and four times more carbon than forests can¹
- protecting and restoring blue carbon ecosystems can help countries mitigate global warming and meet their emissions targets, and
- restoring and improving the management of these ecosystems can enhance food security, and secure livelihoods while providing habitat for marine species and supporting biodiversity.

Looking more broadly:

- Protecting blue carbon can contribute to achieving positive outcomes in a number of other biodiversity and ecological international agreements and initiatives such as the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity, the UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme and the High Level Panel on Oceans.
- Protecting blue carbon ecosystems is aligned with the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (in particular Goals 1, 2, 8, 12, 13, and 14).
- Finding practical solutions to address climate change and protect the environment is becoming increasingly important around the world². In addition, there is a growing realisation among economists, policymakers, politicians and other stakeholders that sustainability and sustainable development is the key to future economic growth.
- Nature-based solutions are considered by many experts as crucial in mitigating climate change. As techniques for measuring and managing blue carbon ecosystems expand so will investment opportunities.



More than 50 countries have already recognised the value of blue carbon in their Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement, but much more needs to be done.

¹ Murray et. al, (2011), Green Payments for Blue Carbon Economic Incentives for Protecting Threatened Coastal Habitats, Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions Report, NI_R_11-04

² <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/18/a-look-at-how-people-around-the-world-view-climate-change/>

During the past 50 years it's estimated that half of the world's mangroves and tidal marshes and 30 per cent of global seagrass meadows have already been lost due to factors such as land reclamation, construction, offshore farming, coastal dredging and over-tourism.

Mangrove deforestation alone is estimated to have contributed as much as 10 per cent of emissions from deforestation globally. This shows the extent to which blue carbon ecosystems can quickly become significant sources of emissions when they are not protected, and why halting their destruction has become an international priority.

The vision of the International Partnership for Blue Carbon (IPBC) is that all global blue carbon ecosystems are protected, sustainably managed or being restored – contributing to climate change mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity, ocean economies and livelihoods of coastal.

The IPBC is a global network of 43 governments, policymakers, researchers, NGOs, and blue carbon experts who understand the importance of coastal ecosystems and are committed to their protection.

The Partnership's mission is to be an open forum for IPBC Partners to connect, share and collaborate to build solutions, take actions, and benefit from the experience and expertise of the global community. And we are building the foundations needed to enable credible and lasting actions to protect coastal blue carbon ecosystems.

In particular, our Partners work together to:

- identify barriers, address challenges and build solutions within countries, regions and globally
- contribute their experiences and capabilities in blue carbon science, policy or advocacy to activities that support global blue carbon protection, and
- encourage and support all countries with significant blue carbon ecosystems to establish policies, management plans and projects for their long-term protection.



Let's work together

The IPBC builds the foundations needed to enable credible and lasting actions to protect coastal blue carbon ecosystems.

The Partnership can help you fill gaps that are hindering your country's ability to develop national policies or implement management plans, such as providing science and data, or building your technical capacity.

To find out more go to www.bluecarbonpartnership.org or follow us on Twitter: @The_IPBC or LinkedIn

