

CONTACT:

Trisha Badger, Director
World Ocean Observatory
(207) 701-1069

tbadger@worldoceanobservatory.org

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**WORLD OCEAN OBSERVATORY'S WORLD OCEAN EXPLORER VIRTUAL IMMERSION
ENDORSED BY UN OCEAN DECADE FOR 2025
A UNESCO Chair Project for the Ocean Celebrates World Ocean Explorer Virtual Immersion**

UNITED STATES – World Ocean Explorer Virtual Immersion received Endorsed Activity status as part of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (the Ocean Decade). World Ocean Explorer, a project of the World Ocean Observatory, presents an astonishing 3D, web-based, simulated aquarium visit, organized to reveal the wonders of undersea life, layered with detailed data and information to augment the emotional connection made to the astonishing beauty and complexity of the dynamic ocean.

Within each of the theme-based modules, students can visit exemplary underwater sites on a web browser. Through immersion among displays, mixed media and 3D models, the experience of an aquarium visit is brought into classrooms or home school environments as an accessible, always available opportunity for teaching and learning.

To be recognized by the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (aka The Ocean Decade) is to be tasked with contributing toward a shared goal to achieve a healthier and a more sustainable ocean. W2O and all resources made available through the free Explorer platform are created and consolidated as a new source of knowledge for more ocean literacy, a free and trusted resource for marine educators to turn to for activities resources, modules, and peer-to-peer connection. Explorer offers theme-based learning opportunities related to deep sea ecosystems, polar regions, coral reefs, maritime work, the coastal region, culture and maritime history, science at sea, fresh water, and the ocean and human health.

World Ocean Explorer hosts peer-to-peer teacher cohorts, engaging with marine educators around the world who are using World Ocean Explorer as a resource with and for their students, utilizing a multimedia experience to learn and explore immersive web-based environments, and for educators to contextualize and explain. Teacher Cohorts engage 15 educators every few months to bring Deep Sea's educational content to students: from Washington State to Nigeria, Maine to Australia, Anguilla to The Bahamas, Thailand to Australia, Explorer is reaching students today, bringing knowledge and wonder about ocean systems to students everywhere.

Some teacher testimonials follow:

“World Ocean Explorer has been impactful for the school, teachers, and students. In Liberia, marine life isn't part of the curriculum, so these topics brought up many passionate questions from both teachers and students. It's truly a valuable resource, as it offers unique insights that are different from the standard curriculum, and it's essential for kids to understand the fragility of marine ecosystems.. Thank you for this incredible opportunity. It's been invaluable!”

Lisa Antoune, The Butterfly Club, Margibi County, Liberia

"I used Explorer with my National Ocean Science Bowl team during after school practice. They loved it, particularly the 3D experiences in the Deep Sea exhibit. I look forward to debuting with my Oceanography and Marine Biology electives. I can foresee many possibilities: I'm most enthusiastic about data collection and can envision having students conducting fish transects on scuba or with a submersible, chemical analysis of hydrothermal vents, sea surface wind, wave height calculations, deep ocean pressure...it's all very exciting!"

Timothy Dwyer, Science Teacher
Friday Harbor High School, San Juan Islands, Washington, USA

"The Explorer platform is amazing: in every instance I've used it with students I find a similar reaction: 'Wow! Cool! Can we do this at home, too?'" Filled with information that ties nicely to NGSS with regard to life science, ecosystems, interactions, and energy, it connects beautifully to Ocean Literacy Principles 5 and 6: *The ocean supports incredible biodiversity* and *The ocean is largely unexplored*.

Nell Herrmann, Classroom Teacher
Blue Hill, Maine, Educator Advisor, World Ocean Explorer

About World Ocean Observatory

The World Ocean Observatory (W2O) is a leading organization advocating for the health and sustainability of the ocean through an accessible worldwide network of communication. Through education, advocacy, collaboration, public connection, and relentless communications, W2O is committed to building an expansive global community of *Citizens of the Ocean*, promoting the conservation of marine resources for the future of all mankind. In 2025 World Ocean Observatory is celebrating 22 years of advocacy, education, and communication for the ocean. Online at worldoceanobservatory.org. W2O and all resources made available through the free Explorer platform are created and consolidated as a new source of knowledge for more ocean literacy, a free and trusted resource for marine educators to turn to for activities resources, modules, and peer-to-peer connection.

About the Ocean Decade

Proclaimed in 2017 by the United Nations General Assembly, the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) ('the Ocean Decade') seeks to stimulate ocean science and knowledge generation to reverse the decline of the state of the ocean system and catalyze new opportunities for sustainable development of this massive marine ecosystem. The vision of the Ocean Decade is 'the science we need for the ocean we want'. The Ocean Decade provides a convening framework for scientists and stakeholders from diverse sectors to develop the scientific knowledge and the partnerships needed to accelerate and harness advances in ocean science to achieve a better understanding of the ocean system, and deliver science-based solutions to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The UN General Assembly mandated UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) to coordinate the preparations and implementation of the Decade.

About the IOC-UNESCO

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) promotes international cooperation in marine sciences to improve management of the ocean, coasts and marine resources. The IOC enables its 150 Member States to work together by coordinating programs in capacity development, ocean observations and services, ocean science and tsunami warning. The work of the IOC contributes to the mission of UNESCO to promote the advancement of science and its applications to develop knowledge and capacity, key to economic and social progress, the basis of peace and sustainable development.