

# Protect and Bless New England's Ocean Treasures

## Help Save New England's Ocean Treasures in an Atlantic National Marine Monument



Off the coast of Rhode Island lie canyons as deep as the Grand Canyon and sea mounts as high as the Rockies. Rare cold-water coral reefs rooted there are more than a thousand years old and nurture a myriad of species.

In another area called Cashes Ledge, vast kelp forests sway with the waves, offering home and sustenance to many of God's creatures. Help save this underwater "Noah's ark" for some of God's most wondrous creatures.

*"Ask the animals, and they will teach you,  
or the birds of the air,  
and they will tell you; ...  
or let the fish of the sea inform you.  
Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord  
has done this?  
In his hand is the life of every creature and  
the breath of all humankind." (Job 12:7-10)*



## Christian Leaders Speak on Caring for God's Creation

*"Many of the world's coral reefs are already barren or in a state of constant decline... Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another..." Pope Francis, Laudato Si'*



*"To protect the oceans is to do God's work. To harm them, even if we are ignorant of the harm we cause, is to diminish His divine Creation. We can stop over-fishing and destructive fishing methods so that the miracle of the fishes will endure for future generations... We can establish sanctuaries in the sea where we agree to do no harm of any kind."*

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, World Oceans Day 2003

*"We are meant to love God and what God has created, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus insists that those who will enjoy abundant life are those who care for all neighbors, especially the 'least of these' – the hungry and thirsty, the imprisoned and sick – and that must include all the species that God has nurtured on this planet."*

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Past Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church



## DISCUSS: BIBLICAL INSIGHTS ON CARING FOR NEW ENGLAND'S OCEAN TREASURES

*Each discussion question is named after one of the five coral canyons being proposed for protection.*

**HEEZEN** Read Genesis 1:20-22: *And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth."*

Reflect: In an age when threats of extinction are a reality for one in five species, what does it mean to live alongside fellow creatures who also share our Genesis call to "be fruitful"?

**NYGREN** Read Genesis 1:26: *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

Reflect: This verse has often been cited by secular environmentalists as a primary source of our mainstream culture's indifference to the condition of God's creatures. What is your interpretation of what it means to "rule over," or in other Bible translations "have dominion over" fellow creatures?

**LYDONIA** Consider Psalm 104:24-26, remembering the wider context of Psalm 104 is a praise narrative: *How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number— living things both large and small. There the ships go to and fro, and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.*

Reflect: Even in popular culture today, we fear Leviathan. Yet in this Psalm, God formed Leviathan for the purpose of frolicking! What insight does this shed into God's wisdom for making *all* creatures? What does this say about creatures' worth, independent of how we value them?

**GILBERT** Read Job 12:7-10, keeping in mind Job's arduous journey toward becoming humble: *Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ...or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all humankind.*

Reflect: Do you seek out opportunities to humbly learn from God's creation? If so, how? If not, how do you want to grow spiritually in this area?

**OCEANOGRAPHER** Read Ecclesiastes 3:18-19: *...As for humans, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath...*

Reflect: How much do you think about interdependence with God's marine creatures? How, if at all, does this impact our spiritual life in the Ocean State?

*For more resources like this, visit [www.creationjustice.org/ocean-treasures](http://www.creationjustice.org/ocean-treasures) and [www.creationjustice.org/creatures](http://www.creationjustice.org/creatures)*