World Heritage in the High Seas: An Idea Whose Time Has Come
49 marine sites inscribed on the World Heritage List

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World Heritage sites:
What is different from other MPAs?

Part of a prestigious collection of iconic marine places

World Heritage Committee reporting

Listing in Danger or removal of the World Heritage List
What about the other half of the planet not protected?
Did the Conventions founders far-sighted vision of protection envisaged a future world where we ended up excluding half of the surface of the Earth?
High Seas scientists convene in Paris to explore World Heritage protection.
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World Heritage Criteria (natural):

vii. Phenomenon/area of exceptional natural beauty;
viii. Outstanding major stages of Earths history
ix. Iconic ecological/biological processes
x. Unique natural habitats and biodiversity
Sunken fossilized islands...
Giant volcanoes forming vast seamounts...
A floating golden rainforest...
60 metre high white spires of rock...
Discovered in 2000 and unlike any other ecosystem yet known on Earth.

**Sits at 800m depth with serpentine cliffs weep hot fluids producing delicate finger-like outgrows and chimneys which has been going for 120,000 years.**

The Lost City Hydrothermal Field
First observed in 1948, the 500km wide oceanic oasis is created through an interaction between wind and currents which promotes blooms of surface plankton that nurture a globally exceptional environment for highly migratory marine predators.
Halfway between North America and Hawaii, white sharks congregate to this spot, likely to feed and mate. No other place like it is known on Earth.
First viewed by Columbus on his first voyage in 1495 and has been a place of myth and legend ever since. Commonly called the Golden Rainforest of the Ocean, it is home to an iconic pelagic ecosystem built around the floating Sargassum seaweeds, the world’s only holopelagic algae.
Uniquely remarkable tectonic featured created by uplift Southwest Indian Ridge that harbours highly diverse and stunning coral gardens and complex sea-cliff deep sea communities like armchair sized sponges, predatory sea spiders and many unknown species yet to be named by science.

Atlantis Bank
How could the World Heritage Convention protect these unique deep sea treasures?
Nothing in the **inspirational vision** of the 1972 World Heritage Convention suggests that nature or **cultural heritage** beyond national **jurisdiction** should be excluded.
The lack of procedures to nominate, manage and protect a site of Outstanding Universal Value in the High Seas is a historical oversight.
The World Heritage Convention beyond **National Jurisdiction**

1. Evolutionary development of the World Heritage Convention application
2. Provisions in the Operational Guidelines allow addressing thematic gaps
3. Synergies with UNCLOS BBNJ negotiations
4. Next steps: Costa Rica Dome & Sargasso Sea / OG amendments
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