The Peruvian Sea is a global biodiversity hotspot sustaining one of the planet’s most productive marine zones. Representing less than 0.25% of the global ocean, it is home to the world’s largest schools of fish and populations of the endemic Humboldt penguins and other guano-producing birds. Globally, it contributes to around 6% of all wild-caught seafood annually, providing food security and supporting the livelihoods of more than 65,000 fishers. In 2021, 8% of Peru’s marine environment had been protected, lagging behind the goal set out in Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 to designate at least 10% as marine protected areas (MPAs) by 2020.

The Nature Conservancy and its partners SPDA and Consorcio Manglares del Noroeste del Perú will help Peru to fulfil its global biodiversity conservation commitments. Together, they will focus on unlocking technical and legal bottlenecks that have been affecting the establishment of new MPAs in Peru for decades. The project will support the expansion of the terrestrial Illescas Reserved Zone into its adjacent marine environment (400 km²) and use this process as a case study. The project will also build on ongoing collaborative efforts with fishing communities, Peru’s government and civil society, in order to improve the participatory and adaptive management of 2,020 km² of existing MPAs by strengthening governance mechanisms, improving MPA staff capacities, developing monitoring and control capacities, and implementing community-based management plans. Furthermore, the project will help communities to adopt and develop sustainable livelihoods and reduce illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, while also empowering women to participate in fisheries and MPA management.

Despite being a global biodiversity hotspot and one of the most productive marine zones in the world, Peru is lagging behind the internationally agreed goal to designate at least 10% as MPAs. By expanding MPAs and managing them more efficiently in the long term, this project will make a significant difference to coastal communities and globally important biodiversity.
KEY TARGETS

Newly created MPAs: 400 km²
Effectively managed MPAs: 2,020 km²
Number of beneficiaries: 5,720

ACTIVITIES AND AREAS OF WORK

MPA GOVERNANCE
- Creating protected areas
- Creating MPA management plans
- Monitoring, control and enforcement of MPAs
- Data collection and mapping
- Support of protected area staff
- Bottom-up management/co-management approaches
- Gender empowerment for MPA governance

SPECIES CONSERVATION/SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES
- Fisheries control and enforcement
- Data collection on fisheries
- Co-management of fisheries
- Fisheries management

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS
- Community mapping
- Creating alternative employment opportunities
- Job training
- Economic empowerment of women
- Initiatives to increase value added in supply chains
- Community entrepreneurship
- Sustainable tourism

HABITAT CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION
- Protection of mangroves
- Restoration of mangroves
- Protection of seagrass beds
- Restoration of seagrass beds