

Press Release

Embargoed until 11am EST hours June 6th 2014 – (WORLD OCEANS DAY – June 8th)

Catlin Seaview Survey announces missions to reveal wonders of Marine World Heritage Sites for first time

World-renowned sites can now be explored on Google Maps



A Manta Ray investigates a Catlin Seaview Survey diver and the 'SVII-S' camera

Sydney, Australia, June 8th. The [Catlin Seaview Survey](#) (sponsored by international insurance company, [Catlin Group Limited](#)) has today (for World Oceans Day) announced a series of missions to [UNESCO Marine World Heritage Sites](#).

Using its revolutionary 360-degree panoramic camera, the [SVII](#), the Catlin Seaview Survey team has already explored five Marine World Heritage sites (Scientific observations are available) and plans to visit ten more over the next 18 months.

The first photos of already-surveyed sites are being published in Street View in Google Maps to mark World Oceans Day, allowing anyone with internet-access to 'virtually' explore these locations from the comfort of their own home. Observations about the locations from the science and diving team are also being released today.

Today's announcement widens further the extensive Catlin Seaview Survey programme which launched in 2012 to create a baseline study of the world's coral reefs. The stunning images and other data it captures is analysed using cutting edge image recognition software to create a baseline record of the health of coral reefs openly available at www.catlinglobalreefrecord.org.

Leading the scientific programme for the Catlin Seaview Survey is [Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg](#) Director of the [Global Change Institute](#) at The [University of Queensland](#). Other partners include the [Scripps Institute](#) in San Diego, [National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration](#) and the international conservation organization, [IUCN](#).

"We live in rapidly changing world in which Marine World Heritage sites have come under increasing pressure from human activities. Science-based evidence forms an important link in protecting these sites" said Professor Hoegh-Guldberg. "Our project is laying down crucial baseline information for understanding and responding to the changes – it can support substantially the protection of these wonderful areas in perpetuity."

"The Catlin Seaview Survey is a potential game-changer for the conservation of Marine World Heritage Sites." said [Richard Vevers](#), Project Director. "If people can see the value of these very special natural wonders, it will be much easier to get support for conservation efforts. The project will not only reveal these sites, it will also show change over time. It will make the positive and negative impacts of how we use our oceans more visible...there for all to see. Certainly, it's an exciting time for marine science and conservation."

"We all know that inscription on the [World Heritage List](#) is only half the job. The other half is ensuring that these carefully chosen areas are effectively managed. As a condition for receiving the World Heritage designation, nations commit to stewarding their sites into the future, ensuring that these exceptional MPAs endure through government transitions. This technology, for the first time, will provide a comprehensive snapshot of the exceptional natural value these sites represent as well as the damages caused by threats like climate change or fisheries. " said Fanny Douvere, coordinator of the UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme.

Some sites, including [Belize](#), have been listed as 'In Danger' and others such as the [Great Barrier Reef](#) are currently under review by the [World Heritage Committee](#). The project aims to help raise the standard of scientific monitoring for globally important sites and all the data collected will be openly available online at the [Catlin Global Reef Record](#).

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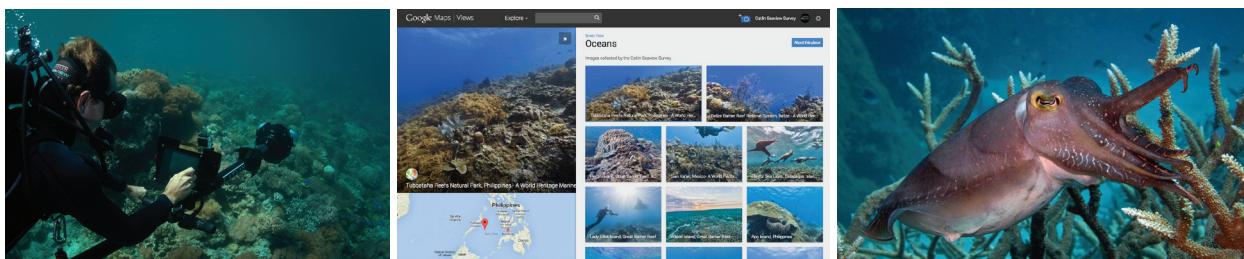
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MEDIA PHOTOS:



Media photos of the underwater survey and these locations can be downloaded at:
<http://catlinseaviewsurvey.zenfolio.com/worldoceansday>

Video B-roll of the team in action can also be downloaded:

Great Barrier Reef and SVII camera:
<https://www.hightail.com/download/ZUczRkJkWkI5bEFQWWNUQw>

Team working in the Galapagos Islands
<https://www.hightail.com/download/ZUczRkJkWkJkMnRqQTIVag>

Please credit all images as listed in media gallery. (Free use with credit to Catlin Seaview Survey, no on-pass)

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Catlin Seaview Survey

The Catlin Seaview Survey is a pioneering scientific expedition revealing more than ever before the impact of environmental changes on the world's coral reefs. The Survey aims to significantly expand the data available to scientists about global coral reef systems. The Catlin Seaview Survey is currently focusing on the Coral Triangle, having previously completed ground-breaking scientific studies of the Great Barrier Reef and the Caribbean region. The images it captures are being used to create a vital scientific baseline study of the reef that can be used to monitor change, as well as being used to reveal it to the world through Street View in Google Maps - in partnership with Google.

More information about the Catlin Seaview Survey can be found here:
<http://www.catlinseaviewsurvey.com>

You can also engage with the Catlin Seaview Survey and its 3.3 million followers on Google+ here:
<https://plus.google.com/+CatlinSeaviewSurvey/posts>

About Catlin

Catlin Group Limited is a global specialty property/casualty insurer and reinsurer operating worldwide through six underwriting hubs: London/UK, Bermuda, the United States, Asia Pacific, Europe, and Canada. The Catlin Seaview Survey is the second major scientific project Catlin has sponsored. The Catlin Arctic Survey (2009-2011) investigated the impact of environmental changes in the Arctic. Catlin believes that insurers must take a leading role in improving the understanding of potential changes to our environment, changes that could affect how risks are managed in the future. Catlin's contribution is to sponsor independent, impartial research that is freely distributed to the world's scientific community. <http://www.catlin.com/>

About Marine World Heritage

UNESCO's World Heritage List includes 46 marine sites that together comprise about 20% of the world's MPA coverage by surface area. They have been selected through a rigorous, multi-annual review of their biodiversity, geological and ecosystem processes, exceptional beauty and other criteria. Marine World Heritage sites are typically multiple-use areas. All sites benefit from a monitoring system that features periodic review and holds nations accountable for conserving the exceptional natural values of their sites. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/marine-programme/>

About the Global Change Institute, The University of Queensland

The [Global Change Institute](#) at The University of Queensland, Australia, is an independent source of game-changing research, ideas and advice for addressing the challenges of global change. The GCI advances discovery, creates solutions and advocates responses that meet the challenges presented by climate change, technological innovation and population change. Measured through a combination of three key global university rankings — The Times Higher Education, Shanghai Jiao Tong and QS World University — [The University of Queensland](#) is currently ranked in the top 100 of all universities worldwide.