



CTA-042-Pierre Cousteau-World's Oceans

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Vic Ferguson

The World Federation for Coral Reef Conservation 281.971.7703 P.O. Box 311117 Houston Texas 77231

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We need greater 'ocean literacy' says son of Jacques Cousteau

Ireland 'not alone in suffering from sea blindness', national marine conference hears



Pierre Cousteau, director of Cousteau Foundation and son of Jacques Cousteau with Simon Coveney TD Minister for the Marine at the Harassing our Ocean Wealth conference in Cork Harbour. Photograph: Darragh Kane

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French explorer, film-maker and diver Jacques-Yves Cousteau once said that "if the sea dies, man dies", and his youngest son concurs.

However, moralizing about environmental protection doesn't work, [Cousteau Foundation](#) director Pierre-Yves Cousteau believes.

Cousteau, who was a guest speaker at the State's Harassing our Ocean Wealth conference in Ringaskiddy, Cork, on Friday, believes the "tree hugging" approach of his parents' generation was of limited success.

However, a growing recognition that environmental damage is having an adverse effect on living standards means that there is a "convergence" between consumer values and global stewardship, he says.



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Cousteau, who was taught to scuba dive by his father at the age of nine, holds an MBA and runs a citizen science network known as Cousteau Divers. He is also a goodwill ambassador for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

He is currently working on commercializing a turbo sail which is a "hybrid wind propulsion device" for shipping . A "Sea for Society" project with which he is involved commissioned research from [NUJ Galway](#), and found that "attitudes and awareness, governance and strategy and knowledge" or lack of it, presented the three main barriers to protecting the marine environment.

[Ireland](#) was "not alone" in suffering from a "sea blindness", he said. "Ocean literacy" and an acceptance that we are "part of nature" and not "distinct from it" were vital elements in accepting the impact that man has on the oceans, he said.

Cousteau said his father was "pessimistic about the future when he used his mind", but "optimistic when he relying on his heart to trust human ingenuity". He is due to speak about his own career as a diver at the conference's free "Seafest" event in Ringaskiddy on Saturday.

Ocean governance is the focus of a new international consultation which the EU has initiated, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu Vella told the conference.

"Ocean governance does not mean restrictions, it just means good government," Commissioner Vella said. With increasing pressure on a land-based economy, "whether we like it or not, we have to turn to our oceans for solutions", he said.

Ireland, which has 17 per cent of Europe's waters, has "been to the forefront when it comes to promoting ocean governance", Commissioner Vella said.

He paid tribute to Ireland for "grasping the potential of its maritime economy", and noted that it was growing nearly twice as fast as the overall economy.

Commissioner Vella said that the EU wanted to develop fish farming but not at "the expense of the environment". Projects which were "not sustainable enough" would "not get a single euro" from the European Maritime Fisheries Fund, he said.

Ireland is going to be part of a "blue century", Minister for Marine forecast [Simon Coveney](#).

The days of not prioritizing the marine sector are "over", Mr Coveney said.

The maritime economy has grown by 9 per cent between 2010 and 2012 and by more than 8 per cent for 2012 to 2014, with a turnover of about €4.5 billion a year, he said, and new opportunities were emerging in "high tech" marine products and services, marine biotechnology and commerce.

Ireland will have a maritime spatial plan by 2021 which will be spearheaded by the Department of the Environment, the conference heard.



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EU Commissioner for the Environment and Maritime Affairs Karmenu Vella and Minister for Defence and Marine Simon Coveney wished Naval Service patrol ship LÉ Niamh a “safe passage” to the Mediterranean Friday night.

The patrol ship with 55 crew and two Army medical staff set sail from Cork harbour under the command of Lieut Cdr [Daniel Wall](#).

It is replacing the LÉ *Eithne*, which rescued almost 3,400 people of 21 nationalities in waters between [Libya](#) and [Sicily](#). It will assist the Italian authorities until September, Mr Coveney said – “dependent on the operational demands and requirements arising.”

Taoiseach Enda Kenny is due to open the €15 million Beaufort research laboratory in Ringaskiddy on Saturday. The free “Seafest” programme includes a food village, sailing and open water swimming, tours of Naval Service ships, rescue displays and demonstrations including a “hurricane simulator”.

*Vic Ferguson
The World Federation for Coral Reef Conservation
Executive Director
P.O. Box 311117
Houston, Texas 77231
vic.ferguson@wfcrc.org
www.wfcrc.org
281.971.7703 (office)
512.986.1902 (cell)*

*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing”....**Edmund Burke***