

the SARGASSO SEA

*the floating golden rainforest of
the North Atlantic*



J. P. Rouja

Named after its characteristic rafts of floating golden *Sargassum* algae, the Sargasso Sea is a place of legend but also a place of international importance that deserves recognition and protection.

The rotating gyre of ocean currents define the Sargasso Sea and collect and concentrate both *Sargassum* and pollutants that remain trapped for many years. Unique communities, including endemic species found nowhere else, have evolved to live on the *Sargassum* mats. These communities in turn act as feeding, spawning and nursery areas for many species of fish, birds and turtles.

Many threatened animals, including whales, turtles, sharks and tuna migrate through the Sargasso Sea. European and American eels migrate there to spawn, linking Europe and North Africa with the USA and Canada. Porbeagle sharks migrate south from Canadian waters into the Sargasso Sea to give birth to their pups; Humpback whales migrate north from the

Caribbean to their feeding grounds in the north Atlantic. Unique communities of endemic species also live on seamounts.

The Sargasso Sea is one of the best known areas of the world's ocean, and is home to vital long-term monitoring programmes that provide essential information on global processes such as climate change. The Sargasso Sea is threatened by human activities including pollution, overfishing, shipping, and even harvesting of *Sargassum*.

The Sargasso Sea Alliance exists to promote awareness of the Sargasso Sea and to seek protection for its iconic flora and fauna.



SARGASSO SEA ALLIANCE



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA



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About the Sargasso Sea Alliance

The Sargasso Sea Alliance is led by the Bermuda Government and aims to mobilise support from a wide variety of national and international organisations, governments and donors for protection measures for the Sargasso Sea.

The Secretariat of the Sargasso Sea Alliance is hosted by the Washington D.C. Office of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Suite 300, 1630 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington D.C., 20009, USA.

Sargasso Sea Alliance partners:

- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and its World Commission on Protected Areas
- Mission Blue / Sylvia Earle Alliance
- Marine Conservation Institute
- Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
- Atlantic Conservation Partnership
- Bermuda Institute for Ocean Sciences (BIOS)
- Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute (BUEI)
- WWF International

Keeping in touch:

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