

# Revillagigedo Archipelago

Waters around Pacific island group now make up Mexico's largest fully protected marine reserve

## Overview

The Revillagigedo Archipelago sits off Mexico's Pacific coast, about 800 kilometers (500 miles) west of the city of Manzanillo and 400 kilometers (250 miles) south of Cabo San Lucas. With its rich ecological and geological landscape, the volcanic island chain was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2016.<sup>1</sup>

The four uninhabited islands—Socorro, Clarión, San Benedicto, and Roca Partida—are the peaks of volcanoes created more than 3.5 million years ago. They are part of a larger formation of seamounts, or underwater mountains, that help create the upwelling of nutrients from the deep sea that supports a vast array of marine life.

To protect this remarkable ecosystem, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto designated the Revillagigedo Archipelago National Park on Nov. 24, 2017. At 148,087 square kilometers (57,177 square miles), the park is Mexico's largest fully protected marine reserve, free from fishing and other extractive activities.



Thirty-seven species of shark and ray have been observed in the Revillagigedo Archipelago.

## Protecting biodiversity and critical habitat for migratory species

Revillagigedo is home to a diverse ecosystem that supports abundant marine life. These waters serve as a critical waypoint for many large migratory species, helping to connect regions of the Pacific Ocean. Among its significant characteristics:

- At least 366 species of fish, including 26 found nowhere else on the planet, call this area home.<sup>1</sup>
- 37 species of shark and ray, including large aggregations of whale sharks, live in the archipelago's waters, including one of the world's largest populations of oceanic manta rays.
- Four species of threatened sea turtles—leatherback, green, olive ridley, and hawksbill—have been found in marine habitats around Revillagigedo.<sup>2</sup>
- The remote marine park provides a place where whales, dolphins, sharks, and tuna can feed, breed, and rest during their migrations. The protected area offers a refuge for species traveling long distances throughout the tropical eastern Pacific.

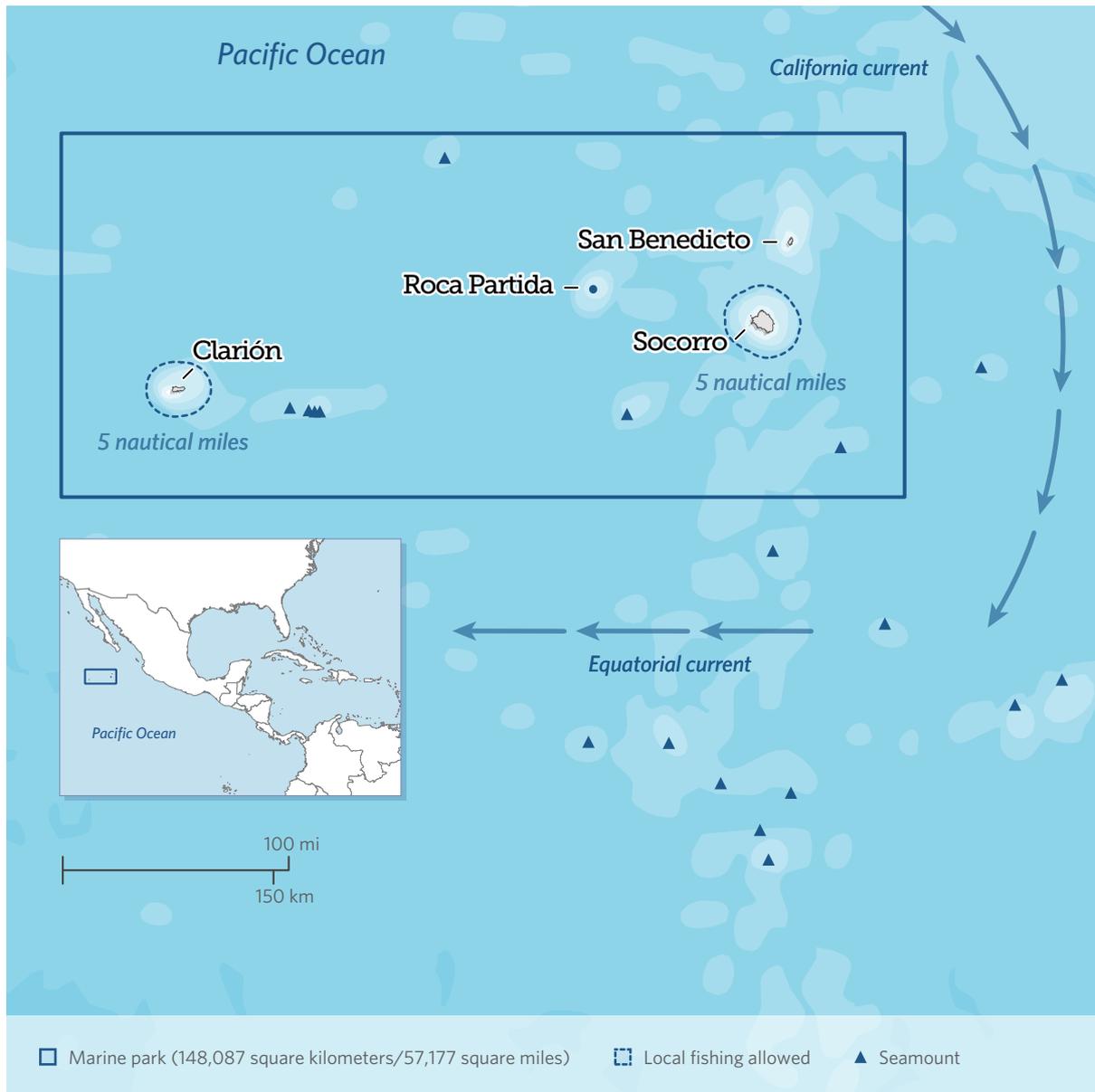
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“ This national park comes into being with equipment, facilities, and personnel, thus ensuring true conservation.”

Enrique Peña Nieto, *President of Mexico*

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# Revillagigedo Archipelago National Park



Note: Mexico's Revillagigedo Archipelago National Park, located 400 kilometers (250 miles) south of the Baja California peninsula in the Pacific Ocean, is now North America's largest fully protected marine reserve. The park's waters are home to 366 species of fish, including 26 found nowhere else. They also serve as an important gathering place for large migratory species such as sharks, whales, and sea turtles.

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## Conclusion

Mexico has taken a major step by creating its largest fully protected marine reserve. This action will help the country contribute to global efforts to protect 30 percent of the world's ocean, the target set by the International Union for Conservation of Nature in 2016. Currently, just over 2 percent is highly protected.

Establishment of Revillagigedo as a marine reserve safeguards biodiversity, supports fisheries productivity, boosts ecotourism, and sustains the myriad life-supporting benefits that healthy oceans provide for species in the water and on land.

## Endnotes

- 1 Luis F. Del Moral-Flores, Jatziry M. Gracián-Negrete, and Ana F. Guzmán-Camacho, "Fishes of the Archipelago of the Revillagigedo Islands: A Systematic and Biogeographic Update," *BIOCYT: Biología, Ciencia y Tecnología* 9, no. 34 (2016): 596-619, <http://www.revistas.unam.mx/index.php/biocytt/issue/viewFile/4448/154>.
- 2 Geoffrey L. Holroyd and Helen E. Trefry, "The Importance of Isla Clarión, Archipelago Revillagigedo, Mexico, for Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) Nesting," *CHELONIAN CONSERVATION AND BIOLOGY* 9, no. 2 (2010): 305-309, [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Geoffrey\\_Holroyd/publication/232665701\\_The\\_Importance\\_of\\_Isla\\_Clarion\\_Archipelago\\_Revillagigedo\\_Mexico\\_for\\_Green\\_Turtle\\_Chelonia\\_mydas\\_Nesting/links/544176d30cf2a6a049a5884a.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Geoffrey_Holroyd/publication/232665701_The_Importance_of_Isla_Clarion_Archipelago_Revillagigedo_Mexico_for_Green_Turtle_Chelonia_mydas_Nesting/links/544176d30cf2a6a049a5884a.pdf).

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## For further information, please visit:

[pewtrusts.org/revillagigedo](http://pewtrusts.org/revillagigedo)

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### The Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project

The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Bertarelli Foundation joined forces in 2017 to create the Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project, with the shared goal of establishing the first generation of ecologically significant and effective marine protected areas around the world. This effort builds on a decade of work by both organizations to protect the ocean. Between them, they have helped to obtain designations to safeguard over 8 million square kilometers (3 million square miles) of ocean by working with philanthropic partners, indigenous groups, community leaders, government officials, and scientists. Since 2010, the Bertarelli Foundation has sought to protect the ocean for future generations through marine conservation and collaborative marine science research.