INSTITUTE OF THE AMERICAS

Welcome back to the Sustainability Dispatch!

Message from Leadership

The past two months have marked a steady start to the year, with activities that reflect how the Environment Program is translating priorities into practice. Across our work, a common thread is the integration of science into decision-making processes that shape conservation, resource management, and policy.

In April, we helped advance dialogue on sustainable maritime transport through the MTTC meeting in La Paz, reinforcing the importance of coordinated, cross-sector engagement to accelerate decarbonization. This effort continues to bridge technical knowledge with the regulatory and operational pathways needed for ports and shipping to transition effectively. Our regional engagement also extended to Santa Marta, Colombia, where we contributed to discussions on port decarbonization and just transition, sharing lessons from Mexico's national strategy and highlighting the growing relevance of maritime emissions for competitiveness.

At the same time, our efforts to strengthen the science–policy interface were reflected in the launch of the "*Ciencia que Conecta*" webinar series. The first session brought together researchers and practitioners to examine ecosystem change in the Gulf of California and highlighted the importance of open-access data in informing management decisions. Additionally, we continue to build our science literacy program through workshops that help early-career scientists and students develop tools to communicate research findings more effectively, contributing to broader access to scientific knowledge.

Recent publications further underscore these efforts. Long-term monitoring of rocky reefs in the Gulf of California and new global analyses on marine protection provide evidence that informs both local management and international conservation targets. These efforts were complemented by the publication of our analysis on the International Maritime Organization's ability to create global operational impacts amid geopolitical fragmentation, an insight increasingly relevant to countries navigating the maritime energy transition.

Together, these activities reflect a consistent approach: linking research, dialogue, and application to support informed and coordinated responses to environmental challenges.

Elizabeth Mosqueda

Elizabeth Mosqueda
Environment Program Lead

Catalina López

Catalina López
Marine Research Program Director

DRIVING IMPACT TOGETHER

IoA as a key partner to the Maritime Industry

In March 2026, Elizabeth Mosqueda attended, as an invited guest, the General Assembly of Affiliates of CAMEINTRAM, where Eng. José Manuel Urreta Ortega was re-elected as President and the National Executive Council for 2026 was renewed. The Chamber presented its 2025 Activity Report, highlighting regulatory modernization, sectoral representation, and strategic alliances. CAMEINTRAM also recognized the Institute of the Americas as a key technical partner supporting energy transition, international standards, and comparative analysis to strengthen the maritime sector's environmental and operational practices.

IoA participates in the 1st National Workshop of the Global Maritime Technology Cooperation Centers Network

On April 7–8, Elizabeth Mosqueda, IOA's Environment Program Lead, participated in the **1st National Workshop 2026 of the GMN Phase II Project** in La Paz, where Mexican and regional institutions met to advance maritime decarbonization. Organized by MTCC Latin America with SEMAR, UNAMAN, the EU, and the IMO, the workshop addressed port-system diagnostics, a new GHG-reduction pilot, green corridors, alternative fuels, and climate finance. Elizabeth represented the Institute of the Americas in the Gender Equality Roundtable, reaffirming the Institute's commitment to capacity building, evidence-based decarbonization, and multisectoral alliances such as RIALA.

Science Communication Training Workshop

On April 18, as part of our efforts to promote science literacy, Catalina López-Sagástegui co-hosted a science communication workshop with dataMares Art Director Luis Miguel Cruz. Organized for the Ichthyology Lab at the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, the workshop introduced key principles for developing scientific infographics. Delivered virtually, the session benefited from the engagement and flexibility of Dr. Erick Oñate, his collaborators, and students, whose participation made it especially rewarding. We are confident this format will help expand access to scientific knowledge and strengthen researchers' ability to communicate their findings effectively.

Monitoreo, Diplomacia y Ciencia Abierta para un Futuro Azul

This webinar was the first of a new series called “Science that Connects” (*Ciencia que Conecta*) that aims to bring together experts from different fields to discuss relevant topics around ocean science and conservation. On April 21st, the IOA’s Catalina López-Sagástegui hosted this session where experts presented important research on the health status of critical ecosystems and the impacts of climate change in the Gulf of California. The discussion was complemented by a dialogue touching on the importance of open-access data to improve conservation and resource management.

Building Regional Pathways for Port Decarbonization and Just Transition

The IOA’s Elizabeth Mosqueda was invited to participate in the forum **“Coal Ports and a Just Energy Transition in Colombia”** organized by AIDA, Centro para la Justicia Marina and Clínica Jurídica of the Universidad del Magdalena on April 24, 2026, in Santa Marta, Colombia. Elizabeth discussed Mexico’s experience with port decarbonization through the five pillars of its National Port Decarbonization Strategy. Aside from emphasizing the need to integrate efforts into national climate policy, Elizabeth highlighted aspects like institutionalizing decision-making, improving interministerial coordination, strengthening data transparency, and ensuring a socially just transition as necessary steps to ensure that maritime decarbonization becomes part of the country’s strategic competitiveness plan.

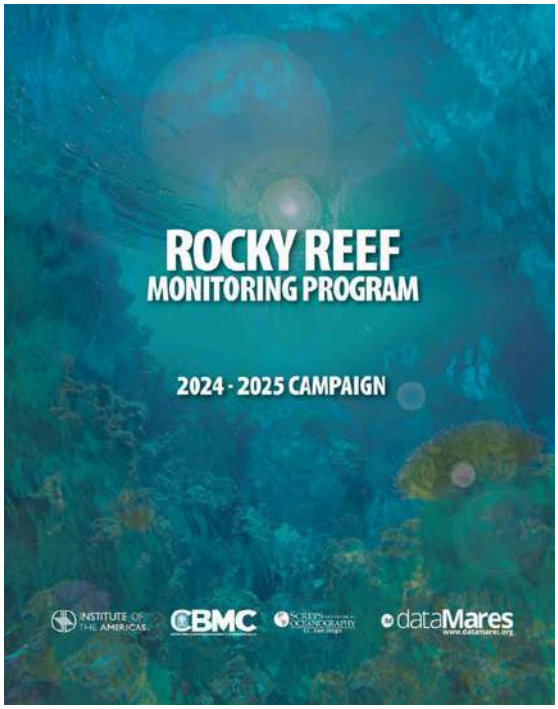
PUBLICATIONS

High-capacity nations can unlock momentum for quality marine protection

Fully protected marine areas deliver the greatest benefits for ocean life, yet they still cover only a small share of the sea and recent progress has slowed. This study shows that important opportunities already exist to strengthen protection in places with the capacity to act, especially in coastal regions and overseas territories. The findings offer a practical and encouraging path to protect more of the ocean and move closer to global conservation goals. To read this open-access publication click here.

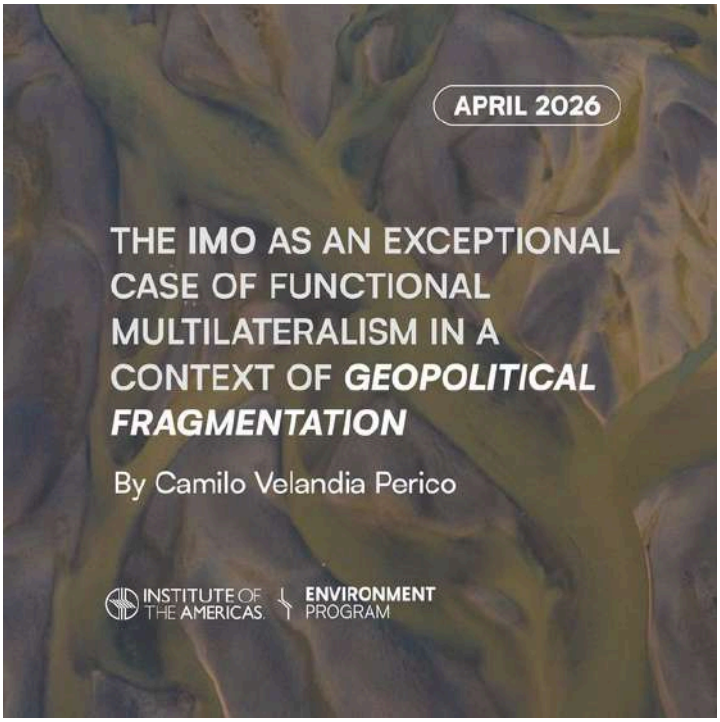
Rocky Reef Monitoring Program, 2024-2025 Campaign

Over 27 years of monitoring, this recently published study shows that rocky reefs in the Gulf of California, Mexico, are undergoing changes linked to rising ocean temperatures and the loss of key habitats. While some regions continue to display healthy conditions, others remain degraded; warming is reducing fish diversity and abundance, and marine heat events are becoming more common. A particularly important result is the decline of Sargassum forests, which provide shelter and nursery grounds for species that sustain local fisheries. Overall, the findings show that climate change is reshaping these ecosystems in ways that demand urgent attention and stronger conservation responses.



The IMO as an Exceptional Case of Functional Multilateralism in a Context of Geopolitical Fragmentation

This analysis written by IOA's Non-Resident Fellow Camilo Velandia Perico describes the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as a unique organization within today's multilateral system. Its institutional design allows technical decisions to translate into global operational effects even amid growing geopolitical fragmentation. Unlike other forums, the IMO operates based on the principle of non-discrimination, preventing States from gaining advantages by not formally adhering to standards, pushing the industry toward regulatory convergence. In a time where climate politics and geopolitical tensions are increasingly influencing maritime discussions, Camilo argues that real influence is exercised through active participation in consensus-building, making the IMO a strategic space for countries to anticipate changes and protect commercial interests. **Read the report in English and Spanish here**.



COMING UP

Webinar: Metas de Descarbonización Basadas en Ciencia para el Transporte Marítimo y Puertos

We continue to strengthen our collaboration with CAMEINTRAM and WWF Mexico and are honored to support CAMEINTRAM's leadership as they host the latest webinar on emission reduction opportunities for the maritime sector. Science Based Targets specialist Ligia Ramos will lead this discussion on May 5th at 10:00 am CST, so make sure to register and join the conversation.

Maritime Transport and Whales: Building Blue Corridors in the Eastern Pacific

The Institute of the Americas wishes World Wildlife Fund Mexico, CMSF and the University of Colima great success in their upcoming regional workshop “Maritime Transport and Whales: Building Blue Corridors in the Eastern Pacific,” to be held on May 19–20, 2026, in Manzanillo. While we are unable to attend, our team warmly extends our best wishes for a productive gathering and looks forward to learning about the workshop’s findings. We are confident new opportunities for our collaboration to grow will be identified.

About the Environment Program

The Institute of the Americas’ Environment Program strives to catalyze climate leadership amongst the private sector and local/regional governments in the Americas, to promote sustainable growth, tackle climate change and minimize environmental impacts in the region with the goal of protecting its rich marine and land-based natural capital.

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