



National Marine Sanctuary Foundation  
2008 Lifetime Achievement Award  
Jean-Michel Cousteau

An impassioned diplomat for the environment, Jean-Michel Cousteau's pioneering ideas in conservation have led to a lifetime of leadership as a steward and educator. Literally thrown in to his ocean legacy when his father, the famed Jacques Cousteau, threw him overboard at age 7, he proudly built upon his family's curiosity and compassion for ocean life around the globe. Frustrated by the environmental limitations on underwater ocean research, Jean-Michel forged a new academic discipline in marine architecture. Graduating from the Paris School of Architecture, his contributions to sustainable architecture were making waves in the 1960's, but the sea called him back, as he orchestrated the logistics for the award-winning film series, *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau*, when his father's famous vessel, *The Calypso*, was forced to sail "the long way" around Africa to Madagascar following the closure of the Suez Canal. Now an Emmy and Peabody Award winner, Jean-Michel has produced and directed more than 75 films, produced television series, and IMAX films documenting the diversity and fragility of ocean creatures, and the impacts of the global community on the ocean.

For more than 30 years, Jean-Michel and his team have conducted a hands-on ocean stewardship program dedicated to educating communities on responsible and sustainable practices, operating in more than seven countries. Armed with an archive of documentary footage, Jean-Michel has begun to revisit sites of previous expeditions to highlight the changes in these areas, and the urgent need to address human impacts on aquatic habitats.

Surely, one of Jean-Michel's most lasting impacts will be the influence his film "Voyage to Kure," had in the designation of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands as a marine national monument. In 2006, Jean-Michel was invited to the White House to screen his film for the President and First Lady, and impressed upon them the beauty of this area and threats from human activity, inspiring President George W. Bush to establish the largest environmentally protected area in the world.