



ATLANTIS, THE PALM ANNOUNCES \$120,000 OF FUNDING TO SUPPORT NINE UAE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS FOR 2022-23

Project partners driving the protection of oceans were strategically selected to support Atlantis Atlas Project's conservation focus and make a local environmental impact

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (30th August 2022) – Atlantis, The Palm today announces a selection of nine local conservation and sustainability projects set to receive funding from the 1 USD contribution initiative the resort launched in June 2021. Over the past 12 months, for every marine animal experience participated in by a guest, Atlantis, The Palm has collected \$1 (USD), which has resulted in a \$120,000 (USD) investment fund for the project, which aims to support UAE-based conservation and sustainability projects to help protect the ocean and our environment.

Over the past two months, UAE-based organisations were invited to apply for funding, after which proposals were solicited and assessed against their contributions to scientific advancement, conservation and sustainability. Atlantis Atlas Project currently focuses on four key groups of wildlife; **sharks, rays, dolphins, and corals**, and two key threats to the ocean; **unsustainable seafood and plastic pollution**. With this in mind, projects were selected based on their support of these conservation goals.

The first project the funding will support is UAE's leading social enterprise **Goumbook** on their 'Save The Butts' campaign. This initiative sees the collection of cigarette butts littering beaches and public areas and uses circular economy principles to recycle the waste to create valuable material from it. This campaign will also actively involve Atlantis Dubai's colleague base through volunteer litter picking and collecting waste within the destination that Goumbook and their partners can recycle.

The initiative will also provide a year of funding for UAE-based **Seafood Souq**, which will support the development of a digital platform to make seafood trade more efficient, sustainable, transparent and traceable. This will involve developing a QR code for diners – to be piloted on Michelin-starred Ossiano's menu – enabling diners to find out exactly where the seafood on their plates was sourced from.

A further year of funding has been initiated with the **Zayed University** and lead UAE-based researcher, Dr Ada Natoli, on the Dubai Dolphin Survey, which supports boat-based research of local dolphin populations. Last year, this project saw a total of 60 boat surveys spanning a distance of 5,444km along



the UAE coastline and more than 270 man-hours, resulting in 11,043 images taken, with dolphins spotted 18 times. From 2022, this project will expand to survey new areas as well as introduce acoustic monitoring.

A further year of funding has also been initiated with the **United Arab Emirates University** to support their research into the local shark and ray population and their study of Critically Endangered species in local waters. Actively involving the Atlantis aquarists and veterinary teams, this additional year of funding will amplify efforts and investigate evolutionary relationships, helping inform fisheries management and conservation strategies in the UAE.

A debut year of funding will go to the **AZA SAFE Sharks & Rays** working group, whose programme's goal is to enable evidence-based support for conservation action globally. Sharks are a key conservation focus for Atlantis Atlas Project and this project draws on relevant zoos and aquarium expertise to help save species in the wild.

Atlantis' very own dive teams will assist **Freestyle Divers** as they plunge underwater to place artificial reefs into the shallow coastal region of Fujairah. This will support the rehabilitation of reef ecosystems in the area, protecting population levels and the biodiversity of natural marine life. Funding will also be provided to **New York University Abu Dhabi** to support their investigations into the impact of climate change on coral reef ecosystems in the Gulf.

Atlantis Atlas Project will also continue to support the position of Global Program Officer for the **IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group**, led by UAE-based Dr Rima Jabado. This important specialist group is the leading authority on the status of sharks, rays, and chimaeras globally and has recently finished assessing the status of all known species – a pivotal development in the field and for these species.

Kelly Timmins, Director Conservation, Education & CSR of Atlantis Dubai, commented: *“We are excited to work with existing and new partners for this years round of funding, in order to protect species and their habitats. As an organisation accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), we are dedicated to supporting partners who are actively working in the field and local community to make a difference. We are proud to say, that every project actively involves our colleagues at Atlantis Dubai; whether it be our chefs and sourcing team working on sustainable seafood, or our divers and aquarists restoring coral reefs,*



it is really a collaborative approach to conservation and sustainability. As our projects get underway, there are also opportunities for our guests and UAE Residents to get involved and learn more; such as visiting our Fish Hospital to see our coral project in action, or joining the UAE Dolphin Project Initiative as a citizen scientist. We look forward to embarking on these projects and seeing the results truly make a difference.”

Tim Kelly, Managing Director & Executive Vice President of Atlantis Dubai, commented: *“We are all extremely proud to announce the first group of projects supported by our 1 USD contribution fund. The nine projects we have chosen demonstrate significant expertise, ingenuity and innovation in their work to protect our environment and the ocean while sharing our conservation goals – and the need to accelerate progress towards them. Driving conservation and sustainability initiatives outside of the resort as well as transforming operations inside the resort are both critical to Atlantis Atlas Project’s long-term strategy – and through this, our collective aim is to make positive, measurable impacts on our planet and its people.”*

To learn more about Atlantis Atlas Project and the full list of 1 USD contribution supported projects, please visit: <https://www.atlantis.com/dubai/sustainability/atlantis-atlas-project/one-usd-projects>

***ENDS**

NOTES TO EDITORS

The 2022-23 partners and their projects supported by Atlantis Atlas Project’s 1USD contribution fund are:

1. Seafood Souq

Led by Sophie Hunter-James, this project will support Seafood Souq's 'SFS Trace' technology in the development of a sustainability dashboard to support responsible seafood procurement making it more transparent and traceable – providing local businesses with clear metrics to measure the sustainable seafood choices that they offer to consumers. Sustainable seafood is a key threat impacting the oceans and supporting Seafood Souq to further develop this platform will be a beneficial tool for the industry – and involve Atlantis, The Palm’s culinary and sourcing teams in driving this forward.

2. Goumbook

Led by Tatiana Antonelli, Goumbook’s 'Save the Butts – Waste to Value' local environmental campaign aims to reduce single-use plastic pollution in our oceans and adopts a circular economy approach by recycling cigarette butt waste to create valuable manufacturing material. Plastic pollution is a key threat impacting conservation, and this campaign actively involves Atlantis Dubai’s colleague base through volunteer litter picking and collecting waste within the destination that Goumbook and their partners can recycle.



3. Freestyle Divers

Led by Darryl Owen and James Campbell, this project works to place coral nurseries and artificial reefs into the shallow coastal region of Fujairah, which rehabilitates the reef ecosystems in the area, supporting population levels and natural marine biodiversity in addition to coastal protection. Coral reef ecosystems are a key conservation focus for Atlantis Atlas Project and the resorts professional dive team will assist Freestyle Divers in the installation of these reefs.

4. Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE)

Led by Hap Fatzinger, the AZA SAFE Sharks & Rays programme's goal is to enable evidence-based support for conservation action. This will create opportunities for partners to provide direct, impactful, and collaborative support for the conservation of sharks and rays, as well as clear communication about the need to protect them. Sharks are a key conservation focus for Atlantis Atlas Project and this project draws on relevant zoos and aquarium expertise to help save species in the wild.

5. International Union for Conservation of Nature, Species Survival Commission Shark Specialist Group

Led by UAE-based Dr Rima Jabado, Atlantis Atlas Project will support the position of the Global Program Officer for the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group. This important role includes organizing online workshops, data entry into the IUCN Species Information Service to complete Red List of Threatened Species assessments, researching and preparing grant applications for funding the development and implementation of conservation strategies for shark, ray and chimaera species, and assisting in the production of peer-reviewed scientific papers. Sharks are a key conservation focus for Atlantis Atlas Project and this specialist group is the leading authority on the status of sharks, rays, and chimaeras globally. The group recently finished assessing the status of all known species.

6. New York University Abu Dhabi

This project will be led by NYUAD's Dr John Burt to explore how environmental pollution impacts coral bleaching. These insights help conservationists to plan strategically for bleaching events, to mitigate their impacts and protect wild corals. Corals are a key conservation focus for Atlantis Atlas Project, and Atlantis, The Palm will continue to increase its efforts to breed them in-house.

7. Zayed University & UAE Dolphin Project Initiative

Led by Dr Ada Natoli of Zayed University, and founder and director of the UAE Dolphin Project Initiative, Atlantis Dubai has been a key partner of the Dubai Dolphin Survey since 2021 – a project which aims to gather scientific baseline information about the local dolphin population off the coast of Dubai through boat surveys. This year's project will expand to include surveying of new areas as well as the introduction of acoustic monitoring. Dolphins are a key conservation focus for Atlantis Atlas Project and this study based in the UAE involves volunteers from the local community as well as Atlantis' employees.

8. United Arab Emirates University

Led by UAEU's Dr Aaron Henderson, this project will study the evolutionary relationships of sharks and rays in the United Arab Emirates. The results will provide fishery management authorities with a foundation for developing meaningful, species-specific conservation strategies. Sharks and rays are a key conservation focus for Atlantis Atlas Project as the resort is home to 10 shark and eight ray species.

9. Global Diving Research SL

Led by Dr Andreas Fahlman, this project analyses lung function (spirometry) in Indo-pacific bottlenose dolphins to expand current knowledge in this area. Dolphins are a key conservation focus for Atlantis Atlas Project and this



valuable data can be applied in wild populations' health assessments, rehabilitation and managed care populations' evaluations as well as respiratory disease follow-up.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Carole Cassidy

Manager, Public Relations

Mobile: (+971) 551100153

Email: carole.cassidy@atlantisdubai.com

For further information about Atlantis, please call +971 4 426 1000, or visit www.atlantis.com/dubai. Both low and high-resolution colour photography of Atlantis is available at www.kerznercommunications.com/atlantis/the-palm/

Follow Atlantis, The Palm on Social Media

Facebook: @AtlantisThePalm

Twitter: @Atlantis

For Resort: @AtlantisthePalm #AWorldAway

For Atlantis Aquaventure: @aquaventuredubai #DifferentInWater

For F&B: @OssianoDubai @BreadStreetKitchenDubai @NobuDubai @SeafireSteakhouse

@RondaLocatelliDubai @HakkasanDxb @WavehouseDubai @Whiterestaurantdubai

#ServingTheExtraordinary

About Atlantis Atlas Project

Atlantis Atlas Project is Atlantis Dubai's commitment to doing business in ways that are good for both people and the planet, by focusing on Responsible Operations, Conservation & Animal Welfare, Education & Awareness, and Corporate Social Responsibility. Atlantis Atlas Project endeavours to be a leader in responsible tourism, ensuring that Atlantis Dubai stands above the rest, whilst providing guest experiences that are more extraordinary than ever. The destination provides immersive experiences and opportunities for guests to learn about the local environment both in and outside of the resort. From inspiring young explorers and families to learn about marine conservation through educational programmes to offering 100+ locally and responsibly sourced dishes across restaurants and cafes around the resort, guests are actively encouraged to participate in Atlantis Atlas Project. Atlantis Dubai is also dedicated to supporting the local community and donates 1 USD from every marine animal experience to projects which make measured impacts on conservation, education and society. Atlantis Dubai has been awarded EarthCheck Silver Certification for the past two years, recognising its contributions to social and environmental sustainability and accreditation from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the internationally-recognised gold standard for animal welfare and care.

About Atlantis, The Palm, Dubai

Located at the centre of the crescent of The Palm in Dubai, Atlantis, The Palm is the first entertainment resort destination in the region. Opened in September 2008, the unique ocean-themed resort features a variety of marine and entertainment attractions and 22 hectares of waterpark amusement at Atlantis Aquaventure, all within a 46-hectare site. It is home to one of the biggest waterparks in the world and one of the largest open-air marine habitats, with more than 65,000 marine animals in lagoons and displays including The Lost Chambers Aquarium, a maze of underwater corridors and passageways providing a journey through ancient Atlantis. Aquaventure Waterpark features 23.5 million litres of fresh water used to power 105 thrilling waterslides and attractions, including several world record-breaking slides, two river rides featuring tidal waves and pools, and water rapids and white-water chargers. Dolphin Bay, the unparalleled dolphin conservation and education habitat, and Sea Lion Point were created to provide guests with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn more about some of nature's most friendly



mammals. The resort boasts an impressive collection of luxury boutiques and shops as well as extensive meeting and convention facilities. Atlantis, The Palm is also known as the culinary destination in the region where guests can take their pick from a collection of 35 world-renowned restaurants including Bread Street Kitchen & Bar, Hakkasan, Nobu, Seafire Steakhouse & Bar and the award-winning underwater restaurant, Ossiano. Atlantis is also home to a buzzing nightlife scene with entertainment destination Wavehouse offering something for everyone, while WHITE Beach is the perfect place to unwind with a drink as the sun slips into the Arabian Sea.