

Sea Shepherd Legal Partners with the Palau National Marine Sanctuary and the Palau Bar Association to Secure Palau's National Heritage

[November 22, 2016 admin](#)

Last week, Sea Shepherd Legal, in partnership with the Palau National Marine Sanctuary Office and the Palau Bar Association, put on a workshop series designed to provide legal tools, practices and strategies for combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in Palau's National Marine Sanctuary. This critical collaboration was inspired by a moving speech given by Honorable President Remengesau during the 2015 Paris Climate Summit.

As world leaders have recognized, Palau's establishment of a marine sanctuary nearly 1,000 times the size of its total land mass is nothing short of heroic. Palau's additional commitment to protecting the sanctuary through strong enforcement measures is similarly extraordinary.

Ensuring the successful enforcement of Palau's Sanctuary is crucial, not only to Palau's waters, but also to the health of the Western Pacific as a whole. As with all of the world's oceans, the Western Pacific is threatened by overfishing, pollution, warming and acidification. Studies have proven that species allowed to recover within such protected areas demonstrate larger body size and higher reproductive rates, leading to greater resilience and faster recovery – a benefit which extends to adjacent unprotected areas beyond the edges of the reserves. However, only when appropriately enforced can marine protected areas serve to combat the deleterious effect of large scale environmental impacts on ocean ecosystems.

There were over 70 participants who attended this first very successful workshop in which Sea Shepherd Legal comprehensively covered the key provisions of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary Act, and how those provisions can be appropriately implemented in light of various international treaties and other regimes. The attendees included lawyers, judges, lawmakers and law enforcement personnel. The workshop is the first in a series and will continue in early 2017, with a focus on the practical aspects of implementation. The workshop series is envisioned to be a long-term collaboration, during which Sea Shepherd Legal will also provide a corresponding Legal Reference Guide for use by the judiciary, prosecutors, enforcement officers and others.

“The opportunity to gather all those involved in the protection of our marine resources is vital to the understanding of the new PNMS law is a very important component to the successful protection of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary.” stated Keobel Sakuma, Executive Director of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary. “The extensive training that the attendees received during the three day workshop will allow them to utilize the tools provided by the PNMS Act and other international treaties to best protect our waters from illegal fishing and other illegal activity in our EEZ.”

The group is now planning the second part of the workshop to be held in the coming months.

About Sea Shepherd Legal:

As a public interest, nonprofit environmental law firm focused on the protection of marine wildlife and habitats, Sea Shepherd Legal works to enforce, strengthen, and develop protective laws, treaties, policies and practices worldwide. Sea Shepherd Legal is involved in a range of activities, from pushing for greater protections for individual marine species to more broadly providing comprehensive briefing to assist governments in responding to Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and other threats to marine ecosystems. www.seashepherdlegal.org