MERCURY

Marine Ecosystem Conservation and Biodiversity Protection

11 – 15 January 2027
London (UK)



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Marine Ecosystem Conservation and Biodiversity Protection

Ref: 15547_314348 **Date:** 11 – 15 January 2027 **Location:** London (UK) **Fees:** 5900 Euro

Marine ecosystem conservation and biodiversity protection is the work of keeping coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves and fish stocks healthy while coasts are used for fishing, tourism, ports and industry. This 1-week course is for environmental, conservation and coastal planning staff who manage or advise on marine sites, and you leave with a Marine Site Conservation Plan. This marine ecosystem conservation course is delivered by Mercury Training Center.

About This Course

Coastal habitats keep shrinking while fishing, building and pollution pressures grow, and plans often stop at a map of protected zones. You should already work on environmental assessment, coastal planning or conservation projects. You practice with habitat data, zoning exercises and monitoring designs, then apply them to a site you know.

Who It Is For

- Environmental staff who assess and report on the condition of coastal and marine habitats.
- Conservation teams who design, manage or monitor marine protected areas.
- Coastal planners who balance development, fisheries and tourism against habitat protection.
- Fisheries and aquaculture staff who set rules on catch, bycatch and farm siting.
- Researchers and NGO staff who run restoration, citizen science or community projects.

This course is not for ship and offshore operators who need to manage pollution from vessels and platforms, who suit a shipping and offshore environmental compliance course, nor for laboratory scientists seeking species identification skills, who will get more from a specialist marine biology course.

Competencies You Will Build

- Habitat Threat Assessment: you rank the pressures on a marine site and say which to tackle first.
- Protected Area Zoning: you draw zones and use rules that protect key habitats and keep fair access.
- Marine Spatial Planning: you resolve competing uses of the same sea area with clear trade-offs.
- Ecosystem Monitoring Design: you set indicators and survey methods that show whether protection works.
- Habitat Restoration Planning: you choose restoration methods that suit the site and its causes of loss.
- Stakeholder Collaboration: you bring fishers, operators, agencies and communities into conservation decisions.

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What You Will Be Able to Do

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- From a site's habitat and use data, build a threat and risk ranking for its ecosystems.
- Given UNCLOS and Convention on Biological Diversity obligations, list the commitments that apply to your site.
- Using a marine spatial planning map, draft protected area zones and use rules.
- Given a pollution source survey, choose monitoring points and prevention measures for plastic, chemical and oil inputs.
- From a degraded seagrass, reef or mangrove area, select a restoration approach and success indicators.
- Using a stakeholder map, plan engagement and outreach that builds support for the site's rules.

Course Content

Day 1: Marine Ecosystems and Their Threats

- Ecosystem Services of Reefs, Seagrass, Mangroves and Open Water
- Threat Ranking for Pollution, Overfishing and Habitat Destruction
- UNCLOS and Convention on Biological Diversity Obligations for Coastal Managers
- Biodiversity Baselines and Species of Conservation Concern
- Climate Change Effects and Adaptation Options for Marine Habitats

Day 2: Pollution Pressures on Biodiversity

- Plastic, Chemical and Oil Pollution Sources Affecting Sensitive Habitats
- Water Quality and Pollution Monitoring Methods for Coastal Sites
- Prevention Technologies and Practices for Land-Based Discharges
- Risk Assessment of Pollution Incidents Near Protected Areas
- Regulatory Compliance Checks for Activities in Sensitive Zones

Day 3: Sustainable Use and Spatial Planning

- Marine Spatial Planning for Competing Sea Uses
- Sustainable Fisheries Rules, Closed Areas and Bycatch Reduction
- Aquaculture Siting and Practices That Limit Habitat Impact
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management for Development and Conservation
- Marine Protected Area Zoning and Use Rules

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Day 4: Restoration, Monitoring and Communities

- Seagrass, Coral and Mangrove Restoration Methods and Site Selection
- Restoration Case Histories: What Worked and Why
- Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators for Ecosystem Recovery
- Community-Based Conservation and Citizen Science Surveys
- Stakeholder Roles of Agencies, NGOs, Industry and Local Communities

Day 5: Conservation Planning Practice

- Exercise: Threat Ranking and Zoning for a Coastal Reef Site
- Exercise: Monitoring Design for a Restored Mangrove Area
- Exercise: Stakeholder Negotiation Over a New No-Take Zone
- Partnership Building, Communication and Public Outreach Plan
- Completing the Marine Site Conservation Plan for Your Own Site

Case Studies and Exercises

These are suggested activities.

- Case study: a coastal tourism development borders a coral reef; you decide which zones and use rules protect the reef while allowing visits.
- Case study: a fishing community faces falling catches and high bycatch; you propose closed areas and gear rules with the fishers.
- Exercise: a port expansion affects a seagrass bed; you plan offsets, restoration and monitoring.
- Exercise: an aquaculture farm seeks a new site near mangroves; you assess the habitat risk and set siting conditions.

What You Take Back

You return with the Marine Site Conservation Plan for a marine or coastal site you work on. In your first month back, use it to share the threat ranking with your team, propose the draft zoning to decision makers and start the first monitoring round.

- Site profile with habitats, species and threat ranking.
- Draft zoning map and use rules.
- Restoration options and monitoring indicators.
- Stakeholder engagement and outreach plan.

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Quick Answers FAQ

What should I know before marine ecosystem conservation training?

You should already work on environmental assessment, coastal planning, fisheries or conservation projects. A basic grasp of marine habitats helps, but no specialist biology training is needed.

How does marine ecosystem conservation differ from shipping pollution compliance training?

Shipping compliance training focuses on what vessels and offshore platforms must do to limit discharges. Marine ecosystem conservation looks at the habitats themselves: ranking threats, zoning protected areas, restoring damaged sites and monitoring recovery with the people who use the sea.

Do marine protected areas really protect biodiversity?

They help when zones match where key habitats are, rules are clear and enforced, and local users support them. Protected areas that exist only on paper, with no monitoring or agreement from fishers, show little recovery.

What do I take back from marine ecosystem conservation and biodiversity protection training?

You take back the Marine Site Conservation Plan: a site profile and threat ranking, draft zoning and use rules, restoration options with indicators and a stakeholder engagement plan, built for a site you work on.

For Your Manager

After the course, the team member can rank threats to marine habitats, draft protected area zoning, choose restoration methods and design monitoring that shows whether protection works. They return with a Marine Site Conservation Plan for a current site, first used to brief decision makers and start the next monitoring round.