

NOMINATING CASHES LEDGE AS A NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



JOIN CLF IN CALLING FOR SANCTUARY STATUS TO PROTECT THE CASHES LEDGE AREA, AN IRREPLACEABLE BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Located 90 miles off New England's coast lies the Cashes Ledge Area. This extraordinary undersea mountain range is one of the most unique ecological structures in U.S. ocean waters.

As the region's water temperatures rise faster than 97% of the global ocean, the still largely intact habitats and diversity of Cashes Ledge provide an incredible opportunity for biodiversity and climate stewardship in the Gulf of Maine. Giving sanctuary status to Cashes Ledge is vital to preserving this treasure for future generations.

National Marine Sanctuaries

- Through the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, the public can propose outstanding places in U.S. ocean waters to NOAA for consideration as a national marine sanctuary.
- CLF together with a coalition of supporters proposed the Cashes Ledge Area. After evaluating the proposed area's national significance, in January 2025, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries added Cashes Ledge to the list of areas to be considered for a National Marine Sanctuary designation
- The designation of a National Marine Sanctuary is a multi-step public process. It provides multiple opportunities for engagement at each phase to ensure community-based decision-making and collaboration.

Cashes Ledge

- The Cashes Ledge Area harbors a treasure trove of marine life living among its peaks and valleys – Cashes Ledge, Parker Ridge, Sigsbee Ridge, and Cashes and Ammen Basins.
- Cashes Ledge contains all of the seafloor types typical of the offshore Gulf of Maine, each supporting its own mix of species. This relatively small expanse of ocean supports a remarkable and rich diversity of habitats and marine life.
- On the top and flanks of Ammen Rock, the area's highest peak, lies the deepest and densest cold-water kelp forest on the eastern seaboard.
- The diverse habitats of Cashes Ledge, ranging from lush kelp to rocky outcroppings to deep muddy basins, provide refuge for an astounding diversity of marine life, from the Atlantic wolf-fish to the rare blue sponge to the unusual red cod.
- Designating the Cashes Ledge Area as a sanctuary would help preserve and protect its extraordinary and often vulnerable wildlife and habitats. Permanently protecting the area would also provide unparalleled scientific research and education opportunities and build climate resilience in a region that is among the fastest-warming in the world's ocean.

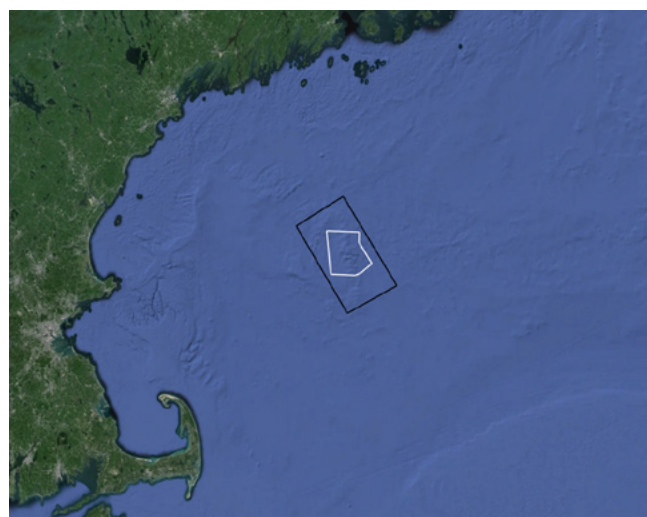
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PROTECTING CASHES LEDGE

Cashes Ledge Sanctuary Provides an Opportunity for Climate Stewardship

- Cashes Ledge is the perfect example of a highly productive marine ecosystem.
- With the Gulf of Maine overheating, preserving mostly untouched pockets of the ocean will be key in protecting marine life. The diverse aquatic life and habitats of Cashes Ledge will be invaluable in building climate resilience.
- As climate impacts in the Gulf of Maine increase, the scientific value and ecological importance of protecting Cashes Ledge as a living laboratory and oceanographic research platform are all the more vital.
- Cashes Ledge provides a glimpse of an undisturbed Gulf of Maine, prior to the influences of human activity. However, damaging human activities threaten this remarkable place.
- The proposed sanctuary will provide opportunities for research and to enhance understanding of climate change impacts in the Gulf of Maine, as well as numerous education and collaboration opportunities for the New England public.
- The current political landscape threatens seismic changes to the institutions and laws that govern ocean resource management. Yet today's biodiversity and climate crises present an opportunity to be more coordinated, more local, and to invest in the work necessary for a climate resilient future.



Proposed Sanctuary (black) and fully protected area (white)



Visit <https://www.clf.org/cashesledgestatement> to sign a statement of support.