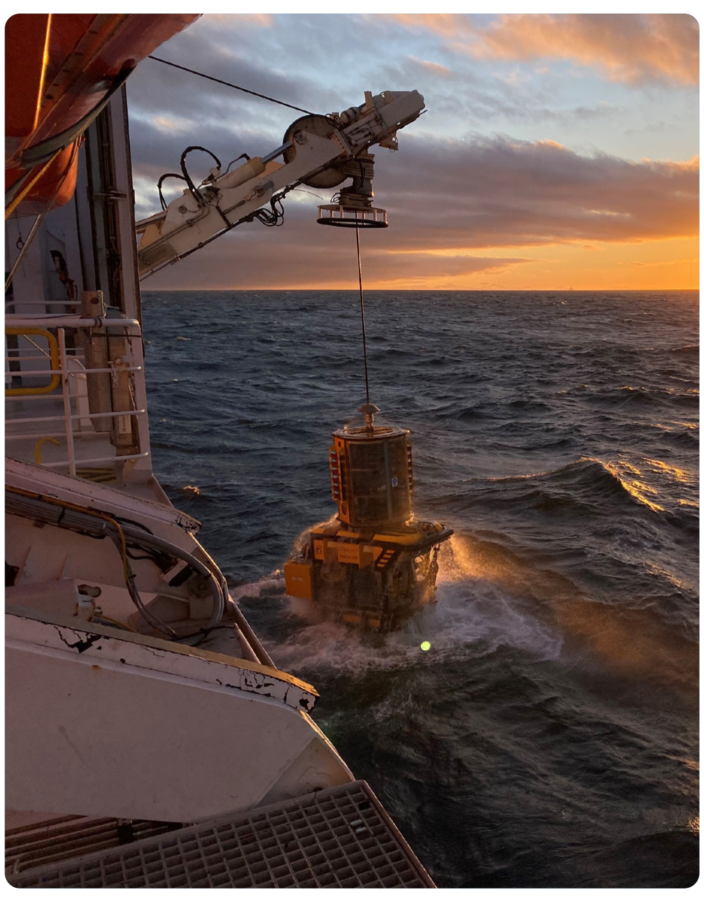
BORA
BLUE OCEAN RESEARCH ALLIANCE

EYES IN THE OCEAN

PROJECT SUMMARY
2025/2026 Q1

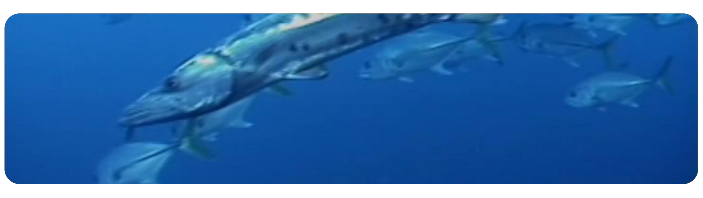


WHAT IS THE **EYES IN THE OCEAN** PROJECT?

The Eyes in the Ocean (EITO) Project is a collaborative initiative between the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) and Subsea7, reflecting our shared commitment to advancing deep-ocean science through long-term industry research partnership.

By combining NOC's scientific expertise with Subsea7 and Seaway7's global offshore operations, the project enables unprecedented access to remote deep-sea environments that would otherwise be difficult and costly to study. EITO utilises existing remotely operated vehicle (ROV) technology onboard operational vessels, and marine life observations are captured during routine offshore activities before being uploaded to the EITO digital database.

With access to a global fleet of over 120 ROVs, this approach unlocks significant additional scientific value from existing operations. The database enables direct feedback between offshore crews and NOC scientists, improving understanding of species distribution and abundance in the deep sea and supporting long-term research outcomes, and evidence-based conservation and future scientific publications. The data and imagery here highlight the project's achievements across 2025 and Q1 2026.

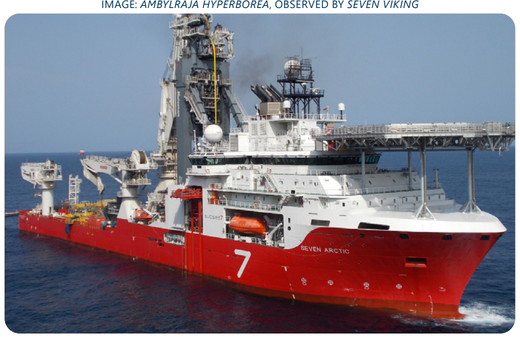


103 MARINE SPECIES OBSERVED
IMAGE: *SPHYRAENA BARRACUDA*, OBSERVED BY *SEVEN ARCTIC*

OBSERVATIONS COLLECTED ACROSS THE OCEAN
ORANGE MARKERS INDICATE AREAS WHERE IMAGES HAVE BEEN RECORDED FOR THE PROJECT

142 TOTAL OBSERVATIONS SUBMITTED
IMAGE: *DEEP SEA SQUID*, OBSERVED BY *SEVEN SISTERS*

IMAGES CAPTURED UP TO 2140m DEPTH
IMAGE: *AMBYLRAJA HYPERBOREA*, OBSERVED BY *SEVEN VIKING*



23 VESSELS PARTICIPATED

WINNERS

To celebrate the exceptional quality of submitted photography and footage, we have introduced a quarterly competition highlighting the most impactful imagery. Winners are recognised in three categories:

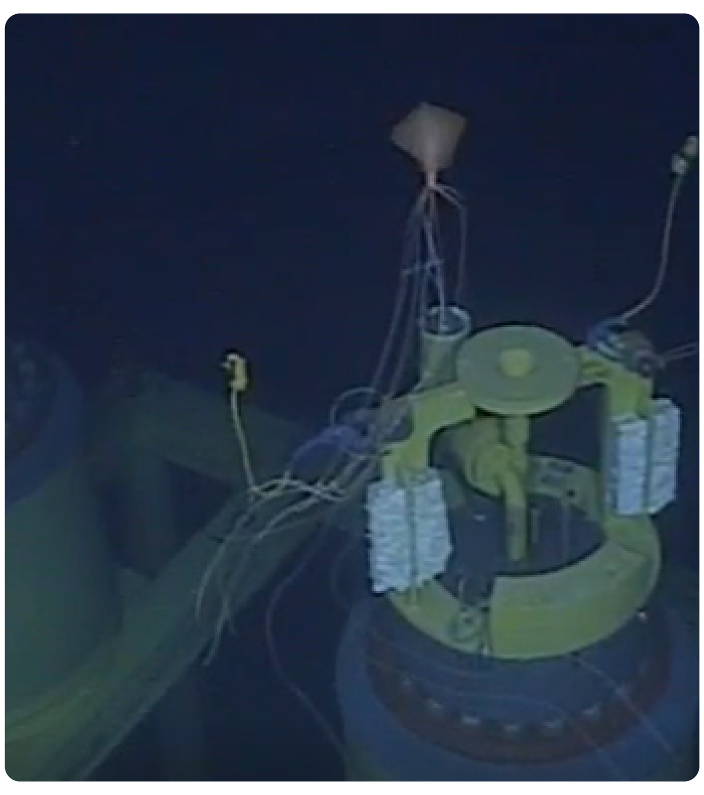
SLEEPER SHARK
SCIENTIFIC VALUE AWARD

LOCATION	Western Australia	**SPECIES**	*Somniosus Antarcticus*
DEPTH	911 m	**OBSERVED BY**	Seven Sisters

Sleeper sharks are a group of large, slow-moving deep-sea sharks. They are highly adapted to life in cold, dark, high-pressure environments and are typically found at depths of hundreds to thousands of metres.

Despite their appearance and name, sleeper sharks are highly effective predators and scavengers which remain poorly understood due to the remoteness of their habitat.

This sighting from waters off Western Australia is likely one of the first observations from the Indian Ocean and has helped to fill a major geographic gap. Observations like this reinforce the emerging view that deep-sea sleeper shark populations may be more continuous and less regionally isolated than previously assumed.



BIGFIN SQUID
EXPANDING OBSERVATIONAL CAPACITY AWARD

LOCATION	Gulf Of Mexico	**SPECIES**	*Magnapinna*
DEPTH	2,135 m	**OBSERVED BY**	Seven Arctic

Bigfin squid are among the most elusive and poorly understood deep-sea animals in the world. Characterised by their large fins and extremely long, delicate arms and tentacles - they inhabit deep, dark environments and are rarely observed. Much of what is known about them comes from a small number of video sightings.

Through the Eyes in the Ocean (EITO) Project, close to 20% of documented Bigfin squid sightings worldwide have been recorded, significantly expanding our scientific understanding. This particular observation provided a rare insight into their natural behaviour, captured without apparent disturbance from the ROV, helping to improve knowledge of how these animals move and interact with their environment.

GREY SEAL
ARTIFICIAL STRUCTURE INTERACTION AWARD

LOCATION	United Kingdom	**SPECIES**	*Halichoerus Grypus*
DEPTH	96 m	**OBSERVED BY**	Seven Atlantic

Grey seals are large, highly adaptable marine mammals commonly found around the UK coastline. They typically forage in coastal and shelf waters but are known to explore offshore environments. Artificial subsea structures, such as pipelines and installation frameworks, can create reef-like effects that attract fish and other organisms.

This grey seal was observed actively hunting around a subsea structure in the North Sea, demonstrating how artificial subsea structures can influence behaviour. Observations such as this provide valuable insight into how marine mammals interact with human-made structures, highlighting their potential unintentional role in shaping feeding patterns and ecosystem dynamics.

BORA BLUE OCEAN RESEARCH ALLIANCE®
IS AN INNOVATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN:

National Oceanography Centre
subsea 7
seaway 7