

**The First Press Conference of the Expedition
SOUL OF THE CASPIAN
project for the study and conservation of the Caspian seal**



Date and time: October 26, 2021, 12.30 (UTS+4)

Venue: VIP-hall of the International Airport named after B.M. Kustodiev

Event: start of the expedition «Soul of the Caspian»

Organiser Clean Seas Foundation

On October 26, 2021 at 12.30 (UTC+4), a press conference on the launch of Soul of the Caspian Ecological Project for the Study and Conservation of the Caspian Seal will be held at the VIP-hall of B.M. Kustodiev International Airport. The project has been developed by Clean Seas Foundation in cooperation with leading experts on marine mammals from A.N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution of the Russian Academy of Sciences with the support of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

The first expedition starts this autumn. On an amphibious aircraft La-8, the scientific and film crew will fly along the Russian coast of the Caspian Sea according pre-built routes. At the helm - Hero of Russia Valery Tokarev, the main pilot of all Clean Seas Foundation's air expeditions, cosmonaut, 1st class test pilot.

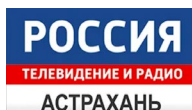
At the second stage, the expedition team and inspectors of the Astrakhanskiy State Nature Reserve, will go out to sea on speed boats to Maliy Zhemchuzhniy Island to install satellite transmitters on Caspian seals and take bio-samples. All these are just the first steps of the project «Soul of the Caspian». There is still a lot of work ahead to study the current status of the Caspian seal population and develop a strategy for Caspian seals conservation.

The Caspian seal is one of the smallest seals in the world. The seal is the only mammal in a salt lake, which is called the Caspian Sea, and also an indicator of its ecosystem. Over the past 100 years, the number of this marine mammal has decreased by 90 %. In 2008, the Caspian seal was red-listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (the IUCN) as Endangered species. And in 2020, the Caspian seal was inscribed into the Red Data Book of the Russian Federation.

Ecologists and biologists of all the Caspian states have long sounded the alarm about the decline in the number of the Caspian seal population and mass mortality recorded in the past few years in Dagestan.

Our ultimate goal is to help the Caspian seal escape from the pages of the Red Data Book and feel comfortable in the vastness of the Caspian Sea.

The main media partners:





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РОСМОРПОРТ



ЧИСТЫЕ МОРЯ
Международный экологический фонд



ФГБУ «Астраханский
государственный
заповедник»

The Expedition Tasks:

- Collection / updating of scientific data on the distribution, key habitats and population relationships of seals;
- Formation of a map of the Caspian seal haul-out sites;
- Identification of factors influencing the degradation of the Caspian seal population, including anthropogenic pollution in the habitats of seals;
- Exchange of data on studies carried out in other Caspian states.

The press conference will be attended by:

1. **Igor Y. Babushkin**, Governor of the Astrakhan Region;
2. **Dmitry N. Kobylkin**, Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Ecology, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (on-line);
3. **Irina Y. Makanova**, Director of the Department on State Policy and Regulation in the Sphere of Development of Protected Areas at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation (on-line);
4. **Igor A. Martynov**, Chairman of the Duma of the Astrakhan Region;
5. **Vasily V. Bogoslovsky**, General Director of Clean Seas Foundation;
6. **Nikolay N. Lyashko**, General Director of LUKOIL-Nizhnevolzhskneft;
7. **Alexander V. Kim**, Acting Director of the Rosmorport Astrakhan branch;
8. **Vitaly Vladimirovich Kovalev**, Founder and Director for Science of the NABU-Caucasus Non-State Environmental Center;
9. **Dmitry M. Glazov**, Leading Engineer of A. N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution of the RAS, Executive Director of Marine Mammals Council;
10. **Maria A. Solovieva**, Ph.D. on Biology, Researcher of A. N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution of the RAS;
11. **Valery I. Tokarev**, Hero of Russia, Chief Pilot of the Expedition, a test pilot, cosmonaut;
12. **Nikolay A. Tsymlyanskiy**, Director of the Astrakhanskiy State Nature Reserve;
13. **Anna Yu. Subbotina**, Deputy General Director of Clean Seas Foundation;
14. Representative of Rosprirodnadzor.

We are waiting for you at the press conference!

The project implementation is possible thanks to:

LUKOIL. Rosmorport, NABU-Caucasus, IEE RAS, Astrakhanskiy State Nature Biosphere Reserve

With the support of:

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, the Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources

Information Partners:

Russia 1 – Astrakhan (STRC “Lotos”), Kaspika Caspian Seals Conservation Agency, www.kaspika.org

The main media partners:



Kaspika
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Important! We are committed to complying with the measures against COVID-19, please be aware of the safety rules during the press conference. Entrance to the event is limited, so we ask journalists to get accredited in advance.

Accreditation for journalists: mob. +7 952-592-87-19 (Julia).

The main media partners:



Kaspika

Caspian Seals Conservation Agency