



Twelve years ago an ocean wonder was discovered off the coast of Vancouver that stunned and amazed marine biologists and conservationists – a reef made entirely of glass sponges. On October 15th and 16th, the public will have a once in a lifetime chance to explore the ancient [glass sponge reefs](#) on a submarine expedition hosted by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, BC Chapter ([CPAWS-BC](#)) in association with Nuytco Research Ltd.

To build awareness about protecting these world wonders, CPAWS-BC is holding a [contest](#) for a chance to win a seat aboard the submarine.

CPAWS' Oceans Director Sabine Jessen will lead high profile Canadians, journalists and scientists to the ocean floor to see the extraordinary glass sponges that reside in the depths of our coastal waters. One lucky member of the public will join these adventurers. The expedition look at the current state of the glass sponge reefs in the Strait of Georgia while raising awareness on their protection.

“We have globally significant reefs in one of Canada’s busiest waterways,” said Jessen, “We need to get down in the water, assess the health of the glass sponge reefs, and shed light on the urgent need for their protection.”

British Columbia is the only place in the world where reef building glass sponges have been found. Prior to their discovery, scientists only knew of glass sponge reefs from fossil records; they were thought to have gone extinct with the dinosaurs. Jessen notes, “They are precious beyond words. If we don’t protect these fragile reefs, they will be destroyed as quickly as we discovered them.”