ANNUAL REPORT 2019



OCEAN WISE OUR VISION IS A WORLD IN WHICH OCEANS ARE HEALTHY AND FLOURISHING.

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ABOUT US

Ocean Wise Conservation Association is on a mission to protect and restore the world's oceans. We empower action through ocean literacy education, world-recognized research, public engagement, and direct-action conservation. Ocean Wise was born out of the Vancouver Aquarium's 60-year commitment to marine ecosystems and is headquartered at the Vancouver Aquarium in Stanley Park.

MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR

The ocean is our planet's life support system. From generating half the oxygen we breathe, to feeding the world's populations, to mitigating the effects of climate change – humans rely on the oceans for our very survival. But our oceans are facing ecological collapse, and we only have a short time to turn things around.

It is with this unsettling truth in mind that I reflect on my two years as Board Chair of Ocean Wise Conservation Association, and almost a decade of involvement in the Vancouver Aquarium. I have huge pride in where we are today. It is, quite simply, a new era for our organization.

We are no longer an aquarium that runs conservation initiatives. We are a globallyfocused ocean conservation organization, dedicated to protecting our oceans through education, research, public engagement and direct-action conservation programs.

The start of this brave new journey began on World Oceans Day 2017 when we officially launched Ocean Wise Conservation Association, proudly built on the Vancouver Aquarium's 60 plus years of commitment to marine ecosystems.

The board led a global search to find Ocean Wise's new president and CEO, and in February 2019, Lasse Gustavsson stepped into the role, bringing decades of international leadership experience at world-leading conservation organizations including World Wildlife Fund, Oceana and Greenpeace.

Lasse has hit the ground running. In his first few months, he negotiated a new 35-year lease for Vancouver Aquarium giving us a bright future in Stanley Park. And in his first year, Ocean Wise released ground-breaking ocean plastics research, achieved a record-breaking year for shoreline cleanups, and saw more than 569,000 people around the world participate in our ocean literacy programs.

It is the start of an exciting new chapter for Ocean Wise, one where I believe we will realize our ambition of becoming the world's leading ocean conservation organization.

Sincerely,



50 PERCENT OF GLOBAL MARINE WILDLIFE HAS BEEN LOST IN THE LAST 40 YEARS. IT'S TIME TO TURN THE TIDE.

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT AND CEO

Firstly, a heartfelt thank you for the warm welcome I received upon moving to Vancouver and joining Ocean Wise one year ago.

My goal for Ocean Wise is to deliver conservation on a scale that matches the needs facing our oceans. I was attracted to Ocean Wise Conservation Association because of its bold vision – a world in which oceans are healthy and flourishing.

Having worked at many of the world's major conservation organizations, I can tell you that Ocean Wise is in a unique position to create real change given our comprehensive mandate that covers education, research, and touches hundreds of thousands of people each year through public engagement and citizen action. Above all, we are one of the only conservation organizations that works at the level of everyday people through our aquariums.

Ocean Wise is working hard, but we want to be doing more. The oceans – and all the plants and animals within them – need us to be doing more.

Thank you for your continued support of Ocean Wise Conservation Association. As a charitable non-profit, we rely on the generous support and partnership of individuals, families, businesses, and governments in our work to protect the oceans. It is only together that we can make a difference.

Sincerely,



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Lasse Gustavsson PRESIDENT AND CEO

OCEAN WISE WAS CREATED TO BRING ABOUT A SEA CHANGE.

OCEAN WISE CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION'S AREAS OF FOCUS **OCEAN WISE AQUARIUMS**

Since opening in 1956, the Vancouver Aquarium has connected more than 40 million people from around the world to our oceans and inspired them to join us as we take action to protect them. Located in Vancouver's iconic Stanley Park, the Vancouver Aquarium is home to over 70,000 incredible creatures. It's also Ocean Wise headquarters, where our scientists, educators and conservation experts do much of their work. Ocean Wise also manages Oceanogràfic, Europe's largest aquarium located in Valencia, Spain, and consults on aquarium projects around the world.

OCEAN WISE EDUCATION

In 2019, Ocean Wise Education had more than 560,000 program participants around the world. Our in-person, mobile and digital programs help students explore the role scientific investigations play in preserving marine life, and discover how our actions impact the world around us. We're proud to collaborate with audiences and educators of all backgrounds and sizes. And we're focused on removing financial and geographic barriers for participants. The more youth understand and appreciate our oceans, the more equipped and inspired they'll be to protect them.

OCEAN WISE RESEARCH

We have pursued science in support of ocean conservation for over 25 years. Our 40-plus researchers focus on ocean pollution (including microplastics), species under threat (including killer whales, beluga whales, Steller sea lions, and glass sponges), Arctic research, Howe Sound biodiversity, and species propagation. Our ongoing initiatives include the Killer Whale Adoption Program, Microfiber Partnership, PollutionTracker, and BC Cetacean Sightings Network. We conduct research in-the-field across Canada, including the Arctic.

CITIZEN ACTION AND FIELD PROJECTS

We partner with local organizations across Canada and around the globe to run citizen action programs including Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, the Ocean Wise Seafood program, Plastic Wise, and the WhaleReport Alert System. Ikaarvik is a program that empowers Arctic youth to combine Indigenous knowledge and Western science to support the conservation challenges of the Arctic. The Marine Mammal Rescue Centre - the only one of its kind in Canada - rescues more than 100 animals in peril each year, with the goal of rehabilitation and release.









BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ninu Gill

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Baxter

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PATRONS

We would like to extend a warm thank you to our Patrons for their significant and valued contributions to aquatic conservation. To be nominated as a Patron is the Aquarium's highest level of recognition.

Marilyn and Dr. Stewart Blusson, OC
Joanne and Peter Brown, OBC
Nicole Clouthier
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GOVERNORS' COUNCIL

Members of our Governors' Council are former Directors who continue to serve with passion, dedication and commitment. We extend our deepest gratitude for their contributions.

Dr. William S. Hoar, OCW.R. Hourston

Ainsley Jackson	Daniel Steiner	Isabelle Coté	Marian MacFarlane	Richard Self
Akira Horii	David Anderson	James Christakos	Mark C. Stevens	Rizwan Gehlen
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Daniel Bouillon	lan S. Davidson	Marian Coombs-Bucci	Richard Routledge	



2019 HIGHLIGHTS



Lasse Gustavsson joined Ocean Wise as president and CEO bringing extensive experience including leadership roles at Oceana, WWF and Greenpeace.

FEBRUARY



Ocean Bridge, our youth service and leadership program, kicked off its 2nd year with 40 new participants from across Canada.

APRIL



Ikaarvik program Arctic youth published a report to help researchers understand how to work closer with Arctic communities.

International Ocean Heroes Bootcamp brought together 300 youth from 20 countries.

JUNE



Ocean Wise's Dr. Lance Barrett-Lennard used drones to collect more than 2,200 aerial images of 100 killer whales as part of a five-year study to analyse the health of killer whales.



1,700 children received free admission to the Vancouver Aquarium on Family Day 2019.



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MARCH

We successfully released 1,400 Oregon spotted frog tadpoles – the most endangered amphibian in Canada.



MAY

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup's largest cleanup of 2019 took place in Edmonton with 945 participants.



At a press conference at the Vancouver Aquarium, Canada's Fisheries and Oceans Minister, Jonathan Wilkinson, spoke about Canada's commitment to ban single-use plastics by 2021



JULY

Ocean Wise's beluga whale researchers studied the impacts of underwater noise on beluga mother-calf pairs in the St. Lawrence River estuary.



AUGUST

Our research dive team continued biodiversity surveys of underwater ecosystems in the Arctic.



The award-winning AquaVan embarked on a month-long tour of northern BC which touched more than 3,900 youth.





Plastics Lab researchers released a ground-breaking report showing the role of home laundry in releasing plastic microfibers into the ocean.



Vancouver Aquarium was the most nominated attraction at the Vancouver Tourism Awards.



The YouthToSea leadership program launched to support high school students in ocean service projects and outreach.



Marine Mammal Rescue saved a California sea lion (nicknamed Archie) suffering from gruesome crossbow injuries.

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Over the course of 2019, the Vancouver Aquarium welcomed almost 1 million visitors. Or as we like to call them, future conservationists.

DECEMBER

SEPTEMBER





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Sobeys joined Ocean Wise Seafood program as a new national partner adding 250 more locations for Canadians to buy sustainable seafood.



OCTOBER

The inaugural Ocean Wise Gala raised over \$450,000 for initiatives to combat ocean plastic pollution.





NOVEMBER

Thanks to our new donor-funded "Octobus" thousands of school children will benefit from free transportation to ocean literacy programs at the Vancouver Aquarium each year.



Dr. Carlos Drews joined Ocean Wise as EVP Conservation bringing leadership experience from Jane Goodall Institute and WWF.



OUR STORIES BREAKING THROUGH THE BARRIERS TO OCEAN LITERACY

When Barbara Atkinson began volunteering at the Vancouver Aquarium in 1978, it was impossible to know the longterm impact she would have fostering young people's discovery of the ocean. Thanks to Barbara's unwavering determination, and help from many other generous donors, in 2019 we launched our new Octobus, a 55-seat school bus granting free transportation to ocean education programs at the Vancouver Aquarium. The new bus removes the transportation cost barrier that previously made ocean literacy programming inaccessible to many Vancouver-area schools. Any teacher can apply for free transportation on the Octobus and, so far, more than 4,000 students have benefited from the program.

"My particular passion is introducing the wonders of the aquatic world to those who have little contact with the ocean. Showing, touching, learning – all experiences needed before committing to love and conserve this most precious and threatened part of our world."

Barbara Atkinson, Volunteer & Donor



RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR GREAT CANADIAN SHORELINE CLEANUP

It was our best year ever for Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup. More than 83,000 people volunteered their time in over 3,000 cleanups nationwide. Founded in 1994 by staff at the Vancouver Aquarium, Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup has grown into a national program and a successful partnership between Ocean Wise Conservation Association and WWF-Canada.



PROVING MICROPLASTICS ARE A MAJOR PROBLEM

Ocean Wise Research Institute's Plastic Lab team, including Dr. Peter Ross and Dr. Anna Posacka, released a groundbreaking report quantifying the role of home laundry in releasing trillions of plastic microfibers from clothing into the ocean annually. Microplastics have even made their way to the Arctic where our researchers sadly found them in the intestines of beluga whales.



CONNECTING MORE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TO OCEAN CONSERVATION

Ocean Bridge is a year-long conservation and leadership program for 40 Canadian youth aged 18 to 30. Founded by Ocean Wise in 2018, participants deliver ocean service projects in their home communities and gather for two immersive expeditions. Ocean Bridge is accessible to youth from all geographies, education and income levels. Thanks to new funding from the Government of Canada, Ocean Bridge will grow four-fold in 2020.



GIVING BELUGAS A VOICE

Beluga whales in the Estuary of Saint Lawrence are endangered. Ocean Wise's Dr. Valeria Vergara is studying the potential impacts of underwater noise on beluga communication, particularly between mothers and their dependent calves. Her research, which was presented at the World Marine Mammal Conference in Barcelona, found that calves produce much weaker calls than adults and that underwater noise can dramatically reduce the distance that a newborn calf call can be heard.



PUTTING SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD ON EVERYONE'S PLATE

Overfishing is one of the biggest threats to our oceans. In 2019, we moved one step closer to our vision of healthy and flourishing oceans thanks to Ocean Wise Seafood's new national partnership with Sobeys – one of Canada's largest grocery chains. The new partnership enables even more Canadians to choose sustainable seafood at the grocery store. The Ocean Wise Seafood program began with a single Vancouver restaurant in 2005 and now boasts more than 785 partners and 3,000 locations.



WORKING FOR OUR WHALES

Concern is growing over the future of whales. Pollution, overfishing, boat traffic and climate change all pose threats to cetaceans and their fragile marine environment. Since the mid-1980s, Ocean Wise's Dr. Lance Barrett-Lennard has been working to save the whales. His team is now using drones to assess the health of killer whales. In addition, our WhaleReport Alert System continues to alert commercial ship masters to the presence of whales so they can avoid ship strikes.



ACTIVATING THE ARCTIC

The Vancouver Aquarium has been working with Arctic communities since the late 1960s. Today, the Ocean Wise administered Ikaarvik program empowers Arctic youth to lead research projects combining Indigenous Knowledge and Western science to address the Arctic's unique priorities. In 2019, Ikaarvik youth in Nunavut and the Yukon developed projects to restore salmon populations using traditional Indigenous practices



104 MORE REASONS TO LOVE OUR MARINE MAMMAL RESCUE CENTRE

Rescue, rehabilitate and release. That's the goal of the Ocean Wise Marine Mammal Rescue Centre, a hospital and rehabilitation centre for sick, injured or orphaned marine mammals. In 2019 the dedicated staff – and nearly 300 volunteers – saved the lives of 104 animals, including three sea lions who were freed of marine plastic and a rare tropical sea turtle (nicknamed Berni) who was discovered 'cold stunned' and far from home.



A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND GALA

Our first-ever Ocean Wise Gala, presented by RBC at the Vancouver Club in November 2019, was a huge success with \$459,000 raised to combat the growing ocean plastic pollution crisis. Silent and live auctions, musical performances, and a team of top Vancouver chefs brought their A-game to wow guests with a decadent sustainable seafood dinner.



RALLYING AN ENTIRE COMMUNITY AROUND OUR OCEAN

Ever since the Vancouver Aquarium opened in 1956 as Canada's first public aquarium, our community of volunteers and supporters have been our most valuable resource in our mission to inspire the global community to protect our oceans. In 2019, we had 1,451 active volunteers ranging in age from 10 to over 90. Our community of supporters spans the globe, following our animal rescue, research, conservation and aquarium stories with keen interest.



OCEAN WISE'S OPERATING FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

		2019 (in 000s)	2018 (in 000s)
	51% Admissions and Membership	\$21,692	\$21,798
Revenues	19% Retail Gross Margin	\$7,941	\$7,539
	7% Programs	\$2,985	\$1,120
	17% Grants and Donations	\$7,131	\$5,459
	6% Sundry Income	\$2,591	\$2,259
	Tota	al: \$42,340	\$38,175

	Total:	\$42,545	\$37,980	
Expenditures	10% Transfers to Capital and Reserve Fund	\$4,419	\$3,505	
	13% General Administration	\$5,324	\$5,032	
	19% Citizen Action & Field Projects, Research, Education	\$7,909	\$6,054	
	28% Animal Care and Habitat	\$11,986	\$11,462	
	11% Marketing and External Relations	\$4,696	\$4,551	
	11% Retail Operations	\$4,607	\$3,808	
	8% Admissions and Membership	\$3,604	\$3,568	
		2019 (in 000s)	2018 (in 000s)	

1. Dollars have been rounded to the nearest thousand.

2. For Capital Asset and Reserve Funds information, see the audited Financial Statements.

3. Certain 2018 amounts have been reclassified for comparative purposes.

4. For a complete set of the financial statements audited by KPMG LLP, please contact us at 604.659.3400.

2019 AT A GLANCE



3,192 LOCATIONS ACROSS CANADA SELLING **OCEAN WISE SEAFOOD** Increased locations by 50% from in 2018

YOUTH FROM **20 COUNTRIES**

participate Ocean Wise's international

OCEAN HEROES BOOTCAMP



163,505 KILOGRAMS OF LITTER

REMOVED FROM 3,937 KM OF CANADIAN SHORELINES, LAKES AND RIVERS

ALERTS SENT BY WHALEREPORT ALERT SYSTEM

to commercial shipmasters to raise awareness of cetaceans

****** 786 **Ocean Wise Seafood** PARTNERS ACROSS CANADA

ilinin 569,891 EDUCATION program participants 92% INCREASE FROM 2018

2019 REPORTED SIGHTINGS TO **BC CETACEAN** Sightings Network

Ocean Wise Conservation Association

P.O. Box 3232 Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 3X8 ocean.org

