



2020 Annual Report

From the President & Board Chair

What a year! Despite the challenges brought about by COVID-19, we have much to be proud of as an organization. But we would be remiss not to acknowledge that 2020 was the most financially challenging year we faced in our history.

With the Vancouver Aquarium’s ownership transferred to Hershend Enterprises, the future of both the aquarium and Ocean Wise is guaranteed. This process preserved an iconic Vancouver institution and our former colleagues at the aquarium can look forward to opening safely, after the pandemic has passed.

The board and leadership of Ocean Wise are excited to now put 100% focus on our core goal of accelerating our bold and ambitious 2030 strategy to make a global impact on ocean conservation – [The Decade to Turn the Tide](#). Not only will Ocean Wise continue as an independent non-profit ocean conservation organization with well-known programs including Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, Ocean Wise Seafood, Ocean Bridge, and many others – we will also scale and replicate our successful initiatives across Canada and around the world.

Hundreds of thousands of people of all ages, from 58 countries, participate in Ocean Wise programs every year. This number continues to grow rapidly as people from all walks of life join in turning the tide for our oceans. Thanks to the support of thousands of individual donors, government grants, corporate partners and philanthropic foundations, Ocean Wise has a diversity of funders working with us to drive deep change over the coming decade.

Now is the time to roll up our sleeves and get to work saving our oceans. And we need everyone to take action: you, your family, your neighbours, companies and governments. This is an ‘all-hands-on-deck’ time for humanity and we have no time to waste!

Thank you for your ongoing support of Ocean Wise. We are excited about the future and what we will accomplish together.



Lasse Gustavsson
President & CEO



Christian Baxter
Board of Directors, *Chair*

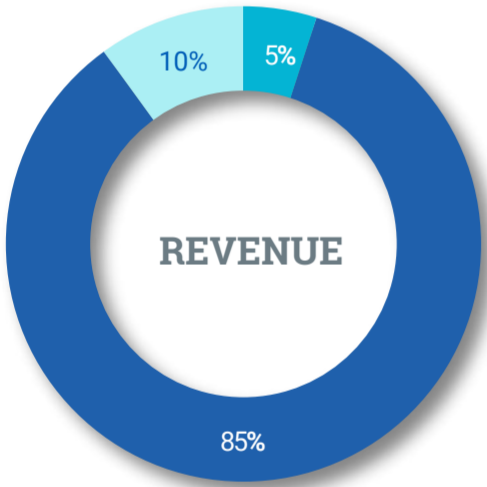


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Financial Highlights | Operating Funds

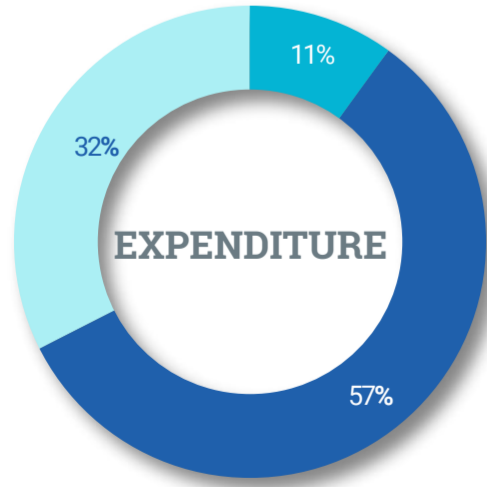
The COVID-19 outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization and had a significant financial, market and social dislocating impact. While the conservation operations were able to manage throughout 2020 albeit in a limited capacity, the aquarium operations were significantly impacted. With lack of revenue from aquarium operations, Ocean Wise responded by decreasing expenses and putting a call out to government and the public for assistance. While relief funds were received from multiple sources, and the aquarium opened during the summer months, there was continued negative cash flow. It was then that Ocean Wise decided to

close the facility to the public as of September 8, 2020. Given the length of the health restrictions, significant capital repairs required to maintain the facility and the limited relief funds currently available, aquarium operations future viability was uncertain. As a result, the Board made a decision to put the assets related to the aquarium facility up for sale in order to ensure the future viability of the aquarium. Due to the extraordinary circumstances during 2020, we will be presenting conservation activities through the operating fund and aquarium operations as discontinued.



85% Grants and Donations
5% Programs
10% Other income

2020
(in 000s)
\$9,404
\$490
\$1,120
Total: \$11,014



11% Marketing & External Relations
57% Conservation, Research & Education
32% General Administration (includes aquarium support)

2020
(in 000s)
\$1,595
\$8,526
\$4,773
Total: \$14,894



1. Dollars have been rounded to the nearest thousand.
2. For Capital Asset and Reserve Funds information, see the audited Financial Statements.
3. For a complete set of the financial statements audited by KPMG LLP, please contact us at 604.659.3400.

Financial Highlights | Discontinued Operations

As a result of the impact of the pandemic on aquarium operations, Ocean Wise adopted a formal plan to dispose of the business operations and related assets of the aquarium.

Accordingly, the operating results of the aquarium have been classified as discontinued operations for both current and prior fiscal years ending and the related assets are reported as assets held for sale.

	2020 (in 000s)	2019 (in 000s)
Revenues	\$26,460	\$38,133
Expenses	\$(24,730)	\$32,465
Impairment of assets held for sale	\$(10,472)	
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses from discontinued operations	\$(8,742)	\$5,668

Subsequent to year-end, Ocean Wise entered into an agreement to sell the aquarium and Marine Mammal Rescue operations and related assets. The transaction was completed on April 25, 2021.



OCEAN WISE'S TOP 10 ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2020

In a year full of unexpected challenges and surprises, Ocean Wise and its dedicated team of staff, volunteers and supporters found unique ways to adapt and rise to challenges of 2020. The following pages capture Ocean Wise's Top 10 achievements from the past year, in no particular order – proof that it will take more than a pandemic to overcome the passion and dedication so many people have for our oceans.



Online Learning steps up in a big way

The advent of a new school year forced everyone to scramble to adapt to a “new normal.” Ocean Wise helped ease the transition by successfully and creatively retooling its [Online Learning platform](#) to meet the needs of educators, students and parents. Through video courses, activities and virtual visits with ocean experts, we engaged a record 255,000 youth via our online platforms!



Ocean Bridge expands its reach

Ocean Wise’s Ocean Bridge youth service initiative, funded by the Government of Canada’s Canada Service Corps, expanded to include a new Direct Action program, providing 24 full-time, three-month placements for young professionals across Canada, both in-field and virtually, working with mentors from 20 national partners in ocean and freshwater research and conservation. In addition, Ocean Bridge’s classic program grew to support, connect and inspire 160 young Canadians aged 18-30 in communities from coast-to-coast-to-coast. In all, they contributed a whopping 45,258 hours of ocean service and engaged more than 34,224 Canadians through their efforts in 2020. [More.](#)

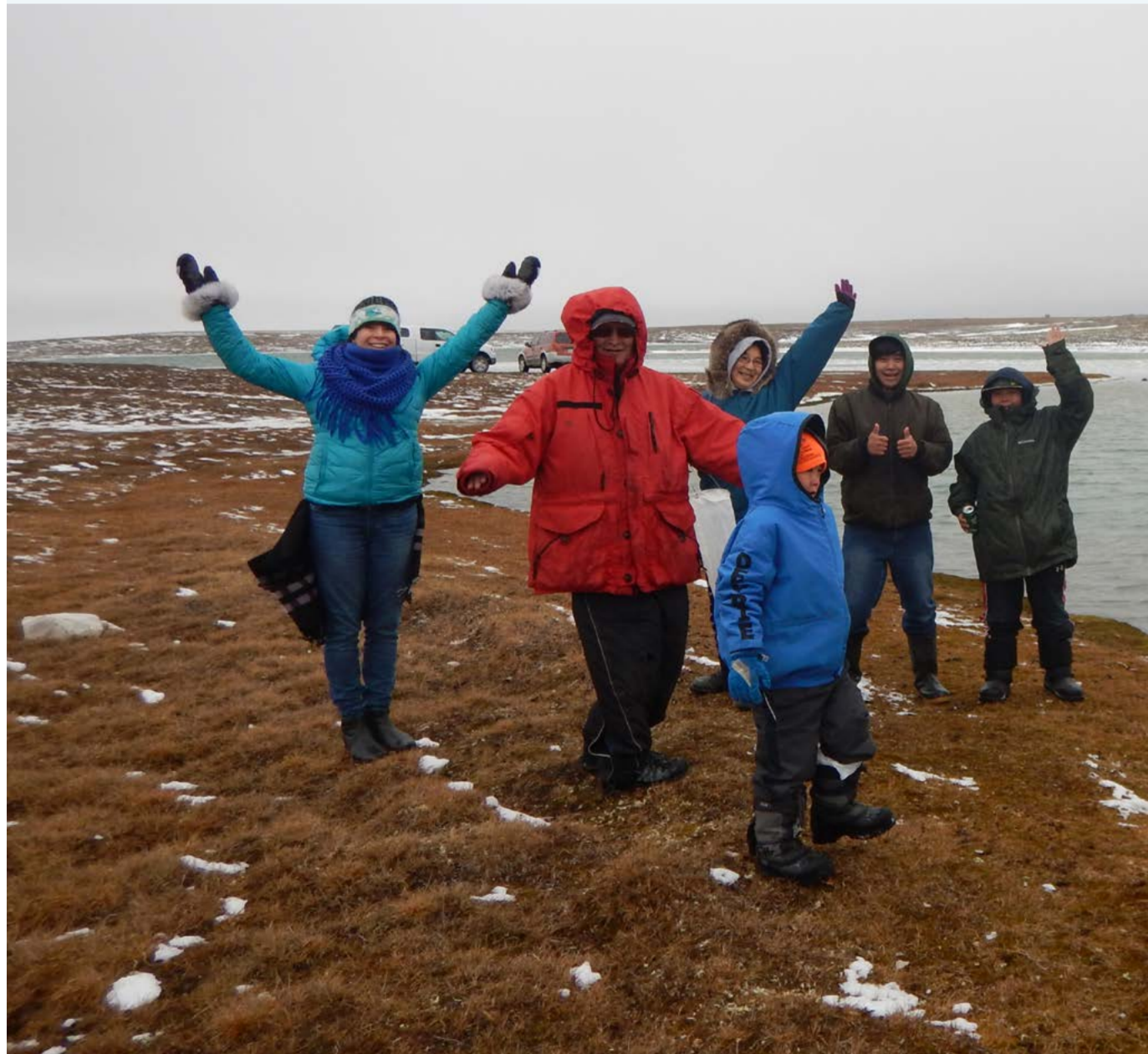
Galvanizing community support for the Vancouver Aquarium

As the true nature of the pandemic set in, the Vancouver Aquarium was graced with a truly incredible wave of community support. From individuals of all ages organizing their own [fundraisers](#), to [chefs cooking up a storm](#), to [donors stepping up](#) in a big way, our amazing community made it known through their actions and words just how important the Vancouver Aquarium is to the fabric of Canada’s ocean conservation landscape, now and well into the future.



Award-winning year for young Northern leaders

An important study co-authored by young leaders with the Ikaarvik: Barriers to Bridges initiative administered by Ocean Wise was published in the highly regarded Arctic Science scientific journal. It was also part of the reason Ikaarvik, which empowers Arctic youth to be bridges between research and their communities, was recognized as [2020's Outstanding Youth Action Organization](#) by the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication.



Joey steals the show

A new social media star was born in 2020 and his name is [Joey](#)! The rescued sea otter pup captured the hearts of Canadians and people around the globe, helping us all through tough times and raising much needed awareness and donations for Ocean Wise initiatives. Joey even got his own feature on Access Hollywood to cap off the year. Joey was one of 88 mammals rescued by the Marine Mammal Rescue team in 2020 – we just hope this brush with fame doesn't go to his head!

Masking up with the Vancouver Whitecaps

Ocean Wise teamed up with the [Vancouver Whitecaps](#) shortly after the pandemic hit to create locally produced masks in support of the Vancouver Aquarium. The community response was overwhelming: more than 100,000 masks sold in just over a week, along with countless messages of support and appreciation. And many agreed that not only do they keep you safe, but they look great too!





New generation of ocean protectors

Anyone needing a little moral boost in 2020 only needed to turn to Ocean Wise's brand new [Youth To Sea program](#): 102 youth participants aged 15-18 contributed more than 11,000 service hours and engaged 4,560 people across the lower mainland and Vancouver

Island. Among their accomplishments, Youth To Sea participants led 480 campers Through AquaCamps programming, participated in outdoor learning journeys and removed more than 1,300 pounds of garbage from British-Columbia shorelines through 15 cleanups. Among

the service projects created by these inspiring up-and-comers were a used toy drive, clothing swaps, recycling programs, podcasts and much more!

Ocean Wise Seafood program celebrates 15 years in style

Ocean Wise Seafood marked its 15th anniversary with a [cookbook of restorative recipes](#), cemented partnerships with the Toronto Zoo and the Calgary Co-op, among others, and saw its co-founder appointed to the Order of Canada “for establishing a world-renowned program to help businesses and customers identify and purchase sustainable seafood.”



Whale of a year

Ocean Wise continued to solidify its position as a leader in whale research in 2020. In November, the Government of Canada announced important investments to improve the [WhaleReport Alert System](#) – which is an innovative way to minimize the impact of boats on whales. This funding will help expand this program north to the waters surrounding Haida Gwaii, as well as to study the impacts of fisheries on the Resident Killer Whales’ declining food supply in the area.

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup influences major change

Canadians picked up around 41,905 kg of litter – the approximate weight of a full-grown sperm whale – from 1,491 km of shoreline through the [Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup](#) in 2020, a remarkable feat given the circumstances. More than 15,000 participants led over 900 cleanups all across the country, with results helping inform [Canada’s upcoming ban of single-use plastics](#) – a testament to the power of this initiative founded in 1994 that has blossomed into a national program in partnership with WWF-Canada.



The Decade To Turn The Tide

Our planet – our one, and only, home – is an ocean planet. But our oceans are struggling. Pollution, overfishing and climate change threaten our oceans, and thereby humanity itself. The good news is that our oceans are resilient. After banning commercial whaling, populations of humpback whales are rebounding. Once on the verge of extinction, sea otters are beginning to thrive along the west coast of Canada. If we give our oceans time to heal, they can continue to provide us what we need to live.

Ocean Wise is on a mission to ensure that our oceans are healthy and flourishing. We’re preventing plastic pollution from harming marine animals. We’re establishing the foundations for building kelp farms that form vibrant underwater forests teeming with life and develop a powerful solution to carbon emissions. We’re devising new ways to protect endangered whales from noise pollution. When we take the right actions, we can rebuild our oceans.

Saving our oceans can seem overwhelming. **At Ocean Wise, we make ocean conservation simple, awe-inspiring and fun.** We show people how they can eliminate unnecessary plastic, at home and at work. The Ocean Wise label at grocery stores and restaurants helps consumers make sustainable choices. And we teach young people to become ocean champions, giving them a platform to activate their ideas for a better world.

The next decade offers an extraordinary time for transformation. We can harness human ingenuity to build ocean-based business opportunities and innovative blue technologies. By bridging scientific and Indigenous knowledge, we can develop a better toolkit to mitigate and adapt to the changing climate. Most importantly, we can act upon the social will for progress to preserve our planet and secure our own well-being as a species.

Together, we can protect our oceans.
Our ten years starts now.

IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS, OCEAN WISE WILL ADDRESS
THREE CRITICAL CHALLENGES FACING
OUR OCEANS THROUGH SEVEN KEY INITIATIVES.





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