



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

- ARCTIC OCEAN
- ATLANTIC OCEAN
- HIGH SEAS



www.oceansnorth.org

Letter from the Executive Director

The last two years have been the most dynamic, unpredictable, and exciting period in the history of advancing marine conservation in Canada. Against the backdrop of the global pandemic and the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change, Canada made an historic commitment to nature in the 2021 federal budget, with nearly \$1 billion earmarked for protecting 25 per cent of Canada's oceans by 2025—a national goal that is not achievable without the areas where Oceans North works.

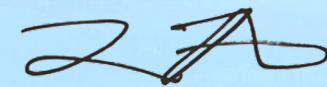
It's also been a time of great change organizationally. Since becoming a registered charity in 2020, Oceans North has experienced significant growth: As part of our response to COVID-19 travel restrictions, we invested heavily in our community-based staff and partners, with plans to expand our team further over the next year.

In July, Oceans North's founding board chair, Mary Simon, was installed as Canada's first Indigenous Governor General. Her Excellency stepped down as Chair of Oceans North and we are very pleased to announce that Hilu Tagoona will serve as our new Board Chair. Hilu is from the inland community of Baker Lake, Nunavut and brings a passion for elevating Indigenous voices as knowledge-keepers of their territories. She feels strongly that healthy land and waters are the force that sustains her people and culture, and that full participation in nature research and policy is the base of self-determination.

In November, Oceans North said goodbye to founding board member Scott Highleyman, who launched our work more than a decade ago. We'll miss Scott's vision and dedication to our work, but are equally enthusiastic to welcome Mr. John Lounds, former CEO of Nature Conservancy of Canada, as a new member of the Board.

We are also thrilled to share that our sibling organization, Oceans North Kalaallit Nunaat (ONKN), launched this fall, with the aim of building and disseminating knowledge about the marine environment and coastal areas in collaboration with Greenlanders. We look forward to working with our new colleagues in Greenland as they advance their vision for healthy oceans and coastal communities on their own terms.

As we look ahead to 2022, it is clear that our goal of realizing a healthy ocean is critical to the future prosperity of Canada and the world. The stakes are high: we have ten years to halt biodiversity loss and stabilize our climate. Everyone at Oceans North is going to keep showing up every day to do our part to build an equitable, nature-positive, climate-neutral world.



Louie Porta
Executive Director



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About **OCEANS NORTH** ...



Oceans North supports marine conservation in partnership with Indigenous and coastal communities. Our work addresses the unprecedented environmental changes taking place in northern marine ecosystems and ensures that they are protected within the framework of Indigenous knowledge, rights and consultation.

Oceans North is a registered charity with offices in Winnipeg, Ottawa, and Halifax. Many of our staff members work remotely from their home communities across northern and southern Canada, as well as in Greenland.

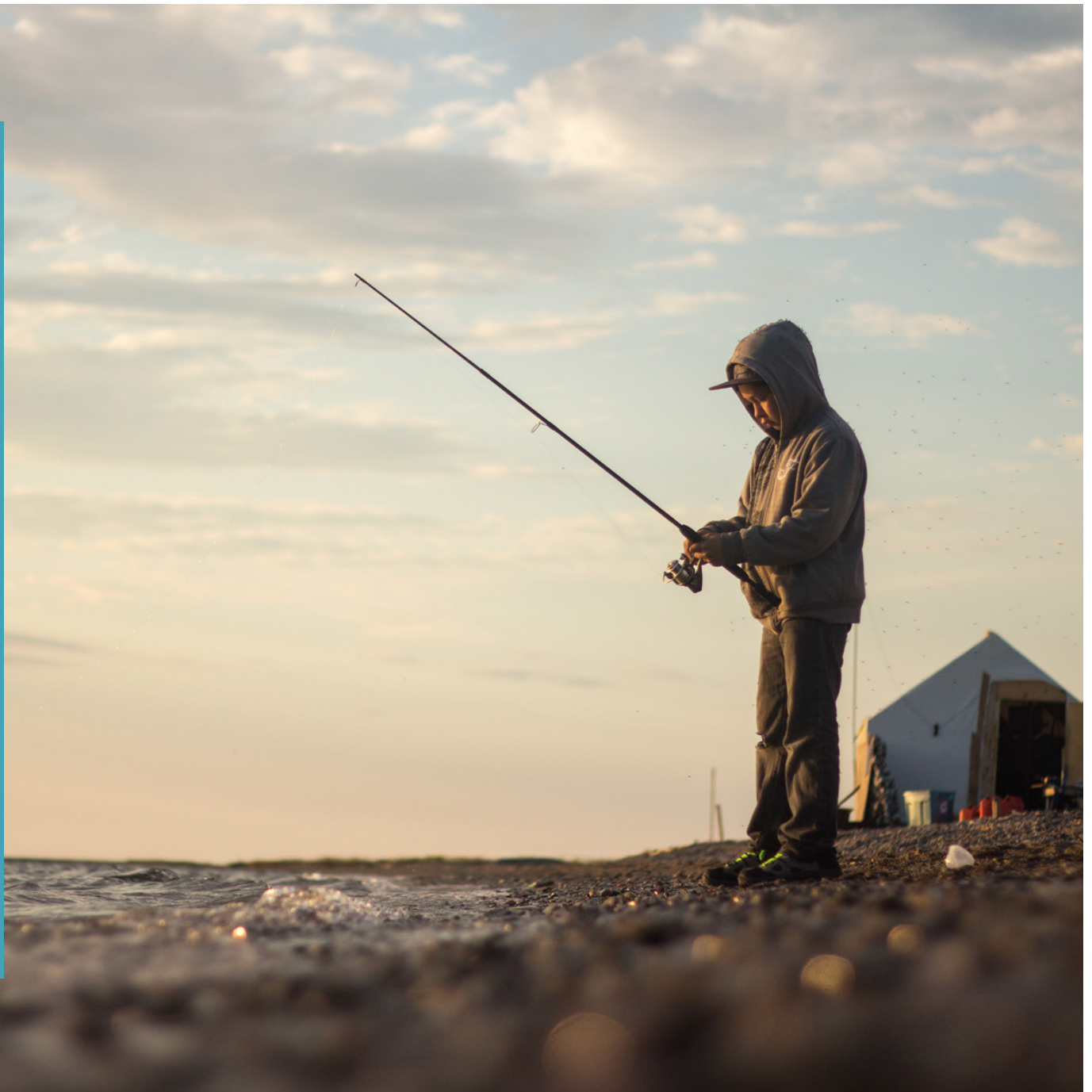
HOW WE WORK



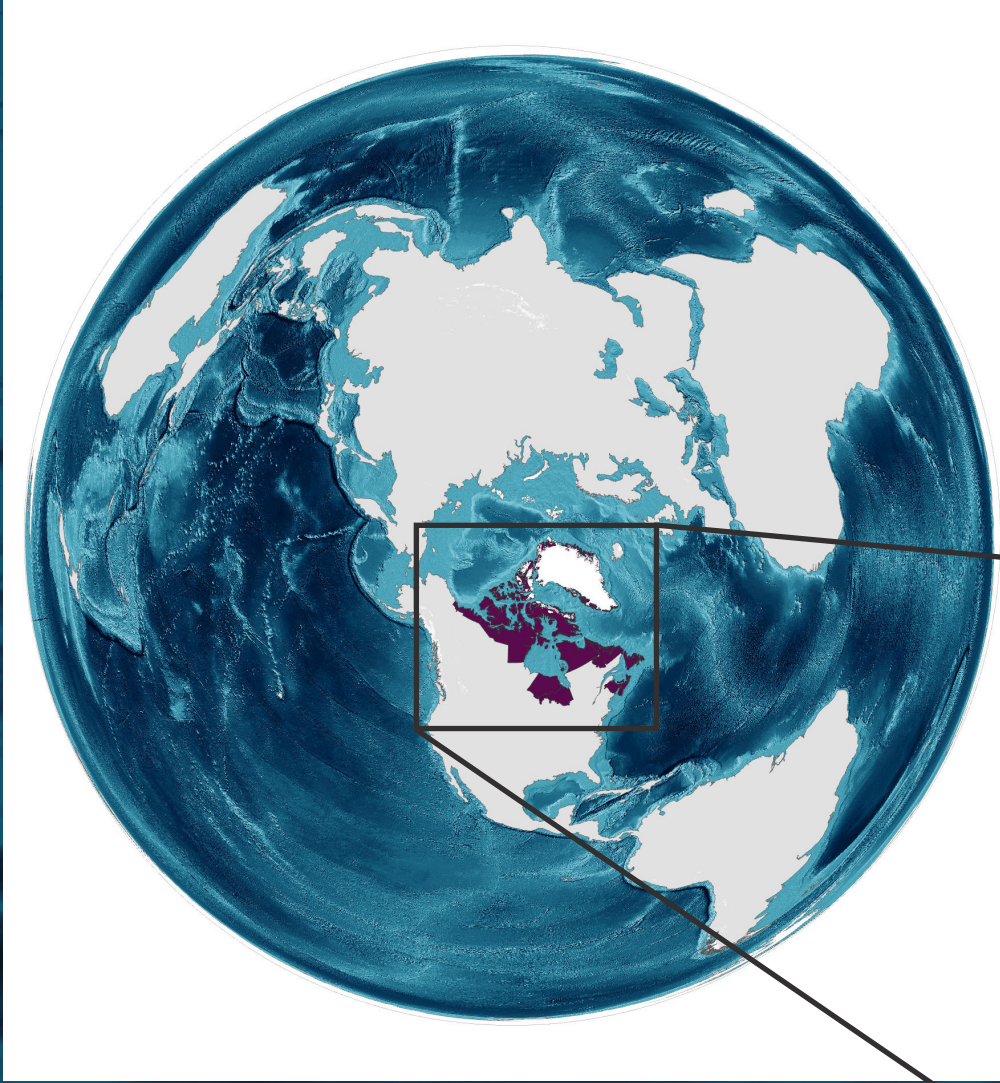
Oceans North believes in **protecting nature *for* people**, not from them. Much of Oceans North's work takes place in Indigenous territories. As a rule, we actively work to empower treaties and strengthen Indigenous institutions and communities.

Investing in **people** and **science** are the foundation of our success. We connect partners, disciplines and perspectives from around the world and pursue knowledge-driven solutions to the most pressing conservation challenges.

Marine conservation requires a **holistic approach**. Whether we're addressing community well-being or tackling climate change, Oceans North understands that the long-term success of our projects depends on the health of the system as a whole.



WHERE WE WORK



Oceans North's work takes us to the Arctic, the North Atlantic, and across international borders.



Canada has the longest **Arctic** coastline in the world, stretching nearly 160,000 kilometres from Baffin Bay in the east, through islands in the central Arctic Archipelago, to the Mackenzie River delta in the west. These waters connect dozens of Inuit, Dene, Cree, and Métis communities and provide habitat for most of the world's beluga whales, narwhal, bowhead whales and polar bears. Some of the greatest marine mammal and seabird migrations on the planet take place here.

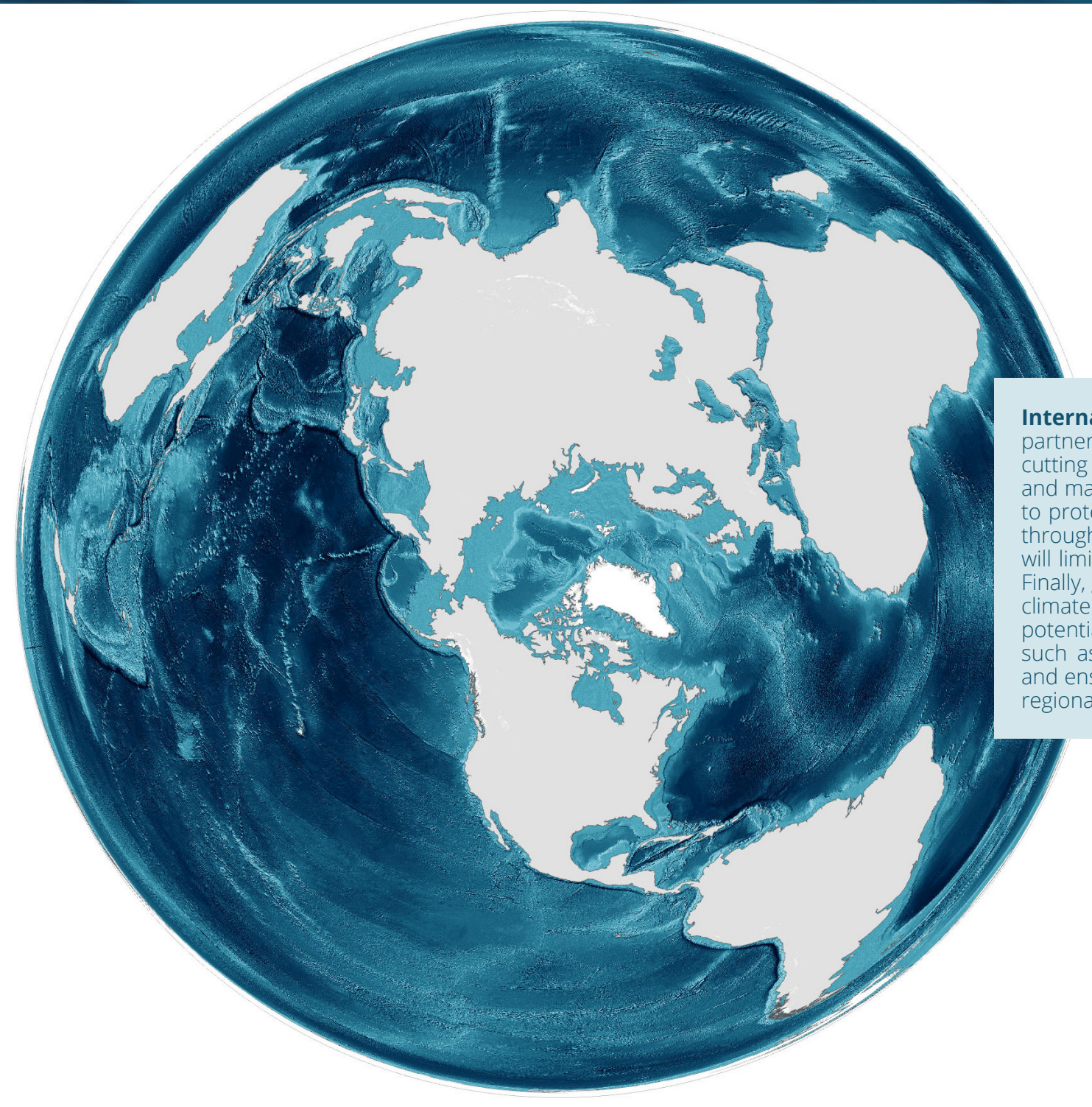
In the **Arctic**, Oceans North primarily works in the four Inuit land claim regions that make up Inuit Nunangat: Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. We also work with northern First Nations groups, including the Omushkego and Eeyou Cree who live along the western and eastern coasts of James Bay.



Atlantic Ocean

The temperate **North Atlantic** Ocean that surrounds Canada's four Atlantic provinces is a mixing zone of waters and peoples. These productive waters historically sustained Indigenous communities along with large quantities of fish, marine mammals, and other resources, which in turn attracted settlers and traders. Today, the ocean continues to form an important part of coastal economies and cultures.

In the **North Atlantic**, Oceans North works to protect the rich coastal and offshore regions which form an important part of life and work for Atlantic Canadians, and especially for Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, Innu and Inuit peoples, the area's original inhabitants.



Internationally, Oceans North and its partners are working in Greenland on cross-cutting conservation issues such as fisheries and marine protection. We are also working to protect the high seas and the deep seas through global treaties and agreements that will limit pressures from industrial activities. Finally, given the close connections between climate and oceans, we are exploring the potential for ocean-based climate action such as reducing emissions from shipping and ensuring that the ocean is addressed in regional and national climate commitments.



2020-2021 HIGHLIGHTS



Despite the challenges the world has faced over these last two years, Oceans North and our partners have continued to make progress on our shared goals. And while obstacles remain, the following highlights from our projects give us hope and confidence as we work together to support marine conservation in Canada and around the globe.

For more information on all our projects and the areas we work, please visit the Oceans North [website](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



Arctic



ADVANCING INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS

Indigenous peoples make up less than 5 per cent of the world's population, but they manage more than 80 per cent of the world's biodiversity across 25 per cent of the Earth's surface. In the Arctic, where Indigenous communities have lived for millennia in balance with the natural world, Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) offer an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to take a more assertive role in the governance and stewardship of their lands while helping Canada reach its conservation goals.

Over the last year, Oceans North has supported Inuit and Cree partners as they reached significant milestones in their goals to advance IPAs in their respective homelands.

In November 2020, the federal government announced a \$1.43 million investment in the creation of the **Arqvilliit Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area**, a Nunavik Inuit-led conservation initiative. Arqvilliit is the Nunavik Inuit name for the Ottawa Islands, a chain of 24 islands in northeastern Hudson Bay, Nunavik. Arqvilliit means "the place where you see bowhead whales" in Inuktitut, but it is also a critical habitat for polar bears. These islands have been occupied by Nunavik Inuit since time immemorial.

Arqvilliit is the first marine area in the Arctic to be recognized as an IPCA before any federal designation was put in place. It is emblematic of the power of

Indigenous-driven conservation as a way to advance reconciliation in Canada and protect the Arctic marine environment.

In **western James Bay**, Oceans North has been working closely with the **Mushkegowuk Council** over the last two years to provide additional capacity for negotiations, research, and communications towards the establishment of a protected area in the region.

Despite its ecological significance, James Bay—Weeneebeg in Cree—is understudied. In August 2021, a research expedition sponsored by Oceans North left the Port of Churchill for the first scientific expedition to James Bay in decades, with the goal of gathering baseline data and exploring key questions identified by the surrounding Cree communities about their waters.

The 2021 expedition coincided with the announcement of a Memorandum of Understanding between Parks Canada and the Mushkegowuk Council for a National Marine Conservation Area covering 91,000km² in western James Bay and southwestern Hudson Bay. In 2022, Oceans North will continue to work closely with the Mushkegowuk Council to establish a community-led marine monitoring program and help collect traditional knowledge of the waters. A second research expedition will also be visiting the communities in 2022.



INVESTING IN INDIGENOUS MONITORING AND GUARDIANSHIP

Indigenous knowledge is key to developing conservation solutions that consider the broad context of life in the Arctic and North Atlantic, and which support traditional and sustainable uses of the marine environment. To that end, Oceans North helps to develop and support Indigenous guardian and stewardship programs in the regions where we work.

In 2020-21, Oceans North supported Indigenous guardian programs across Inuit Nunangat, employing a dozen full- and part-time guardians. In Nunatsiavut, the Legends of the Land continued their work conducting research to support protected-area planning, advancing small vessel training, and working with Transport Canada to adjust regulations. In February 2021, Oceans North published a video about the [Legends of the Land](#) to share the important contribution that they are making in Nunatsiavut and to raise awareness about Indigenous guardianship in Arctic Canada.

In the Kivalliq region of Nunavut, Oceans North partnered with the Coral Harbour Hunters and Trappers Organization to successfully complete the first year of a beluga and walrus monitoring program, with plans to continue in 2022. And in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Oceans North continued its partnership with the Fisheries Joint Management Committee and local Hunters and Trappers Committees to support the Imaryuk Monitoring Program, with the goal of conserving local fisheries adjacent to the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway and Husky Lakes.



ENABLING KNOWLEDGE-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS TO PROTECT CANADA'S OCEANS

Knowledge-driven solutions are critical to the long-term health of Canada's northern waters and the Indigenous peoples who live there. Oceans North supports and carries out a variety of projects that draw on both Indigenous and local sources of knowledge, as well as Western scientific methods.

One of our longest-running projects is in **Tallurutiup Imanga**, Canada's largest National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA). *Tallurutiup Imanga* is home not only to a vibrant ecosystem that hosts the world's largest population of summering narwhal, but also to the Mary River iron mine, one of the largest mineral developments in the North.

Since 2014, Oceans North has deployed passive acoustic monitors in the Eclipse Sound region of North Baffin Island to better understand narwhal presence, absence, and behaviour in relation to underwater noise resulting from increased shipping in the region. Data from the monitoring program is helping communities identify management priorities for the NMCA, and is also helping them respond to the proposed expansion of the Mary River mine, which would result in significantly more shipping through the area.

In **Western Hudson Bay**, where one-third of the world's belugas migrate to each year, Oceans North has been supporting a three-year study on interactions between whale-watching vessels and the thousands of belugas that feed in the estuaries near Churchill, Manitoba. Our overall goal is to develop science- and local knowledge-based management practices that will allow the belugas and the human residents of Churchill to co-exist for generations to come.



North Atlantic

© Nick Hawkins



PROTECTING AND RESTORING MARINE HABITAT

Oceans North works with community partners in the North Atlantic to conserve areas of biological and cultural importance so that they will continue to meet the needs of future generations and increase ecological resilience amid a changing ocean.

Over the last two years, Oceans North has been building relationships with Mi'kmaw communities throughout Mi'kma'ki (the traditional territories of the Mi'kmaq) to advance conservation through Indigenous-led governance and stewardship. In the Avon River, for example, we provided support for the Mi'kmaw Conservation Council's efforts to monitor fish passage in the Minas Basin. This has led to the restoration of fish passage through the river, which had been dammed for several decades. In partnership with the Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative in Pitu'poq (Bras d'Or Lake), we are also supporting increased monitoring of forestry to better inform activities surrounding this inland sea.

Over the past two years, we have engaged with the offshore and inshore fishing industries on protecting areas that are of importance for corals and sponges. We expect progress in Fundian Channel and Browns Bank under the *Oceans Act* and Eastern Canyons fisheries closures under the *Fisheries Act* in early 2022. We have also focused on new tools for fish habitat protection under the *Fisheries Act* as well as regulations for Ecologically Significant Areas, enabling much-needed protection of freshwater and coastal habitats.



© Nicolas Winkler



REBUILDING FISHERIES IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Many species of fish are in trouble in Atlantic Canada, both from overfishing and from climate change. Oceans North has worked to ensure the strongest possible rebuilding plans for numerous commercially fished species in the region. We have also advocated that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) reduce the quota for forage fish such as mackerel and herring, which are a key part of the marine food web. This year, the mackerel quota was reduced by 50 per cent.

As part of our broader campaign to protect forage fish, Oceans North has been exploring and promoting the use of alternative baits that do not rely on wild-caught mackerel or herring. In May, Oceans North released a new video highlighting a PEI company that's working with lobster fishers to run trials on a new kind of bait.

Also in May, Oceans North released *Turning up the Heat*, a report on the impacts of climate change on fisheries in the Atlantic and Eastern Arctic. Among other things, the report found that DFO does not currently incorporate climate change into fisheries management. The findings were covered nationally, and a paper on the subject has been published in the *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*.

As we look to 2022, we will redouble our efforts to ensure that forage fish have a chance to rebuild. We will continue to push Canada to adopt regulations under the *Fisheries Act* for population rebuilding. And in each of the fisheries science and management processes we engage in, we will continue to advocate for better monitoring and measures to reduce bycatch.



International Oceans

FROM THE HIGH SEAS TO THE DEEP SEAS

Most of the world's waters—roughly 64 per cent—are outside the control of any one country. In order to help conserve these regions, known as the “high seas,” Oceans North is working towards improving global governance and ensuring they are sustainably managed.

Firstly, Oceans North has long been engaged in the creation of a new high-seas treaty that will cover biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). Treaty negotiations have been delayed due to COVID, but a new meeting is expected in March 2022. In November 2021, Oceans North and the High Seas Alliance launched a campaign that highlights the “Hidden Natural Wonders of the World” that occur in the high seas, drawing attention to the fact that these places cannot be fully protected until a treaty is signed.

However, some protections can be accomplished through existing tools. Oceans North has been on the Canadian delegation at the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), the international body that manages fisheries

in the high seas of the North Atlantic. This September, Oceans North played an important role in getting the NAFO parties to agree to protect roughly 100,000 square kilometres of rare and biodiverse deep-sea habitat—much of it underwater volcanoes known as “seamounts”—by putting a stop to bottom fishing in those areas.

Seamounts are also one of the deep-sea ecosystems at threat from deep-sea mining (DSM), an emerging industry that could have potentially devastating consequences for the ocean. We still know very little about the deep seas; four-fifths of it have yet to be mapped or explored. A governance regime does not currently exist for DSM in the high seas, but some countries are rushing to establish one so that they can start mining. Oceans North and its partners have launched a petition asking the Canadian government to demonstrate global leadership at the International Seabed Authority and prevent DSM from going ahead before the impacts are understood.



ADVANCING OCEAN CONSERVATION AND FISHERIES REFORM IN GREENLAND

Greenland—or Kalaallit Nunaat in Kalaallisut, the Greenlandic Inuit language—is a nation with deep social, cultural, and economic ties to the marine and coastal environment. It is home to some of the most productive ocean habitat on the planet, and the communities of Greenland rely heavily on the continued abundance of both Atlantic and Arctic sea life: fishing is the country's primary economic driver. Greenland is also warming rapidly, and the melting of the country's vast ice cap could have global ramifications for climate change and sea level rise.

Oceans North has been engaged in Greenland for 10 years on conservation projects, largely through partnerships with other organizations such as the

Inuit Circumpolar Council of Greenland. However, historically, there have been no “made-in-Greenland” organizations with a dedicated focus on conservation issues.

That changed this fall when Oceans North Kalaallit Nunaat (ONKN), our sibling “fond” (or charitable organization), officially became Greenland's first environmental NGO. The central purpose of ONKN is to develop made-in-Greenland solutions for conservation and sustainable development issues facing coastal communities. ONKN is governed by an independent board of directors and led by Executive Director [Soren Stach Neilsen](#).



A bright sunburst is centered in the upper half of the image, radiating light across a clear blue sky. Below the sky, a vast expanse of sea ice stretches to the horizon. The ice consists of numerous small, irregular floes of varying sizes, some appearing as white snow-covered mounds and others as clear, blue-tinted sheets. The overall scene is bright and expansive, suggesting a cold but clear day in a polar or high-latitude region.

LOOKING AHEAD

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As we look ahead to the next 12 months, we remain encouraged by the progress we have been able to make during this challenging time and are more committed than ever to our partnerships and collaborative approach.



Connecting oceans & climate ...


Oceans North is committed to addressing climate change as part of our mission to conserve the marine environment in partnership with Indigenous and coastal communities. Oceans play a key role in mitigating climate change and regulating temperature, but their ability to support life is being compromised as the water warms and becomes more acidic due to greenhouse gas emissions.

In March, Oceans North celebrated the Supreme Court of Canada's decision that a national price on carbon was constitutional. Oceans North was an intervenor in the case, and we were the only organization to speak directly about the connection between climate and oceans.

The interconnectedness of oceans and climate has also motivated us to examine ocean-based solutions to climate change, such as reducing emissions from the maritime sector. Earlier this year, Oceans North hosted the first-of-its-

kind Ports and Maritime Hydrogen Summit, which brought together decision-makers, innovators and industry leaders to discuss the role of clean hydrogen in reducing maritime sector emissions. In October, we released [*Charting a Course for Net Zero: Critical First Steps on a Hydrogen Pathway*](#), a report that examines the role of clean hydrogen in the transition towards net-zero for ports and marine vessels. Oceans North is now building the partnerships necessary to translate these ideas into demonstration projects.

In October, Dr. Susanna Fuller (VP of Operations and Projects) represented Oceans North at COP26 in Glasgow. Susanna was the first civil society member to represent oceans on the Canadian Delegation since the start of the UNFCCC process. We worked in advance of the international meeting to have Canada include ocean and ocean industries in its climate mitigation commitments and took this message to COP26, where for the first time the nature and climate linkage was made clear.



*Continuing to
strengthen our
commitment to
justice, equity, and
inclusion*



Our work touches the lives of nearly 77,000 Indigenous people across more than 80 communities. Over a decade ago, Oceans North was seen as radical among environmental organizations because we prioritized investing in these communities and working through modern treaty agreements. Today, our approach has been validated by the Government of Canada, by Indigenous peoples and governments, and is now fully bought into by philanthropic organizations as the highest standard for conservation work in Canada and around the world.

Directly and indirectly, many of our projects provide opportunities for alternative career options outside of extractive industry cycles while also helping to create the conditions for sustained cultural continuity through land-based activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Oceans North deepened our work on the ground, hired new community-based staff members in key campaign areas, and found alternative ways to stay connected with our partners while Northern travel was prohibited.

The work we have done has shown us that we must go further to decolonize the nature protection space, to bring equity and social justice to marine conservation initiatives and do everything possible to ensure that Indigenous peoples are the leaders of their own conservation efforts.



*Putting marine
protected areas
in the spotlight*



We are excited by two upcoming events in 2022 that will help drive our work forward:

- (1)** Oceans North has partnered with the National Geographic Pristine Seas Campaign to shine a bright light on the areas where we work and pressure decision makers to achieve protections; and
- (2)** Canada is hosting the International Marine Protected Areas Conference (IMPAC5) in September 2022, at which we anticipate a number of key announcements.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

OCEANS NORTH CONSERVATION SOCIETY | Summary financial statements*
For the year ended March 31, 2021 (all \$,000)

BALANCE SHEET

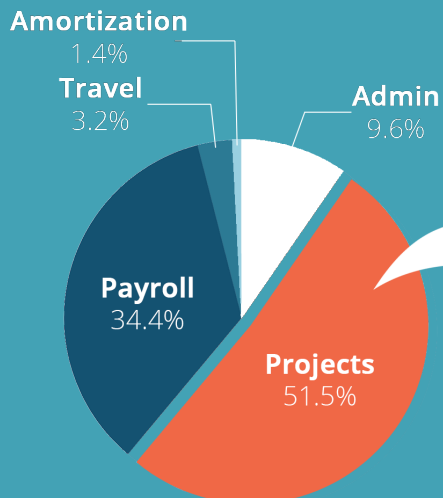
	2021	2020
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$3,080	\$1,889
Accounts receivable	\$64	\$31
Prepaid expenses	\$161	\$261
Net tangible capital assets	\$194	\$145
TOTAL ASSETS	\$3,499	\$2,326
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	\$665	\$530
Deferred Contributions	\$2,352	\$1,399
Total current liabilities	\$3,017	\$1,929
Net assets	\$482	\$397
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$3,499	\$2,326

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

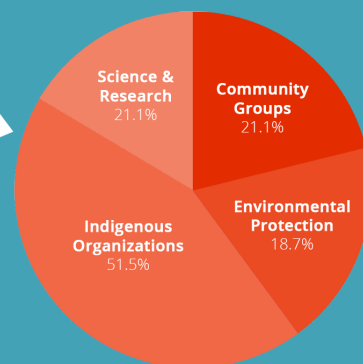
FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDING MARCH 31, 2021

	2021	2020
REVENUES	\$6,431	\$6,205
EXPENSES		
Administrative	\$295	\$369
Foreign exchange loss	68	6
Amortization	89	51
Payroll	2,370	2,167
Projects	3,271	3,187
Rent	152	140
Travel	6	197
Other	95	88
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$6,346	\$6,205
EXCESS REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$85	NIL
Opening net assets	\$397	\$397
Closing net assets	\$482	\$397

2021 EXPENSES



2021 SUBGRANTS



*excerpt from audited financial statements

FUNDERS & FUNDED PARTNERS

Our work would not be possible without the support of our partners and funders.



FUNDERS

Becht Family Charitable Trust

Blue Nature Alliance

Donner Canadian Foundation

Ducks Unlimited

Environmental Funders Canada

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

National Philanthropic Trust

Oak Foundation

Oceans5

Pew Charitable Trust

Private Donations

Weston Family Foundation

Wyss Foundation

FUNDED PARTNERS

Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs

Build Films

Churchill Northern Studies Centre

Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

Coral Harbour Hunters and Trappers Organization

Dalhousie University

Fisheries Joint Management Committee

Flow Video

Hamlet of Coral Harbour

Harrison Lewis Coastal Centre

Inuit Circumpolar Council - Greenland

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Joint Secretariat – Inuvialut

Kalaallit Nunaanni Aalisartut Piniartullu Kattuffiat (KNAPK)

Kivalliq Inuit Association

Kurtairojuark Hunters and Trappers Association

MITACS

Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet) HTO

Mushkegowuk Council

Northern Village of Inukjuak

Nunatsiavut Government

Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated

Olokhaktomiut Hunters and Trappers Committee

Ocean Conservancy

Scripps Institute of Oceanography

SeaBlue Canada Partner Organizations

Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources

University of Alberta

University of Manitoba

University of Waterloo

Wildlands League

