



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

- ARCTIC OCEAN
- ATLANTIC OCEAN
- HIGH SEAS



www.oceansnorth.org

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the dynamic landscape of 2023, Oceans North remained committed to the principles of marine protection, evidence-based decision-making, and strategic partnerships. And while our ocean continues to face many challenges, our work offers many opportunities for hope.

At home, Canada's introduction of a policy framework for ten new National Marine Conservation Areas at the start of last year aligned with global efforts to address the climate and biodiversity crises. But achieving this will only be possible through collaborative action and supporting on-the-ground efforts by local leaders. Community-led programs we've been involved in, such as the shark sighting initiative in Nunatsiavut and a youth exchange fostering connections between Inuit and Cree youth, underscored the significance of grassroots engagement. Collaborative research projects, including cataloging species in Western Hudson Bay waters, showcased the power of unity and shared objectives.

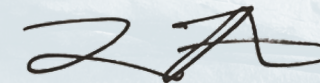
And when it seems harder than ever for people worldwide to work together, countries agreed to a landmark High Seas Treaty that, once ratified, will help protect marine ecosystems and species beyond national jurisdiction. In another important step towards protecting our shared ocean, Oceans North has advocated for a moratorium on the emerging deep-sea mining industry—and last summer, Canada joined several others supporting this imperative.

We also continued our work to advance the marine energy transition. Healthy oceans need a healthy climate, and our commitment to building strategic partnerships to help us reach this goal remains steadfast.

Collaborative initiatives, like developing Canada's first electric lobster fishing vessel with Membertou, exemplified the strength of innovative, partner-driven approaches to challenging problems. However, making industries like fishing sustainable is about more than reducing emissions. That's why we remain engaged in fisheries science and management processes across the Arctic and Atlantic.

In parallel, Oceans North experienced substantial growth this year, expanding our team to include new positions in communications, geography, climate action, and special projects. We also welcomed Fred Whoriskey, Executive Director of the Ocean Tracking Network at Dalhousie University, to our board of directors. This expansion has fortified our ability to address evolving challenges effectively.

As we gaze towards 2024, your continued support remains instrumental in our shared pursuit of a sustainable future for our oceans and the communities they sustain. Thank you for staying on the venture with us.



Louie Porta
Executive Director



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About **OCEANS NORTH** ...



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

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

HOW WE WORK



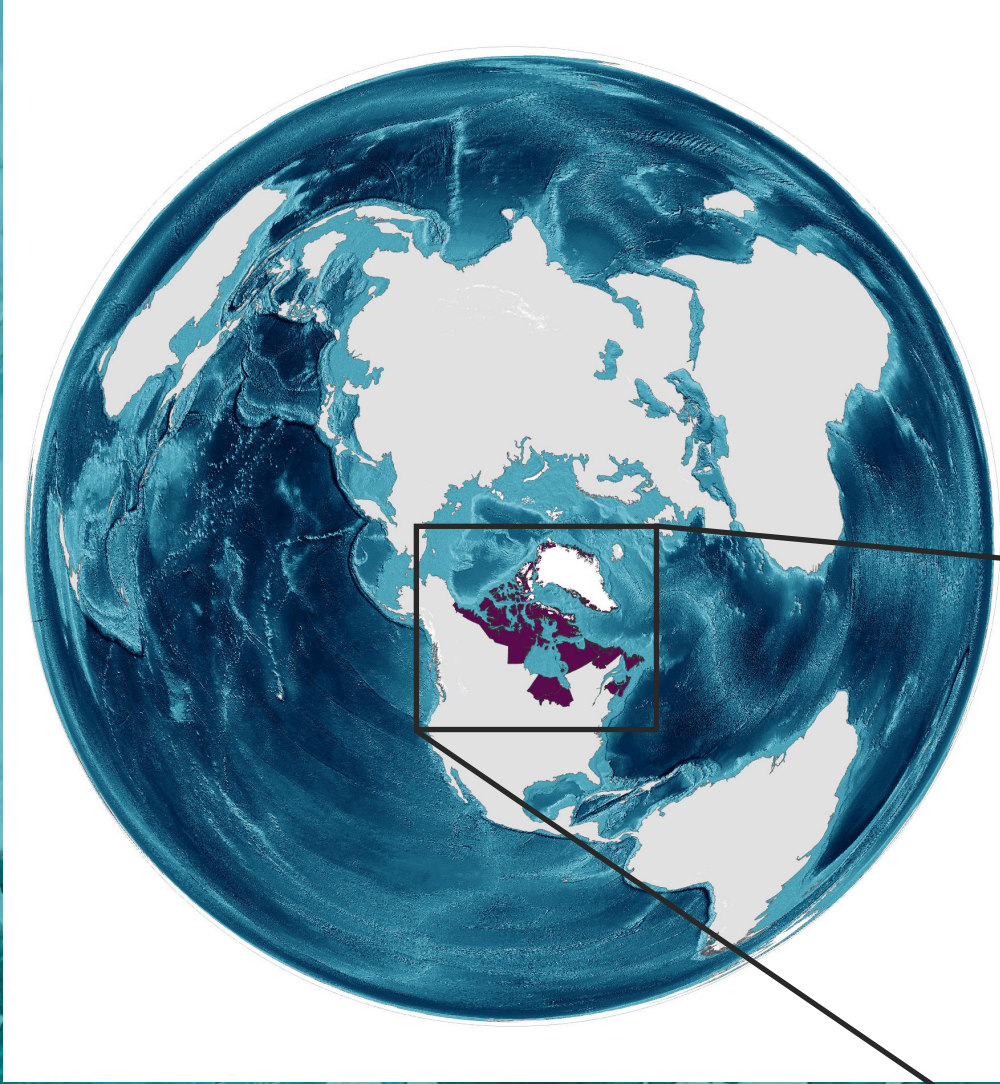
Oceans North believes in **protecting nature for people**, not from them. Much of Oceans North's work takes place in Indigenous territories. We actively work to empower treaties and strengthen Indigenous institutions and communities.

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.





GREENLAND

Inuvialuit
Settlement
Region

NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

NUNAVUT

CANADA

Hudson
Bay

Nunavik

Nunatsiavut

MANITOBA

ONTARIO

QUEBEC

	Inuit Nunangat
	Eeyou Itschee
	Treaty No. 9 Boundary

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 in the watersheds and marine waters of western Hudson Bay and James Bay, including the Omushkego Cree, Eeyou Cree and Sayisi Dene.

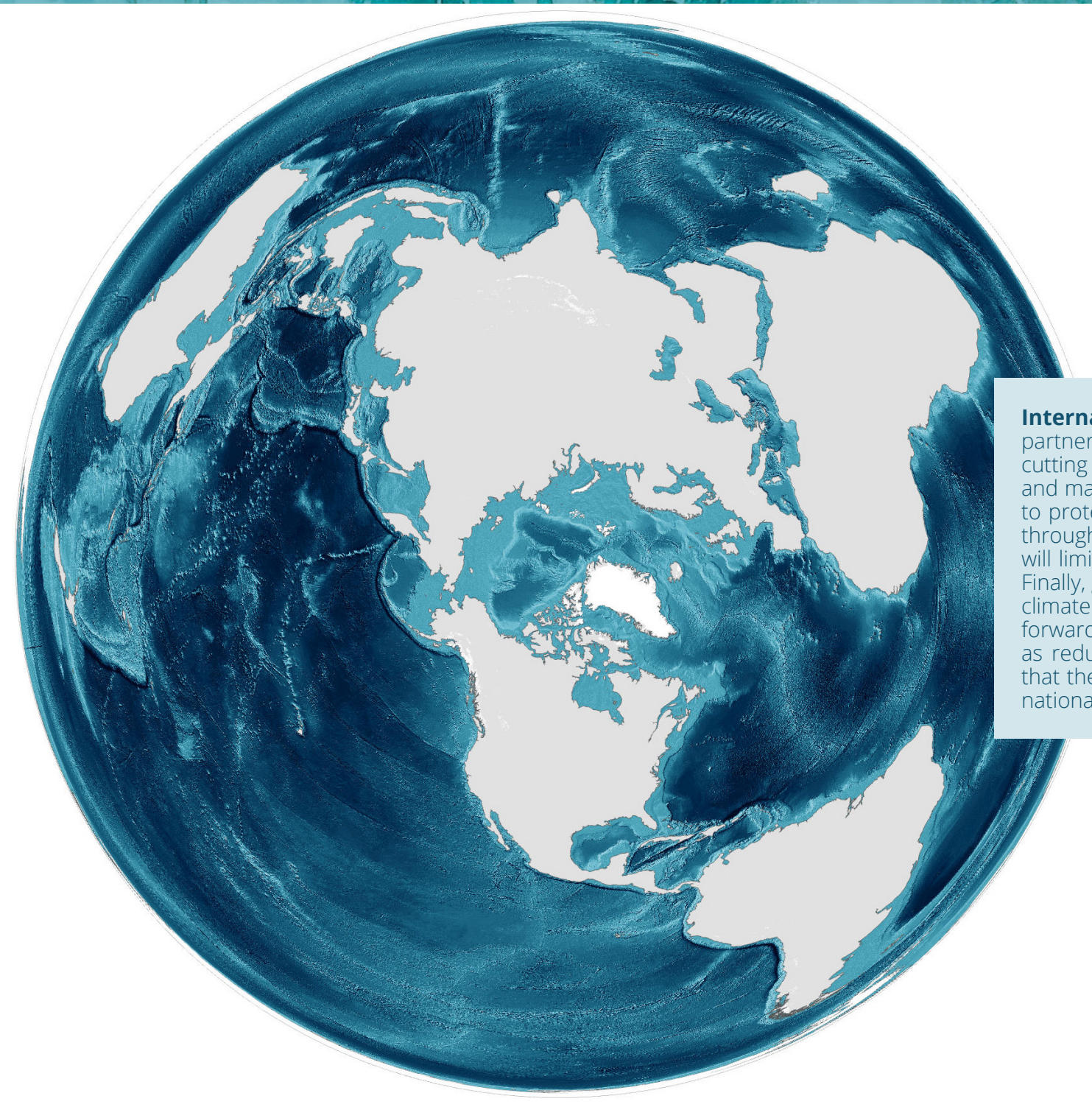


Atlantic Ocean



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 sustain and restore the abundance of 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're helping move forward ocean-based climate solutions such as reducing vessel emissions and ensuring that the ocean is addressed in regional and national climate commitments.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS



Since our last annual report, Oceans North has continued to support science, build partnerships, and advance marine protection across Canada's waters and beyond. Here are a few key moments.

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





ADVANCING MARINE PROTECTION

In February, IMPAC5 marked a pivotal moment as Canada **unveiled a policy framework to establish ten new National Marine Conservation Areas (NMCAs)**, aligning with global efforts to address the climate and biodiversity crises. Simultaneously, **the Assembly of First Nations emphasized the importance of Indigenous-led protection** through a report on Marine Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas. Oceans North continued to support the development of Indigenous-led protected areas across the Arctic and Atlantic.

On March 4, after 21 years of informal discussions and five years of negotiations, countries at the United Nations reached agreement on a new **High Seas Treaty**. This also represents the culmination of years of work for our staff members, two of whom were present at the final set of negotiations. The agreement will help conserve marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, marking a crucial step in ensuring sustainable use of these regions.

In May, Oceans North celebrated **a decision by the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO)** to avoid transiting through Nunavut's Eclipse Sound during the summer. Oceans North and the Hunters and Trappers Organization of Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet) had asked for the measure to ease pressure on the area's struggling narwhal population.

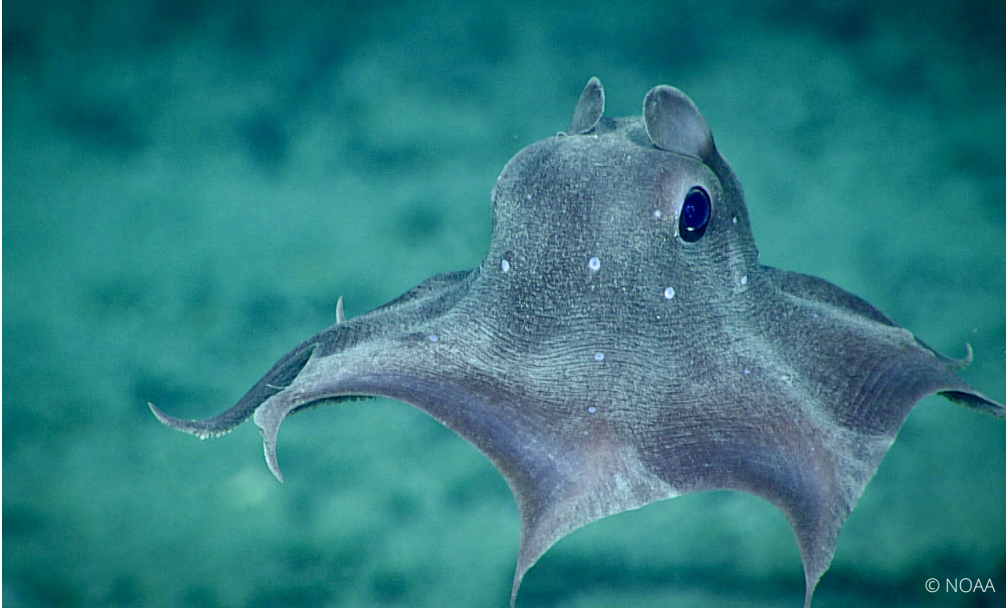
August brought recognition to the **Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) – Greenland, as they were awarded the United Nations Development Programme Equator Prize** for their work in gathering essential knowledge

about the North Water Polynya, known as Pikialasorsuaq in Greenland, through the Pikialasorsuaq Commission. This large open-water area between Canada and Greenland is a biodiversity hotspot and has supported nearby Inuit communities for generations. Oceans North and its sister organization Oceans North Kalaallit Nunaat helped support the creation of the Pikialasorsuaq Commission and helped facilitate discussions in both countries.

In October, **Greenland and Canada signed a letter of intent, marking a significant collaborative effort to safeguard the North Water Polynya**. This agreement marked progress toward establishing the world's first bilateral Marine Protected Area (MPA) and was accompanied by the release of an educational animated video by Oceans North Kalaallit Nunaat.

In February 2024, **the Mushkegowuk Council and Parks Canada announced they had completed the feasibility study for a new NMCA in western Weeneebeg (James Bay) and southwestern Washaybeyoh (Hudson Bay)**. This is a crucial step towards Indigenous-led protection of a vast and globally significant marine ecosystem. Oceans North and other project partners have been supporting the Mushkegowuk Council throughout the feasibility process, which was first launched in 2021.

On March 4, 2024—one year after countries agreed to the text of a new High Seas Treaty—Canada added its signature, becoming the 88th country to do so. Next, at least 60 countries must ratify the treaty in order for it to come into force. Oceans North pushed for Canada to sign the treaty and is now working to ensure that both Canada and other nations continue to advance the process.



SUPPORTING SCIENCE AND EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

In July, **Canada officially joined several other nations advocating for a halt, moratorium, or ban on deep-sea mining.** Earlier in the spring, we put pressure on the government with a concerted letter-writing campaign and digital and physical ads in the Capital Region. We celebrated this development with a press release, social media posts and coverage in publications like *The Guardian*, marking a significant win for the deep-sea mining campaign.

Fisheries faced both challenges and progress in and outside Canada. The **45th meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)** in September resulted in crucial conservation steps, such as extending closures in vulnerable marine ecosystem areas until 2026. Additionally, a groundbreaking resolution, co-sponsored by Canada, addressed climate change impacts on fisheries and emphasized precautionary and ecosystem-based approaches.

In June, **Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) extended the closure of Atlantic mackerel fisheries** for another year to ensure long-term stock health. October brought a significant update on the 2J3KL northern cod stock, suggesting it may no longer be in the “critical zone,” highlighting the importance of science-based fisheries decisions.

However, a November report on DFO’s monitoring approach found serious problems in the government’s monitoring of marine fisheries catch. Oceans North continues to push for improved monitoring, including the use of new technologies such as cameras and electronic logbooks.

The **28th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)**, co-sponsored by Canada, established clear guidelines for electronic monitoring systems. **Oceans North’s fisheries director, Katie Schleit, was also recently named an ICCAT commissioner.**

December saw a multi-stakeholder workshop addressing **New Energy Markets in West Coast Shipping**, aligning clean energy projects with the marine value chain. Simultaneously, Transport Canada launched the \$165.4 million Green Shipping Corridor Fund, fulfilling an earlier call by Oceans North.

That same month, Oceans North staff in Atlantic Canada took part in public panels on climate adaptation solutions for Nova Scotia and led webinars focusing on **marine-based Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs).**



© The Climate and Us



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Since forming a partnership in December 2022, Oceans North has been working with Membertou to bring together a local team to build Canada's first electric lobster fishing vessel and its associated shoreside charging infrastructure. In April, **Oceans North staff attended a meeting hosted by Membertou**, where project partners toured Membertou's boatyard facilities, discussed the project proposal and identified the next steps ahead of the full project launch. **By October, the project was in its final design.**

In Nunatsiavut, we launched a **community-led shark sighting program** in partnership with the Nunatsiavut Government to collect information for communities on what shark species are present in the region.

In the summer, **a youth exchange was held between the communities**

of Fox Lake and Rankin Inlet. The exchange, supported by Oceans North, brought together Inuit and Cree youth for on-the-land learning and cultural activities. Participants shared their connections to the waters of Western Hudson Bay and the importance of harvesting for their communities. A [short film about the exchange](#) was made in partnership with the Moore Foundation and BBC Storyworks.

Additionally, Assiniboine Park Conservancy's Conservation and Research team partnered with Oceans North, DFO, and the Manitoba Museum **to catalogue and study the species living in Western Hudson Bay waters.** Samples were collected in 2022 from western Hudson Bay near Churchill. Throughout this year, a range of invertebrates were collected, including sea stars, urchins, snails, and much more. Initial analysis has found 50 distinct species across seven different phyla. This information will help play a role in conservation planning.

An aerial photograph of a vast ocean filled with numerous icebergs of various sizes and shapes. The water is a deep, dark blue, while the icebergs are bright white. The text 'LOOKING AHEAD' is prominently displayed in the center of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below the text, there are three small, light blue dots.

LOOKING AHEAD

...



We **continue working with Membertou on the vessel electrification project**, building on feasibility studies and the final design to create a test vessel. We know that the technology exists and that electric vessels are ready to hit the water. The work in this coming year is to show how it can be applied to lobster fishing vessels and other workboats.

In 2023, twenty-six Canadian environmental organizations, including Oceans North, and nine international groups called on Canada to sign and ratify the new treaty to protect high seas biodiversity. Treaty negotiations concluded last March, and it was opened for signature at the September meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. Canada still has not ratified the treaty, and **we will hold events in Ottawa this summer to push for action.**

The work against deep-sea mining continues this year. In July 2023, nations reached an agreement that would make it more difficult for deep-sea



mining to start immediately in international waters but did not fully halt the industry's progress. The decisions around deep-sea mining's future have been pushed to July 2025, and we will be attending ISA meetings throughout the year to follow these discussions.

More Indigenous-led conservation projects are making progress across the country. Building on Canada's historic \$800-million commitment to Indigenous-led conservation, announced in December 2022, Oceans North is working with our partners in the Arctic and subarctic to finalize projects that will protect key ecosystems in ways that empower Indigenous governments and advance community wellbeing. We are also working to identify new sites that will help advance the next generation of protected areas.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

OCEANS NORTH CONSERVATION SOCIETY | Summary financial statements*
For the year ended March 31, 2023 (all figures rounded to nearest \$,000)

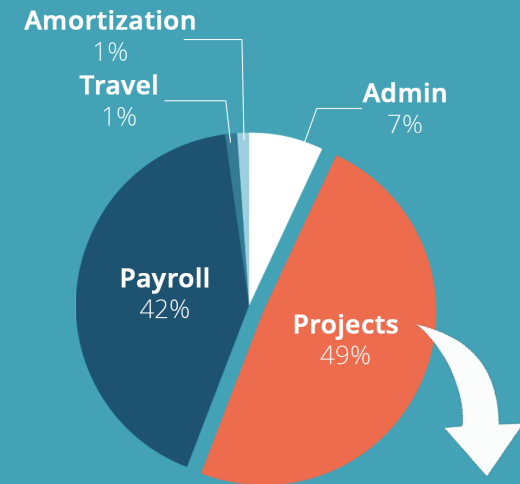
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDING MARCH 31, 2023

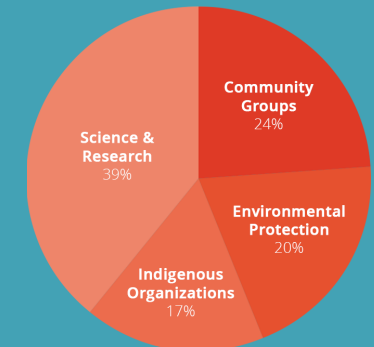
	2024 Board Approved Budget	2023 Audited Actuals	2022 Audited Actuals
REVENUES	\$14,791,000	\$9,800,000	\$8,097,000
EXPENSES			
Administrative	\$636,000	\$757,000	\$455,000
Foreign exchange loss	\$30,000	(\$66,000)	\$26,000
Amortization	N/A	\$48,000	\$77,000
Payroll	\$4,713,000	\$3,949,000	\$3,411,000
Projects	\$8,650,000	\$4,684,000	\$3,914,000
Rent	\$197,000	\$175,000	\$189,000
Travel	\$485,000	\$37,000	\$72,000
Other	NIL	\$36,000	\$41,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$14,711,000	\$9,620,000	\$8,185,000
EXCESS REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$80,000	\$180,000	(\$88,000)
Opening net assets	\$574,000	\$394,000	\$482,000
Closing net assets	\$654,000	\$574,000	\$394,000

*excerpt from audited financial statements

2023 EXPENSES



2023 SUBGRANTS



OCEANS NORTH CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Summary financial statements*

For the year ended March 31, 2023

(all figures rounded to nearest \$,000)

BALANCE SHEET

	2023	2022
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$5,944,000	\$3,405,000
Accounts receivable	\$436,000	\$239,000
Prepaid expenses	\$99,000	\$141,000
Investments	\$13,701,000	NIL
Net tangible capital assets	\$163,000	\$171,000
TOTAL ASSETS	\$20,343,000	\$3,956,000
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	\$692,000	\$792,000
Deferred Contributions**	\$19,077,000	\$2,770,000
Total current liabilities	\$19,769,000	\$3,562,000
Net assets	\$574,000	\$394,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$20,343,000	\$3,956,000

*excerpt from audited financial statements

**funding held in trust for partners



FUNDING & FUNDED PARTNERS

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



FUNDING PARTNERS

Becht Foundation
Blue Nature Alliance
ClimateWorks Foundation
Deep Sea Conservation Coalition
Donner Canadian Foundation
Environmental Funders Canada
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Google.org
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
Great Island Foundation
Hilary and Galen Weston Foundation
Monarch Foundation
National Philanthropic Trust
Oak Foundation
Oceans5
Ocean Conservancy
Orca Climate Fund
Parks Canada
Pew Charitable Trusts
Private Donations
RBC Tech For Nature
Sobrato Philanthropies
Wyss Foundation

FUNDED PARTNERS

Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs	Joint Secretariat – Inuvialuit	Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Bear River First Nation	Kivalliq Inuit Association	Sachs Harbour Hunters and Trappers Association
Churchill Northern Studies Centre	Kurtairojuark Hunters and Trappers Association	Scripps Institute of Oceanography
Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq	Membertou First Nation	SeaBlue Canada Partner Organizations
Coral Harbour Hunters and Trappers Organization	MITACS	Spence Bay Hunters and Trappers Association
Dalhousie University	Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet) HTO	Tuktoyaktuk Hunters and Trappers Association
Ekalututliak Hunters and Trappers Association	Mushkegowuk Council	Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources
Fisheries Joint Management Committee	Northern Village of Inukjuak	University of Alberta
Fox Lake Cree Nation	Nunatsiavut Government	University of Manitoba
Hamlet of Coral Harbour	Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated	University of Waterloo
Harrison Lewis Coastal Centre	Olokhaktomiut Hunters and Trappers Committee	York Factory First Nation
Inuit Circumpolar Council – Greenland	Ocean Conservancy	

