

Oceanic Society

Annual Report

2022–2023



Oceanic Society



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An underwater photograph of a humpback whale and its calf swimming near the surface. The adult whale is in the foreground, with its head and pectoral fins visible. The calf is swimming just below and behind the adult. The water is a deep blue with some light reflecting off the surface.

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Letter from the President

As we reflect on the past year, I am heartened by the remarkable strides we have made together in the face of adversity. Emerging from the challenges of a global pandemic that tested our resolve, Oceanic Society has demonstrated unwavering dedication to our mission – to deepen the connections between people and nature and to improve ocean health by addressing the root cause of its decline: human behavior.

The urgency of our cause has never been clearer. Our oceans face unprecedented threats ranging from species loss to overfishing, coral bleaching caused by climate change, and the growing problem of ocean plastic pollution. All these threats have one common cause: human behavior. From the everyday choices we make, to the products we consume, the way we use energy, and the policies we endorse, our actions reverberate through the tapestry of ocean health.

Oceanic Society's response is radical in its simplicity, and transformative in its potential. We have embarked on a mission to inspire and nurture a paradigm shift in human behavior — a shift toward what we call "blue habits." Each small, daily blue habit we adopt contributes to the monumental task of healing our waters, forging a path toward a more vibrant and resilient future.

We extend deep gratitude to the steadfast supporters who have fueled our journey. Together we are building an "oceanic society" and a legacy of hope and change that is a testament to the capacity of collective action to protect the natural world that sustains us all.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Mast".

RODERIC B. MAST
PRESIDENT & CO-CEO



Oceanic Society



About Us

As America's oldest non-profit organization dedicated to ocean conservation, Oceanic Society has worked for more than 50 years to inspire and empower people worldwide to take part in building a healthy future for the world's oceans.

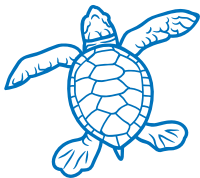
Our mission is to improve ocean health by deepening the connections between people and nature to address the root cause of its decline:

human behavior.

Through our work, we are:



Bringing the ocean into our daily lives with Blue Habits—a science-based effort to motivate simple, daily choices that lead to healthier oceans.



Supporting efforts worldwide that engage coastal communities in protecting threatened marine species and their habitats.



Leading expeditions that give people life-changing experiences in nature, support ocean research and conservation, and shape the travel industry.

Together, these strategies "move the needle" in ways that measurably improve ocean health and reduce the hazards that humans pose to oceans over time.



Volunteers with Ocean Sole clean the beach in Kilifi, Kenya as part of Oceanic Society's 2022 Global Ocean Cleanup. © Ocean Sole



Blue Habits

In FY23, our [Blue Habits](#) program reached and engaged millions of people worldwide in actions that support healthy oceans, from fighting plastic pollution to making sustainable seafood choices to reducing carbon footprint. We continued to grow and engage our Oceanic Society community, including numerous events that brought together ocean-lovers to learn about our oceans and take action to protect them, like the [Global Ocean Cleanup](#), a worldwide campaign to fight ocean plastic pollution, which we organized twice in FY23. We teamed up with organizations around the world to clean some of Earth's most important ocean habitats and create inspiring artwork from collected waste. We not only removed trash from our oceans and coasts, we also engaged audiences online and offline, provided funding to worthy organizations, and harnessed the power of behavioral science to build momentum for change.



Blue Habits

by the numbers

50+ coastal cleanups facilitated

50 tons of marine debris removed

\$35,500 provided in grants to partners

14 partnerships created



16,000,000+ people reached with campaign content

4,070 volunteers engaged

20 coastal cleanups funded or led

Conservation Travel

Oceanic Society has been leading nature-based travel experiences worldwide since 1969 as one of the first groups to offer whale watching tours and international “ecotourism” and “voluntourism” experiences. Our founders knew that the best way to engage people in caring for the ocean and thereby build a more oceanic society was to connect them to the ocean through first-hand travel experiences. Beyond engaging travelers, throughout our history we have seen how nature travel, when done properly, can drive conservation efforts and support sustainable local livelihoods. In many areas that we visit, tourism has already helped bring species back from extinction and led to permanent protection of sensitive habitats while also providing economic opportunities to local residents.

Through our California whale watching tours and international expeditions, we have helped connect tens of thousands of people to ocean wildlife and habitats worldwide and generated millions of dollars for ocean research and conservation.

In FY23, we launched the industry’s first Traveler Plastic Pollution Offset Program, through which we fund the removal of 200 pounds of trash from the ocean for every traveler who joins one of our multi-day nature expeditions. In addition, we grew our Expedition Impact Fund, and provided small grant support to ecotourism operations around the world.



Conservation Travel

by the numbers

90 environmental education expeditions facilitated

2,112 hours of volunteer work facilitated

73,000 lbs of marine debris removed from the marine ecosystem via Plastic Pollution Offset Program

27 conservation travel partners

\$7,340 provided in support of beach cleanup efforts

\$8,450 awarded in small grant support

1,264 passengers

229 individual whale flukes identified

\$469,689 generated for conservation



Global Sea Turtle Conservation

Our State of the World's Sea Turtles Program is a global effort to study and protect sea turtles and their habitats, and to leverage the amazing charisma of sea turtles to drive ocean conservation action. In FY23 we published the 18th volume of the award-winning State of the World's Sea Turtles (SWOT) Report, which is distributed free-of-charge to research and conservation programs worldwide in-print and online. For the report, we produced a special feature on leatherback sea turtles, plus a range of articles about important sea turtle conservation topics.

In addition, the SWOT program distributes small grants to field-based partners around the world to realize an array of important research and conservation goals. To date, 141 grants have been awarded to 116 applicants in more than 56 countries and territories, including 18 grants awarded in FY23.



Sea Turtles *by the numbers*

SWOT Report vol. 18
published

18 grants awarded in
9 countries

321 satellite-tracked
turtles mapped

\$18,000 provided in small
grant support

988 leatherback nesting sites
mapped

10 articles published by
39 experts

48 new and improved Regional
Management Units developed

145 registered sea turtle
projects globally



2,000+ hard copies
distributed

1 peer-reviewed article
submitted to Endangered
Species Research

2,000+ report downloads

50,000 people reached
online

Critter Scholars

Oceanic Society's Critters Scholars Program gives life-changing ocean experiences to underserved students and communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. The program was established in honor of Captain Roger Thomas, and borrows one of his famous catchphrases, 'critters,' which he used to describe all the fantastic ocean wildlife we see on our trips.

This program provides free-of-charge boat trips to student groups who otherwise would not have the means to participate in such an activity, combined with educational programming that seamlessly integrates those experiences into educators' curricula in new and engaging ways.

In FY23, we were unable to lead as many trips as we had hoped, due to funding limitations; however, we received pledges that will help us lead 10+ trips in 2024.



Critter Scholars *by the numbers*

9 schools from underserved communities participated in Critter Scholars trips

3 trips led

1 short film produced

118 students attended CSP trips

“I never even been on a boat before. But now I get it, why people always looking happy on their boats. It’s cool out there, man. I wanna do it again!”

- Critter Scholar



“The best part of the trip? Umm, seeing Plankton from Spongebob is real!! This is the most fun school’s been, like, ever.”

- Critter Scholar

FY23 Financials

Balance Sheet as of June 30, 2023	
Cash	\$2,128,721
Fixed Assets and Other Assets	\$354,006
Total Assets	\$2,482,727
Payables	\$23,821
Unearned & Restricted Revenue	\$1,094,302
Other Liabilities	\$125,584
Total Liabilities	\$1,243,707
Beginning Net Assets	\$844,664
Current Year Change	\$394,355
Total Net Assets	\$1,239,020
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$2,482,727



FY23 Financials

Revenue vs. Expenses: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023	
Revenue	
Earned Revenue	\$2,854,656
Unrestricted Revenue	\$537,905
Restricted Revenue:	
Sea Turtle Conservation Program	\$317,018
Blue Habits Program	\$180,654
Critter Scholars Program	\$17,584
In-Kind	\$175,641
Total Revenue	\$4,083,458

Expenses	
Conservation Travel Programs	(\$2,328,070)
Whale Watching	(\$366,459)
Sea Turtle Conservation Program	(\$313,428)
Blue Habits Program	(\$260,870)
Critter Scholars Program	(\$67,577)
In-Kind (Advertising)	(\$175,641)
Fundraising	(\$144,692)
Management and Operations	(\$32,366)
Total Expenses	(\$3,689,103)
Revenue vs. Expenses	\$394,355



Our Team

Staff

Rod Mast | President & Co-CEO

Brian Hutchinson | VP, Outreach & Co-CEO

Nicole Bouharb | VP, Finance

Wayne Sentman | Director, Conservation Travel

Lindsay Mosher | Associate Director, Blue Habits

Rosie Jeffrey | Manager, Strategic Growth & Partnerships

Chris Biertuempfel | Manager, California Programs

Ashleigh Bandimere | Coordinator, Sea Turtles

Pei Lun Lee | Coordinator, Conservation Travel

Linda Sue Brown | Bookkeeper

Board of Directors

Zachary Rabinor | Board Chair

Dr. Charles Betlach II | Board Vice Chair

Finn Torgrimsen Longinotto | Secretary

Dr. Sylvia Earle

Mark Stanley

Marilyn Pearson

Hari Balasubramanian



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