



2024 Annual Report





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Dear Friends,

I am delighted to present our 2024 Annual Report. This year has been one of significant impact and growth, and I am proud to share the milestones we have achieved in our mission to protect marine life.

In 2024, our dedicated team and passionate volunteers worked tirelessly on various conservation initiatives. Our beach cleanup programs continued to experience success – we removed a tremendous volume of litter with the help of thousands of volunteers. These efforts not only improved ocean health but raised awareness about the critical issue of pollution and how individuals can help solve this problem. We also resumed cleanups at the Isles of Shoals for the first time in 10 years and removed tons of fishing gear from these offshore islands, which are important habitat for nesting and migrating birds.

Our marine mammal research program continued collecting and sharing data on whales in our region. This critical research tracks distribution, behavior and health of whales and shares our findings with partner organizations around New England. Our results help shape conservation strategies and policies that protect these magnificent animals. We also continue to actively network with whale watch naturalists around the region to share sightings and education theories and tools.

Education is key to solving many of the challenges facing our ocean. This year, we reached thousands of students through our interactive programs in schools and at our Blue Ocean Discovery Center. By engaging the next generation in marine conservation, we inspire young minds to become stewards of the ocean, ensuring a brighter future for our planet.

We are excited about the year to come and are ready to meet its challenges with our dynamic, passionate team of scientists, educators, interns and volunteers.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors, sponsors, and volunteers. Your generosity and commitment enable us to pursue our mission with vigor and determination. Together, we are making an enormous difference in the fight to protect our ocean.

With gratitude and optimism,

Jennifer Kennedy
Executive Director



Dear Supporters,

On behalf of the Blue Ocean Society's Board of Directors I would like to sincerely thank you for your ongoing support. In partnership with our dedicated staff, you made 2024 a banner year of research, stewardship and community action on the Gulf of Maine.

Together, we conducted over 350 beach cleanups at 45 sites from Maine to Massachusetts, removing 160,000 pieces of trash from area beaches. From whale watches to tours of our Blue Ocean Discovery Center at Hampton Beach, we conducted a variety of educational programs that reached 35,000 curious students from area schools. Our proprietary research illuminated behavior of Fin, Humpback and endangered Right Whales, as well as shed light on the impact of unstudied microplastics on NH beaches.

With evolving environmental conditions and increasingly unpredictable funding sources, the support of our donors and volunteers matters more today than ever. Organizations such as Blue Ocean make quick and efficient use of every incremental volunteer hour or donation. A \$50 donation ensures 330 pieces of litter are removed from our beaches. A \$500 donation funds a life-sized inflatable whale program for up to 80 students. But that equation cuts both ways and programming is quickly impacted by fiscal uncertainty.

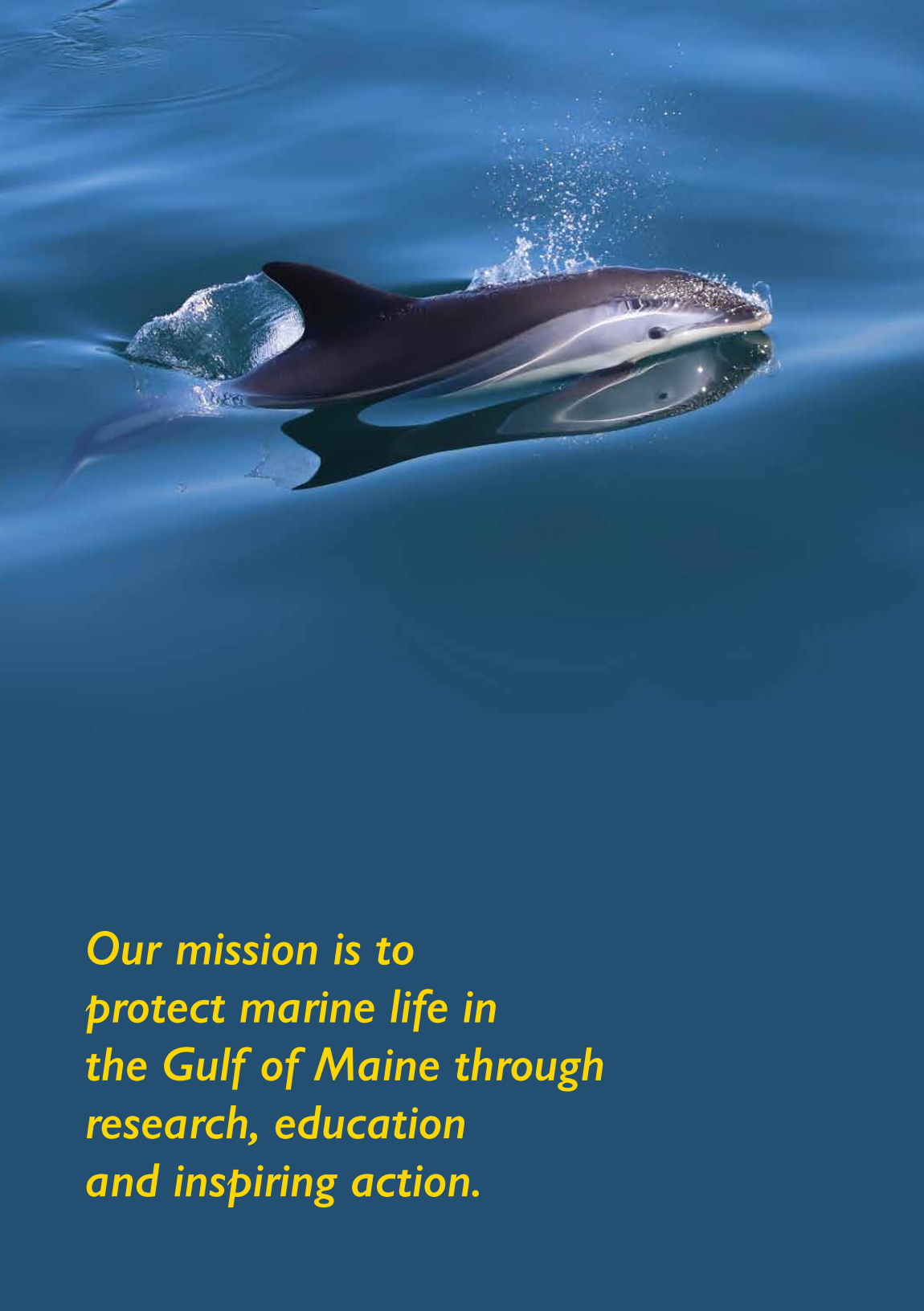
If you have contributed in the past, please continue to do so. We know there are many worthy causes and are grateful for your continued investment in our seacoast. If you share our desire to protect our coast but are unsure of where to begin, our passionate staff and board members can guide you to the most fulfilling way to contribute.

Looking ahead, 2025 promises to be another rewarding season on and around the Gulf of Maine. Our Blue Ocean Symposium kicked off the season to a packed theater in Kittery, ME with an inspiring roster of speakers from entrepreneurs to conservationists. We are prepared for our busiest beach cleanup season yet. Education programs continue at area institutions and whale watch trips have started out of Rye Harbor. And we are excited to welcome beachgoers to the newly refurbished Blue Ocean Discovery Center on the Hampton boardwalk.

Thank you and we hope to see you at the shore.

Gratefully,

Tyler O'Brien
Blue Ocean Society Board Chair



Our mission is to protect marine life in the Gulf of Maine through research, education and inspiring action.

2024 Board of Directors

- Christian Brouillard *Chair*
- James Boos *Treasurer*
- Anne M. Crotty, Esq. *Secretary*
- Colleen Durkin-Blackburn
- Tyler O’Brien
- Dave Schleyer
- Nadine Stewart Lysiak, PhD
- Todd West, JD
- Norlaila Miller

Staff

- Jennifer Kennedy *Executive Director & Co-Founder*
- Dianna Schulte *Director of Research & Co-Founder*
- Angela Sames *Office Coordinator*
- Niki Sullivan *Education Programs Coordinator*
- Nikki Tenaglia *Community Engagement Coordinator*
- Breanna Butland *Program Assistant and Educator*
- Kaela Preston *Data Coordinator*

Blue Ocean Discovery Center Summer Staff	Research Associates aboard M/V Granite State	2024 Marine Debris Interns	2024 Whale Research Interns
Anna Evans	Jonathan Gwalthney	Breanna Butland	Breanna Butland
Amelia Carchidi	Melanie White	Acadia Gelineau	David Hoppe
Anna Miller	Matt Mitchell	Amelia Carchidi	Nathalie Pare
Riley Levesque			Lulu Pumayalli
Emma O’Brien			Summer Shifflett
Acadia Smith			

2024 Major Funders

The Brook (RMH NH, LLC)

New Hampshire Department of
Environmental Services Coastal Program

The Schleyer Foundation

The Grey Rocks Foundation, Inc.

NOAA Marine Debris Program

The Spicy Shark, LLC

Newburyport Bank

Hampton Beach Village District

Aquafisk, Inc.

Howell Conservation Fund



The Grey Rocks
Foundation, Inc.



Newburyport Bank
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



A large humpback whale is breaching the surface of the blue ocean, its dark, wrinkled skin and open mouth creating a splash. Two white seagulls are in flight around the whale, one on the left and one on the right. The water is a deep blue with small waves.

Research

The focus of our research in 2024 was on identifying and cataloging local fin and humpback whales, studying the distribution of whales, basking sharks, and ocean sunfish, investigating long-term trends in distribution and social groups among marine mammals, and studying associations between species.

2024 Research: Microplastics

In 2024 we continued our work with University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and New Hampshire Sea Grant to study microplastics on New Hampshire beaches. This long-term data set is continuously updated in our digital *Microplastics on NH Beaches Dashboard* so you can explore microplastic pollution trends on NH Beaches.

Visit the *Dashboard* via the QR code to explore the data from different beaches at different times and even by type of microplastics.

We also neared completion of a comprehensive *Sampling and Sorting Toolkit* providing guidelines and resources for sorting and sampling microplastics in your local environment. Scan the QR code to access this informative document.



2024 Research Highlights



We conducted

158

whale watch/
research trips

We saw a minimum of

8,291

animals

Fin whales were seen most frequently, followed by humpback whales and harbor porpoises.

We observed

104

individual humpback
whales, including
6 calves.

We spotted a
blue whale - the
largest
species
on the planet

- for the first time since 2016!

23

species were
documented
including:

- 4 species of baleen whales
- 5 species of toothed whales
- 5 species of sharks
- 3 species of large fish (non-shark)
- 4 species of sea turtles - Green, Kemps
Ridley, Leatherback, and Loggerhead
- 2 species of seals

Several humpback whales
were documented as being
entangled with
rope/buoys and/or
monofilament line
in our study area.

We taught over

10,000

whale watch
passengers

about the ocean and how
to protect it

Of the whales with known
age, the majority were adults
(7+ years old). Ten of the
whales were estimated to be

40

years old

or more. More females
were seen than males.

A woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a dark blue t-shirt and black pants, stands on a wooden floor, addressing a group of children. The children are sitting on the floor, facing her. One boy in the foreground wears a red t-shirt with 'MILLER 4' on the back. A large, black, inflatable whale is in the background. The scene is indoors, likely in a gymnasium or large hall.

Education

We strive to share our love of marine life with the public to spread greater awareness of the Gulf of Maine and inspire environmental stewardship. This year we taught thousands of adults and kids about preserving Gulf of Maine marine life through our educational whale watches, the interactive Blue Ocean Discovery Center, the annual symposium, a life-sized inflatable whale and more.

2024 Education Highlights



Facilitating Discovery

We hosted nearly 7,000 visitors at our Blue Ocean Discovery Center.



Inspiring Curiosity

We reached nearly 3,000 students with interactive educational programs such as our life-sized inflatable fin whale and marine debris presentations.



Impactful Fieldwork

Our ongoing studies found that over 40% of the microplastics found on NH beaches are foams (e.g., polystyrene) such as foams that come from dock floats, construction and consumer items like Styrofoam coolers and packaging materials.



Knowledge as Power

Our annual symposium informed attendees about current initiatives that are protecting marine life and our ocean environment and ways to get involved.

Action & Advocacy

Whether through a meaningful hands-on experience at a marine debris cleanup, or by advocating for pollution prevention campaigns on Capitol Hill, we continue our work to inspire others to support our mission and take action to protect our Gulf of Maine marine environment.

2024 Action & Advocacy Highlights

Executive Director and Co-Founder Jen Kennedy spoke as an expert on whale behavior in this region in **USA Today** in response to the rare whale encounter in the Gulf of Maine where a feeding whale landed on a fishing boat. Jen provided crucial information and essential safety tips.



Upon receiving one of our largest marine debris grants to date, we began using the funds to clean up derelict fishing gear in the Gulf of Maine region. We also continued our successful partnership with Howell Conservation Fund to study microplastics and started working with Shaw Institute to find the source of these tiny pollutants.



We conducted cleanups at the Isles of Shoals for the first time in nearly ten years, removing thousands of pounds of lost fishing gear and other debris and returning usable gear back to fishermen.



We installed 22 fishing line recycling bins at marinas, docks and tackle shops from Dennis, MA to Wells, ME. Volunteers monitor the bins and collect the line, which is sent to Berkley Pure Fishing for recycling.



Executive Director and Co-Founder Jen Kennedy was invited by the Ocean Conservancy—a national nonprofit dedicated to ocean health and pollution prevention—to join fellow International Coastal Cleanup coordinators in sharing their stories on Capitol Hill. The group highlighted plastic pollution on our shores, the passion of our volunteers, and the need to support the Farewell to Foam Act and NOAA marine debris funding. We’re deeply grateful to the staff of Sen. Shaheen, Rep. Kuster, Rep. Pingree, Rep. Amo, Sen. Reed, and Sen. Whitehouse for their time and engagement.



Community

In 2024 more than 4,000 volunteers came together to support our mission, clean beaches, learn, teach and share our dedication to the health of the ocean environment in the Gulf of Maine.



““

The kids enjoyed being out in the sun at the beach during school hours. I was only with one team but they enjoyed trying to collect more than those around them. It was a fun competition

””

*Beach clean-up
program volunteer*

““

**10/10 will
be doing
this again
next year!
Thank you
so much!**

””

*Adopt-a-Beach
program volunteer*

““

All of my kids really enjoyed our day and I saw participation out of every single kid. Picking up trash isn't always glamorous but, the beach clean up was fun and we honestly had such a great time!

””

*Beach clean-up
program volunteer*

A photograph of four people (three young women and one young man) sitting on the deck of a boat. They are all smiling and looking at the camera. The man on the left is wearing a blue and black jacket and a black cap. The woman next to him is wearing a red shirt and a white cap. The woman in the center is wearing a bright green jacket. The woman on the right is wearing a brown shirt and glasses. They are on a boat with a metal railing, and the ocean is in the background. The sky is overcast.

This was the best summer I've ever had

and because of it I'm going to pursue a job in marine science. This internship made me realize my dreams are achievable and quite possibly changed the course of my life. Thank you! Being out on the water every day, in the fresh air and sunlight, was healing. It's exactly where I want to be. It never got old and I don't think it ever will.

~ Summer Shifflet, 2024 Whale Research Intern

2024 Interns





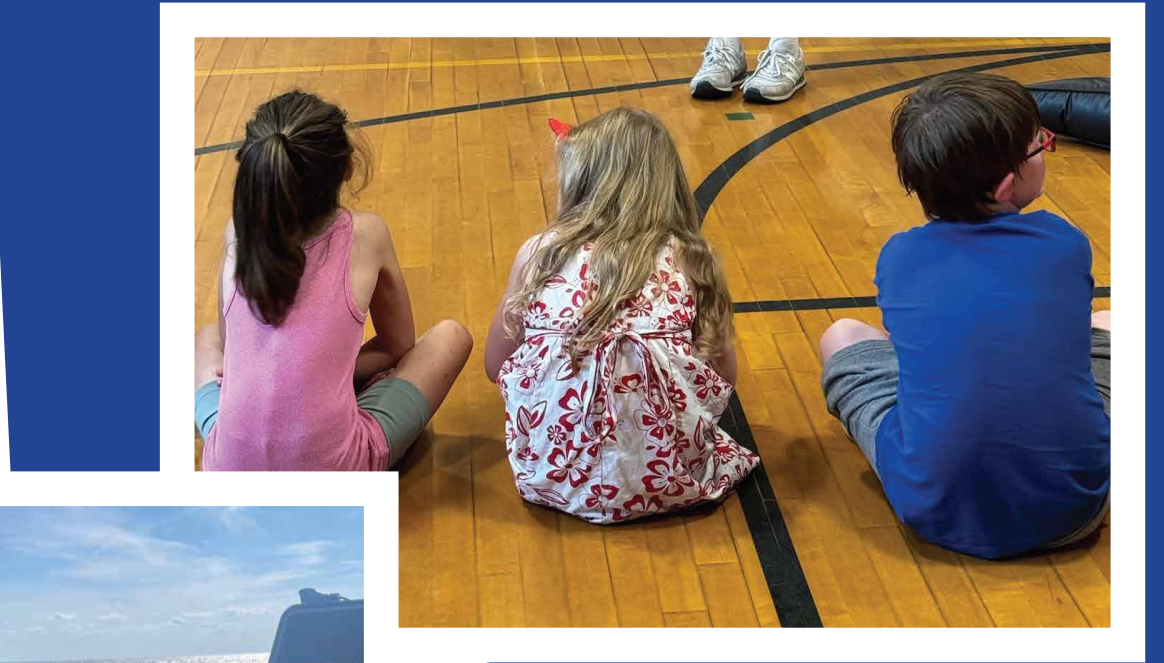
“

The marine debris presentation followed by a beach cleanup was very effective in teaching the students about the importance of ocean health stewardship in real time. Blue Ocean's statistics are very powerful and learning about the impact of debris on marine life helps our students understand how their efforts can make a difference and raise awareness for others. Getting feedback right away on the number of items and total weight collected helps student awareness that every little bit helps.

School Group Leader

”

2024 Students



2024 Beach Cleanup Groups

In 2024, more than **4,055 volunteers** participated in **293 beach cleanups** from Portland, ME to Boston, MA, removing over **160,811 pieces of litter** weighing **8,212 pounds**.

Single-use plastics were more than 34% of the items collected and we are still finding the Hooksett disks that were accidentally released in 2011.

We have cleaned beaches with the community since 2001 to reduce litter entering the ocean and protect marine life. Volunteers of all ages tally items as they collect them from the beach, and this data helps us better understand marine debris on our beaches and is used to prevent future pollution.

Aland Realty
AmWins
Apple Store
Ardent Concepts
Ardent Concepts Automation Dept

Berwick Academy
Bow High School
Breakthrough Manchester
Chinburg
Chop Shop 166
Coach
Coe-Brown Northwood Academy
Conval Regional High School
Daisy Girl Scout Troop 63308
Deltek
Dover High School
Durgin Pines
Enterprise Mobility
Exeter Subaru
Farm Credit East
First Citizens Bank #2
Flatbread Company
Gathering Waters Charter High School
GE Aerospace
Girl Scout Troop #61345
Girls Inc of NH
Governor's Academy
Granite State Credit Union
Granite United Way
Great Bay Charter School
GZA GeoEnvironmental
Hampton Cub Scout Pack 177
Hampton GOP
Henry J. McLaughlin Middle School
Cougar Chef's Club
HOPEww Scouts
Impax

International Association of
Privacy Professionals
JAG- NH Memorial High
John Hancock Signature Services
John Stark Regional High School
Jordan Park Group
Laborie Medical Technologies, Corp.
Lincoln Akerman School
Little Harbour School
Londonderry High School
Lonza Biologics
Loftware, Inc.
Manchester West High School
MegaFood
Messiah Lutheran Church Amherst
Milford Girl Scouts
National Association of Women
in Construction-Granite
State Chapter #218
NESC Staffing
New Hampton School
NH Certified B Corporations-
Seacoast
Nottingham Elementary
Novocure
Nute Middle High School
Oyster River High School
Philips Exeter Academy
Pinkerton Academy
Planet Fitness
Point 32 Health
Polo Ralph Lauren

Portsmouth High School
PrimeAsia
Project Management Institute
NH Chapter
Prospect Mountain High School
Santander
Seacoast Financial Planning
Solari Salon & Spa and First
Impressions Day Spa
Southern New Hampshire University
St. Thomas Aquinas High School
Starbucks
Stonyfield
Temple Israel Manchester
Temple Israel Portsmouth
The Cornerstone School
The Derryfield School
The Granite YMCA
The Seacoast Board of REALTORS®
The Winchendon School
The World Affairs Council of NH
Thornton Academy
Timberland
Trillium Flow Technologies
UKG
Unitil
University of New Hampshire
VCA Animal Hospitals
Voya Financial
Water Country
Whole Foods Market
Wilton Lyndeborough Cooperative
High School
Wilson Language Training
Winfield Children's House



2024 Volunteers

Adopt-a-Beach Groups

Club Finz of Southern Maine
Seacoast Paddleboard Club
Riley Levesque
Albers Family
Christine Ward
Allagash Brewery
FUUSE/PEA
Rod Mattson
Work Opportunities Unlimited
I Got Bridged
Sophie Pike
East Coast Cannabis
Maia Manesis Naylor
Amy & Liz Costello
Jenna Riley
NH DES Coastal Program
Chuck Sampson
Bill Hall
Chucky & Mary Rosa

Volunteer Beach Cleanup Leaders

Joe Carroll
David Gilman
Lesa Borninski
Christine Campanella
Pam Perreault
Mike Paige
Kat Couree
Joe Leverone
Charlie Raeburn
Nancy Anderson

Fishing Line Recycling Program Coordinator

Stephanie Burrows

Microplastics Sampling Leads

Christine Campanella
Pam Perrault
Charlie Raeburn
Tim Palen

Microplastics Sorting Volunteers

Pam Shaw
Sophie Casa
Avery Settele
Justin McLane
Abby Sargent
Anna Evans

Office and Event Support

Ann Birner
David Gilman
Diana Drouillard-O’Brien
Nancy Anderson
Pam Perreault
Mike Toepfer
Charlie Raeburn
Joe Leverone
Bette Garrett
Edwin Thompson
Jackie Jimenez
Krissy Mitchell
Patti Sullivan
Rebecca Potter
Susan Scott
Shaun Dillon
Morgan Adams
Laura Zakorchemny

2024 Volunteers





Sustaining

In 2024, generous donors, grants, and creative fundraising events fueled our mission and growth.

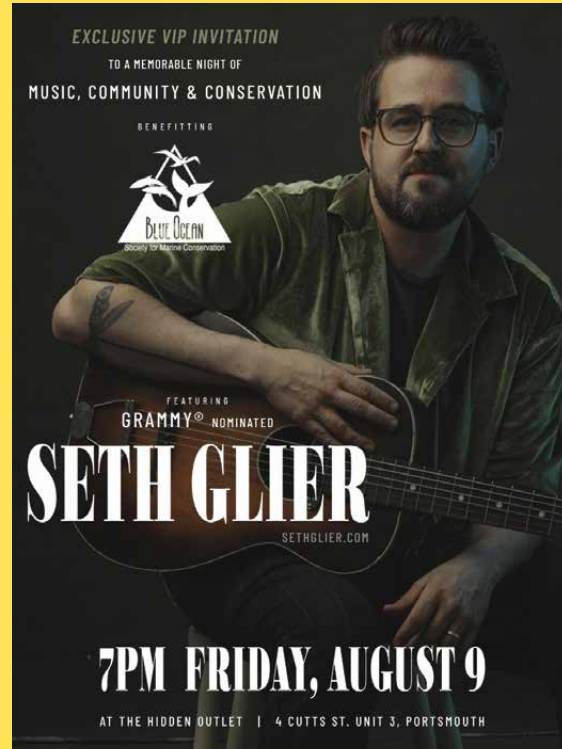
Continued efforts to build a strong financial foundation and the enthusiastic leadership of our dedicated Board supported our mission to protect marine life in the Gulf of Maine for generations to come.

2024 Sustaining Highlights



Ostreida: Oyster Vodka

We partnered with ISCO Sprits on their vodka distilled with oysters from Little Bay. A portion of the proceeds of every bottle sold in New Hampshire benefits the Blue Ocean Society.



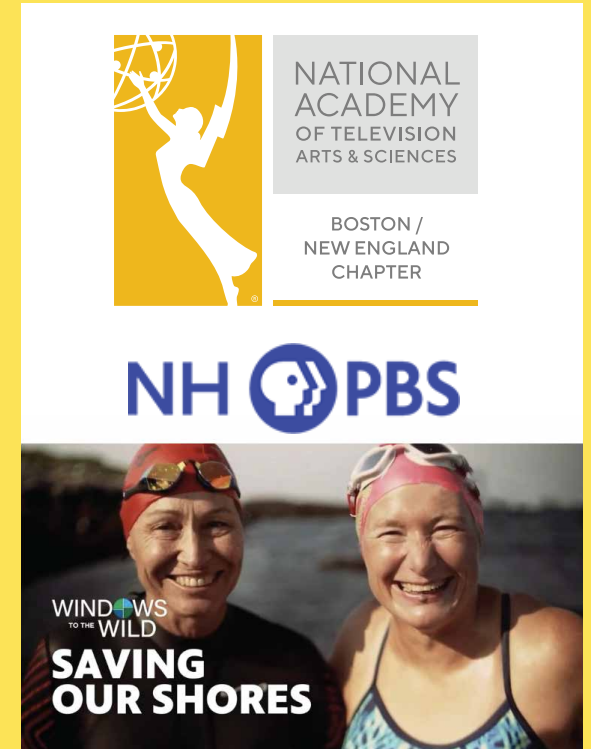
Creative Fundraising

We partnered with Duckfeet and Rust + Salt to host an inspiring community evening with Grammy-nominated artist Seth Glier.



Community Events

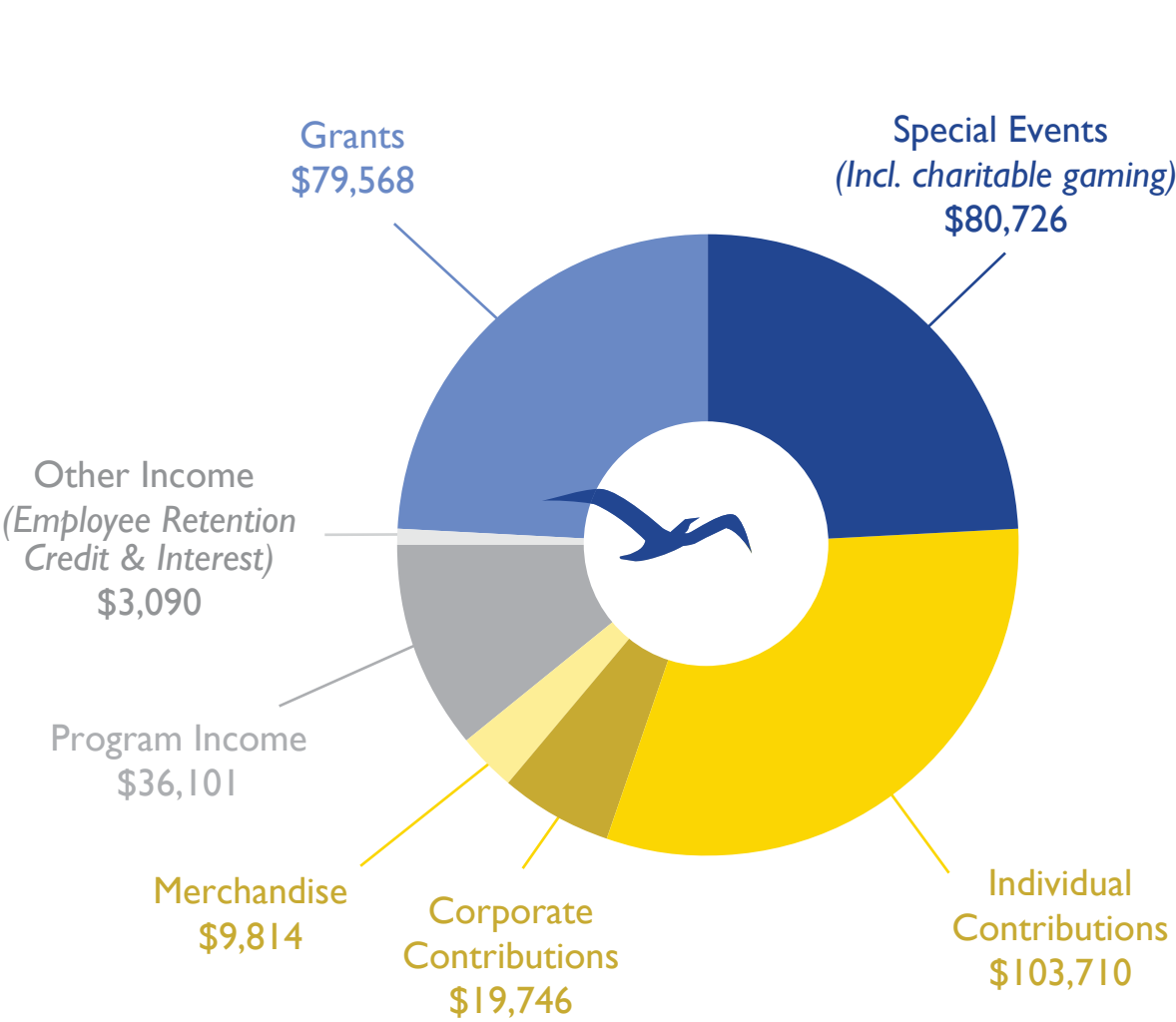
Once again we were honored to be a beneficiary of the New England Hot Sauce Festival, which draws thousands of enthusiasts to Hampton, NH.



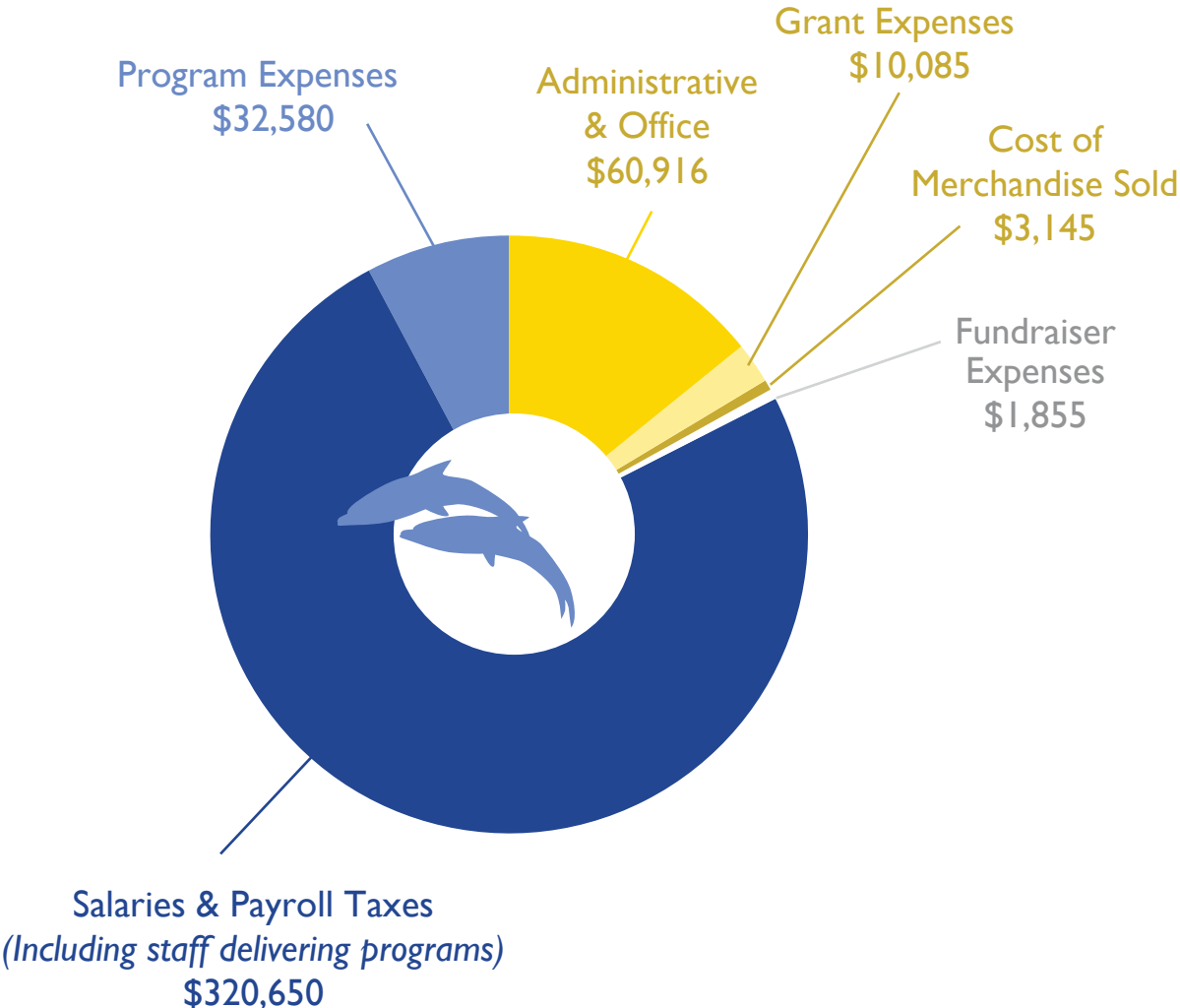
Emmy Nominated Stories

To raise funds and mark 50 years since the successful fight against an environmentally disastrous idea to install a coastal oil refinery on our shores, swimmers swam 7.5 miles from the Isles of Shoals to Rye Beach. The event was featured on NHPBS/*Windows to the Wild* and went on to receive an Emmy nomination.

2024 Financials



INCOME: \$332,755

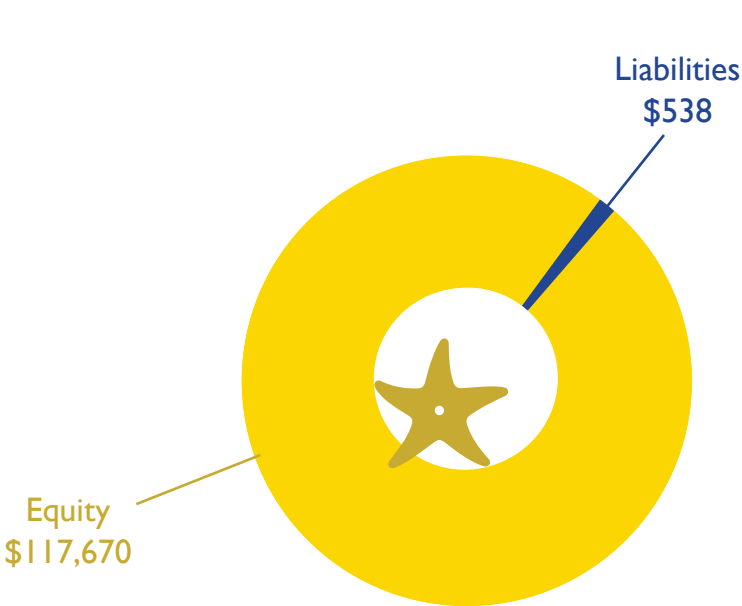


EXPENSES: \$429,231

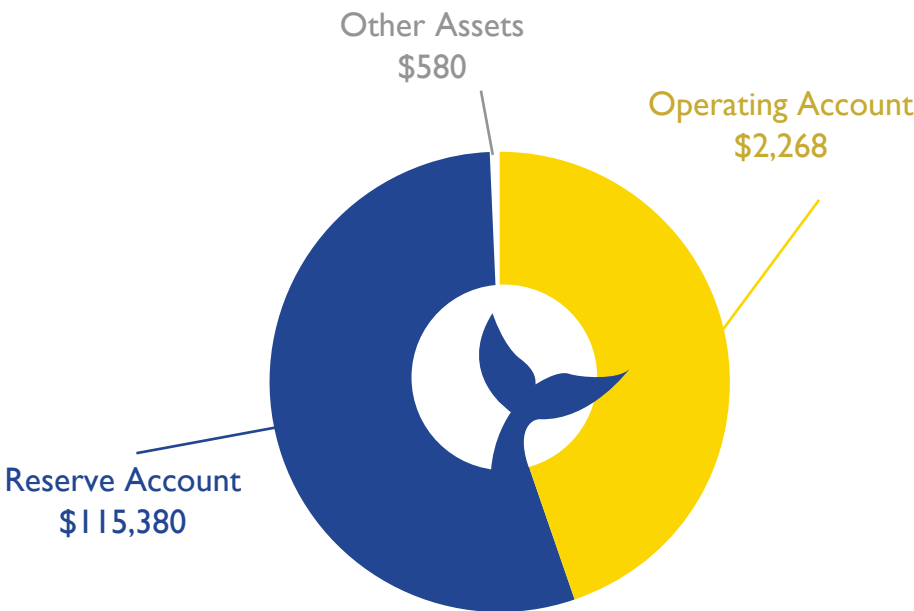
2024 Financials

2024 Marked a Strategic Investment in People and Programs

This year, we made the intentional decision to draw from our reserves in order to meet rising demand for our programs and retain the skilled staff needed to deliver them. While delayed grant reimbursements and administrative holdups impacted short-term cash flow, these investments ensured continuity, responsiveness, and growth in the face of increasing community and environmental needs.



TOTAL LIABILITY & EQUITY:
\$118,238



TOTAL ASSETS:
\$118,238

OPERATING REVENUES

	2024	2023
Contributions	123,456	173,710
Special Events	80,726	149,137
Grants	79,568	94,098
Programs	36,101	51,981
Merchandise	9,814	14,472
Other	3,090	41,148
TOTAL	\$332,755	\$524,546

OPERATING EXPENSES

	2024	2023
Salaries	320,650	211,868
Administrative	60,916	48,865
Programs	32,580	99,499
Grants	10,085	30,218
Merchandise	3,145	2,334
Fundraisers	1,855	8,023
TOTAL	\$429,231	\$400,807

2024 Donors

Together with those who care deeply for the health of our ocean, we're turning the vision of thriving marine life in the Gulf of Maine into a lasting reality.

Philanthropi Charitable
Vanguard
Stifel
Charity Gift Certificates
The HCA Foundation
Town Fair Tire Foundation, Inc.
Town Fair Tire Foundation, Inc.
Sprague
Dominion Energy
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The Schleyer Foundation
Logitech
Dell Technologies
PayPal Giving Fund
Hannaford Bloomin' 4
Good Program
The Grey Rocks Foundation, Inc
Tuesday Afternoon Club
of Durham
Vanguard Charitable
Beane Family Foundation
Coastal Rompers Girl Scout
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Aimee Bonanno
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Lisa Garrison
Karen Gellatly
Cynthia Genest
Norm Geoffrion
Stoneface Brewing Co

Susan Giacalone
Stephen Giannetti
Cindi Gianopoulos
Sheryl Gibbons
Sarah Gielink
Christine Gies
Anita Gildea
Juanita Giles
Christopher Gillard
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Katrina Gilman
Allison Gilmer
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Catherine Gordon
Gopinath Govindarajan
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Molly Groth

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Barry Hayes
Pete Head
Donna Head

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