

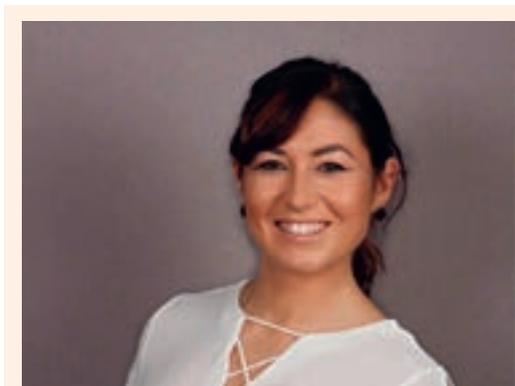


ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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In memory of our friend and colleague Joanna Toole, an outstandingly committed young woman who devoted her life to animal welfare and ocean conservation issues. Joanna tragically lost her life on 10 March 2019 in the Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) plane crash as she travelled to Nairobi to attend the UN Environment Assembly on behalf of the FAO. Joanna joined OceanCare between 2017 and 2018 as an Ocean Policy Consultant and brought her depth of experience of working within high level, policy making forums including the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme, and the International Maritime Organization to our organisation. During this time, she worked to establish, and then served as the coordinator for the Abidjan Aquatic Wildlife Partnership leaving another lasting legacy of her profound and wonderful commitment to wildlife. Joanna guided us through the process of submitting our SDG commitments in the context with the first UN Oceans Conference 2017, where she delivered our statement on SDGs and Ocean Noise in the Hall of Humanity. We will continue our shared mission for a healthy living ocean with Joanna’s spirit in our hearts.



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Dear readers,

We do it casually, but ceaselessly, from our first cry to our final breath. Now, while I write, I am consciously and gratefully drawing a deep breath. And I suspect that you too are doing the same while reading.

We breathe all throughout our lives – and we are worried about the depletion of the rainforests, because we know that trees give us the oxygen that keeps us alive. They are the planet’s green lung.

However, we often forget that this is only half the truth as only one of the planet’s lungs is green. The other lung is just as important – and it is blue: The phytoplankton in the oceans produces almost exactly the same amount of oxygen as the photosynthesis in the forests’ trees. In other words, every second breath comes from the sea. In this sense, ocean conservation is always climate protection at the same time. And we have been practising it for over thirty years now.

That can also be seen in this annual report, which summarises our manifold activities in facts and figures. What it cannot show are the storms and turbulence that often make our ship’s journey a tempestuous voyage. Some members of the OceanCare crew have disembarked (one under tragic circumstances, as you can read about on the opposite page) and others have just joined us.

This annual report is a logbook; it clarifies our proven strategy of commitment to the oceans and its inhabitants. We remain true to the principle that author Leah Lemieux aptly put in a nutshell with the phrase “diplomacy is the most radical form of activism”. We do not attack, but when we see wrongdoing, we call it what it is. We do not provoke, we seek dialogue. This is because we can only win decision-makers’ support for ocean conservation by convincing them.

We have achieved a lot, as demonstrated by this report. It is you, dear members, sponsors and patrons, who have made this possible. And I would be pleased if you would continue to accompany us in the future and remain loyal to us.

I breathe out, but I am not yet able to breathe a sigh of relief, because there is still no land in sight for the blue lung. Nevertheless, we remain on course.

Thank you for being on board.

Best regards,

Sigrid Lüber, President



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Projects

Marine Pollution

Underwater Noise

Underwater noise is a form of pollution that knows no boundaries. In large parts of the ocean, it causes considerable damage to the marine ecosystem. For example, seismic tests used for finding fossil fuels in the seabed, military sonar, and the globally increasing shipping traffic all generate noise that endangers biodiversity and the health of the oceans. As this also has a destructive impact on fish stocks, people in countries that depend on the catching and consumption of fish suffer socio-economic consequences. Among the organisations making sure that international bodies hear all about the underwater noise, OceanCare was the first and is still helping to lead the way today. This commitment led to OceanCare being granted UN Special Consultative Status in 2011.

■ **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS):** In June, the 20th meeting of the UN Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea was held at the UN headquarters in New York. The theme was the role of science and its contribution to sustainable development. Experts from the domains of science, technology and industry, as well as representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, exchanged concerns and views with delegates from the UN member states. Due to the general precarious situation in the ocean, OceanCare called for the precautionary principle to be applied wherever there is a lack of scientific data, taking underwater noise as an example. Adverse impact on marine animals should be avoided as much as possible, by means of best environmental practice and the best available technologies. These demands were included in the final report to the UN General Assembly.

■ **UN High Seas Agreement (BBNJ):** Until now, the high seas have been a largely lawless domain. In 2017, the United Nations decided to close the loophole with an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. In March and August 2019, the second and third of four negotiation rounds took place in New York. Since the negotiations began, OceanCare has been campaigning for transboundary pollution, such as noise and plastics, to be governed by the new agreement. At a side event in August, OceanCare and representatives of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) showed delegates how such transboundary pollution can be tackled. In December, OceanCare attended the High Seas Alliance (see p. 44) strategy meeting to prepare for the final round of negotiations in March 2020.

■ **UN General Assembly Climate Action Summit (UNGA):** At the invitation of the Belgian government, Nicolas Entrup represented OceanCare at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York on the 23rd of September and explained how quieter oceans contribute to climate action. Two sources of noise also play a central role in the emission of greenhouse gases: the oil industry and international shipping. It has been proven that the oil industry, by using extremely loud long-range acoustic devices, is causing massive damage to marine life, from marine mammals to



zooplankton, and is partly responsible for a significant decline in fish stocks in certain areas. OceanCare called on the UN member states to agree on a binding roadmap to end exploration for fossil fuels in the seabed. In shipping, a legally prescribed reduction in the speed of cargo ships is required. This would significantly reduce both CO₂ emissions and noise levels in the ocean.

■ **Brussels Declaration:** Belgium wants to make progress on climate protection and to push for a modern transformation of the energy sector. The so-called Brussels Declaration has already been signed by over 30 governments, by representatives of the private sector and by non-governmental organisations, including OceanCare. In February, it was presented in Brussels, in the presence of the UN Special Envoy for the Ocean. OceanCare took part in the panel discussion and explained the links between the energy revolution and reduction of underwater noise in a presentation.

■ **General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM):** In February, a joint OceanCare/GFCM workshop on the impact of underwater noise on fish, invertebrates and fish stocks was held in Rome. It was attended by experts from scientific institutes, the Chairperson of the GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee, representatives of the European Commission for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, and delegates from the Food and Agriculture Organization. Discussions addressed the fact that noisy activities are permitted in zones where fishing is prohibited, the relevance of environmental impact assessments to the prevention of adverse impact on marine life, and the need to study the socio-economic consequences of the impact of underwater noise on Mediterranean fish stocks. The participants developed recommendations on how underwater noise can be curbed, and a concept for a socio-economic study was commissioned. The workshop followed a call for such a study in the United Nations Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries.

■ **Convention for Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution (Barcelona Convention):** At the 21st Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, the area between the Balearic Islands and mainland Spain was declared a Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance. This area covers 46,386 km² and is extremely valuable in an ecological sense. It is a migration corridor for species such as the fin whale, but also a habitat for a wide variety of marine life, including pilot whales, sperm whales, Cuvier's beaked whales, bottlenose dolphins, striped dolphins, sharks, sea turtles and seabirds. OceanCare had been campaigning for protection of this area for years. As an organisation newly accredited for the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan, it can participate in the development of the corresponding management plan. The objectives include a permanent ban on fossil resource exploration and extraction, and a reduction in the speed of cargo ships in the sensitive area, which would also reduce the risk of ships colliding with large whales. Even before the meeting of the contracting parties, Spain had set an example by rejecting two applications for oil exploration in the newly declared protected area, thus making an important contribution to climate protection and species conservation.



■ **Agreement for the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS):** In November, the Meeting of the Parties to ACCOBAMS took place in Turkey. OceanCare addressed the danger of collision between ships and whales in the dense traffic of the Mediterranean Sea. This applies to fin whales and sperm whales in particular. The delegates showed that they were open to measures for avoidance of such collisions, such as moving shipping routes out of areas where there are large numbers of whales and reducing sailing speeds. OceanCare particularly welcomed ACCOBAMS' call on member states to carry out environmental impact assessments before any noise-intense activities, in accordance with the CMS Family Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment for Marine Noise- generating Activities. Such measures are essential for sensitive areas like the Hellenic Trench, where a highly endangered sperm whale population lives, and where the oil industry is currently planning and conducting seismic tests. At a side event, SAVE Whales (see opposite), a project aiming to minimise collisions between cargo ships and sperm whales, was presented to the ACCOBAMS delegates by OceanCare. This side event showed government representatives how precarious the situation is for whales. OceanCare also issued a clear warning about the dangers of the planned exploitation of new oil resources in the Hellenic Trench.

■ **Workshop on the tension between whale conservation and military challenges:** The underwater world is also often a theatre of war, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean. Large marine areas are monitored with active sonar to locate enemy submarines. Frequently, whale strandings occur after military manoeuvres. OceanCare and NRDC have long been trying to establish an exchange between whale conservationists and militaries. In October 2019, ACCOBAMS held a workshop in Toulon, France, which was attended by representatives of the French, Italian and Greek navies. Here, OceanCare contributed with its expertise in the field of underwater noise and welcomed the dialogue between stakeholders, with the aim of protecting the marine environment from harm wherever possible. It is a step in the right direction.

■ **EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive:** In January, OceanCare, IFAW, NRDC and Seas at Risk examined how effectively marine animals in EU waters are protected from noise. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive, adopted in 2008, calls upon EU member states to ensure a "good environmental status" in sensitive marine areas by 2020 and to reduce noise-intense activities to a biologically acceptable level. The report Reduce the Noise shows how inadequately measures are being implemented and that noise levels are continuing to rise in many marine areas. Primarily, there is a need for action regarding the exploration of oil and gas deposits in the seabed, military activities and shipping. Reduce the Noise makes it clear how closely noise reduction is linked to climate protection and the avoidance of collisions between ships and whales. The authors of the report call on the EU member states to reduce maximum speeds for ships, to develop technologies that are more environmentally friendly and to carry out environmental impact assessments in accordance with the CMS EIA Guidelines. Noise buffer zones are needed around sensitive marine areas, noise must be prevented in the areas themselves and shipping routes must be moved. In addition to the political initiatives, OceanCare also actively addressed technical and scientific issues relating to noise reduction, as part of an EU working group advising the European Commission and EU member states.



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■ **SAvE Whales – avoidance of collisions between whales and ships:** Thanks to a bequest, OceanCare was able to launch the SAvE Whales project. The acronym stands for “System for the Avoidance of ship strikes with Endangered Whales”. This project, also called SaveMoby in OceanCare’s communications, combines knowledge from marine biology, underwater acoustics, applied mathematics, computer network technology and computer science, and integrates real-time marine traffic data as well. The SAvE Whales system is to locate sperm whales acoustically, compare their positions and movements with ship movements, and issue warnings to captains of any ships on a collision course with whales, so they can avoid the animals. It shall also collect data on sperm whales and the impact of human activities on their habitat, from which efficient conservation measures can be derived. The three-year pilot project is to be carried out in the waters south of Crete, where an endangered sperm whale population lives. If the system is as successful as expected, it will be an effective animal and species conservation tool, which can also be implemented in other marine regions that are important for sperm whales.

■ **Oil exploration in Greece:** The Greek government has issued licences to explore for oil deposits in the seabed using seismic technology in the Hellenic Trench and in the area around the Ionian Islands. These sensitive areas are home to vulnerable species, such as sperm whales, Cuvier’s beaked whales and common dolphins. For years, scientists and bodies like ACCOBAMS have been calling for the Hellenic Trench, which is up to 5,000 metres deep, to be placed under protection. In April, OceanCare took part in a symposium organised by WWF Greece, addressing oil production plans in Greek waters. As an expert on underwater noise, OceanCare supported WWF Greece’s appeal to the Greek government to suspend the issued oil exploration licences.

■ **EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR):** In May, the 4th EUSAIR Forum was held in Montenegro. The focus was on tourism and the topic “blue growth”. OceanCare presented a report on the activities of the oil and gas industry in the region, introduced the problem of underwater noise to the board and drew attention to seismic surveys’ adverse consequences for fishing.

■ **Conference participation:** As a scientific expert, OceanCare consultant Dr Linda Weilgart participated in Quieting Ships to Protect the Marine Environment, a technical workshop organised in London by the Canadian government and the International Maritime Organization. She also contributed her expertise to the Review of Canadian Practice with Respect to the Mitigation of Seismic Sound in the Marine Environment, conducted by the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) in Nova Scotia, as well as to the World Marine Mammal Conference in Barcelona and the International Conference on the Effects of Noise on Aquatic Life in The Hague. At a symposium held in Hamburg by the Jens-Peter and Betsy Schlüter Foundation for Shipping and Environmental Protection, Dr Linda Weilgart and Nicolas Entrup gave various presentations that laid important foundations for discussion. At the science and engineering conference Oceans 2019 in Seattle, ocean law expert Lora L. Nordtvedt Reeve appeared on OceanCare’s behalf and presented information on underwater noise in the context of the new High Sees Agreement.

Plastic Pollution

Every year, around nine million tonnes of plastic waste finds its way into the oceans. Many marine animals die because they eat plastic waste or get entangled in nets. OceanCare takes a multifaceted approach to the problem: We are working within international bodies to obtain binding regulations, we are raising awareness of the need to stop single-use plastics with our I Care campaign, and we are doing important work on the ground with regard to beach clean-ups and the rescue of animals caught in marine debris.

■ **UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4):** At UNEA-4 in March 2019, heads of state and government, environment ministers, and delegates from all over the world discussed the plastics crisis. The findings of the meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics, which OceanCare had attended in 2018, were presented. A majority of the member states were in favour of a strict approach to the plastics problem. A UNEA mandate to develop an international plastics treaty failed, due to resistance from a few states such as the USA and Brazil. However, the continuation of the expert group in which OceanCare is involved was ensured. This group is to examine technical and financial options for reducing plastics and to identify possible courses of action in time for the February 2021 fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly.

■ **Global Pact for the Environment (GPE):** GPE wants a global UN pact to unify, and thus strengthen, international environmental law. After UNEA-4 in 2019, OceanCare attended two GPE meetings in Nairobi and worked to convince political decision-makers of the need for the desired pact. The UN member states showed varying degrees of openness to such instrument, but foundations were successfully laid in the process towards unifying environmental law.

■ **UN High Seas Agreement (BBNJ):** In March and August, the United Nations continued negotiations on a legally binding high seas agreement governing the protection and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (see p. 4). The draft agreement will be finalised in 2020 and submitted to the UN General Assembly. Since the negotiations began, OceanCare has been campaigning for the agreement to govern underwater noise and plastic pollution as transboundary forms of pollution.

■ **European Union:** Within the framework of EU MERMAIDS Life+, the EU responded to OceanCare's call for filter systems to be used in washing machines and dryers, so as to prevent microfibres from entering the water cycle. This requirement was included in the draft of the new regulation on the eco-design of washing machines and dryers. Given the rapid pace of technological development, the European Commission will review it in 2025. Via Seas at Risk, OceanCare provided input for further EU consultations, such as smart goals for the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 regarding the impact of plastics on biodiversity.

■ **Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA):** In October, at the invitation of the FDFA, OceanCare took part in an exchange on microplastic pollution of inland and marine waters at the University of Basel, where approaches to solving the problem were discussed informally.



graceful

disgraceful

■ **Global chemicals strategy stakeholders (SAICM):** In March, at the invitation of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, OceanCare took part in an exchange between the Swiss government, the private sector and non-governmental organisations. We pointed out gaps in international legislation on the use of chemicals, criticised the massive increase in plastics production planned by the industry, called for classification of plastics according to toxicity and called on the plastics industry to commit to a circular economy.

■ **Break Free from Plastic (BFFP):** Since 2016, OceanCare has been a member of this coalition, in which organisations around the world are campaigning for a reduction of plastic pollution and for circular use of plastics. In the context of UNEA-4, OceanCare was recognised as a core member of BFFP. The coalition's European branch defined its strategy for the coming years at a meeting in Venwoude, the Netherlands. OceanCare contributed its expertise to workshops and was accepted into both the policy working group and the BFFP Europe advisory group.

■ **Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI):** In the summer, OceanCare became a member of this global alliance against lost or abandoned fishing gear, thus supporting initiatives to ensure that ghost nets are recovered, and that fishing nets will be tagged, so that these can be traced back to their owners in the future. The aim is to reduce the risk of marine animals getting entangled in ghost nets and drown.

■ **Joanna Toole Internship:** In October, GGGI presented the Joanna Toole Internship, which is supported by Ocean Conservancy, OceanCare, the Center for Coastal Studies and the Joanna Toole Foundation. Every year, one selected female marine conservationist is given the opportunity to work on GGGI members' projects aiming to reduce the threat to marine life posed by ghost nets.

■ **Plastic pollution in Sicily:** In an OceanCare research project (see p. 26), plastic on the sea surface was counted. A total of 12,156 plastic parts and 256 parts made of glass or other materials were collected and recorded. Plastic particles in the 2.5 to 20 cm size range were most prevalent, along with a myriad of nets, lines, plastic bags, plastic bottles and polystyrene. On the 21st of September, World Cleanup Day, OceanCare cleaned two beaches and spent three hours collecting around 200 kilos of waste from a 7,000m² area. The most common items were lollipop sticks, cigarette butts, polystyrene parts, packaging, bottle tops and plastic bottles. Scrap metal and car tyres were also removed from the beaches.



■ **School project in Italy:** In 2019, OceanCare carried out the Due Mani (two hands) school project in Viareggio and Trieste. Over the course of three days, more than 40 students learnt about the extent and impact of plastic pollution, and also cleaned a beach, where they collected 60 kilos of waste in one hour.

■ **Clean-up with rock band ITCHY:** In 2019, fans were again photographed with the I Care logo at ITCHY concerts in Switzerland, as part of a photo campaign organised by OceanCare. For each of the 200 photos, the band spent one minute collecting rubbish from the sea off Calabria on World Cleanup Day. They encouraged fans to follow their example and Stern.de reported online. Here is the campaign video: youtu.be/udMMUVSkjN4

■ **World Cleanup Day in Zurich:** On the 21st of September, OceanCare, Trash Hero World, Hydroheart, STOPPP and Tauchsport Käser organised a clean-up operation in Zurich. In five hours, over a tonne of waste was collected from the lake and along the lake promenade by 44 divers and 130 helpers. Cigarettes caused the most concern: 16,000 butts were picked up, each containing up to 7,000 chemicals and capable of contaminating around 40 litres of water. STOPPP and OceanCare jointly identified 176 branded products in a “brand audit”. The results were submitted to the Break Free From Plastic brand audit platform, which collects such data worldwide and calls on manufacturers to take responsibility. Here is a video about the clean-up: youtu.be/cqUKd-oO4-M

■ **Save the Med Foundation:** OceanCare has been cooperating with the Save the Med Foundation (formerly Asociacion Ondine and Alnitak) since 2016. In 2019, a total of 2,552 pupils from 35 schools were involved in the foundation’s school project Dos Manos (two hands), in which the organisation raised their awareness of plastic waste and carried out beach clean-ups with them on the Balearic Islands, collecting and categorising 103,290 objects, mainly made of plastic. Schools from France, Sweden, Denmark and Italy also visited the project. In the Changemakers at Sea project, schools exchanged ideas on the challenge of reducing plastics. In addition, the club Bio-Bellver was founded, in which school pupils meet on a weekly basis to discuss the problems of the plastics crisis, as well as possible solutions, and to give presentations. By promoting drinking fountains and the use of refillable bottles, they ensured that around 11,000 fewer single-use plastic bottles were consumed. In recognition of this effort, they were allowed to accompany researchers working at sea. The Save the Med Foundation regularly carries out beach clean-ups. On World Cleanup Day, 120 volunteers took part.

■ **iSea:** OceanCare assisted the Greek organisation iSea with its #zeroplastic campaign. Didactic material was developed, which the Greek Ministry of Education approved for use in the classroom. The iSea Science Café streamed online presentations by experts. Educational material was distributed to schools and fishing associations in 27 communities, reaching about 20,000 people. At 31 environmental education events and six beach clean-ups, 300 people collected 2,196 kilos of waste. With stands and lectures, iSea reached around 2,700 people. At an International Hellenic University event, 30 tourism experts and entrepreneurs discussed zero-waste solutions. In addition, iSea launched the project Kookoonari, which aims to transform a school into a zero/low-waste school. It also started the project Keep Our Sand and Sea Plastic-Free, aiming to reduce consumption



of single-use plastics by means of environmental education. In a survey, iSea is currently investigating how sensitive the Greek population is to the plastics crisis. Initial results show that young people in particular are willing to give up plastics and almost all respondents are in favour of a ban on microplastics.

■ **Trash Hero World:** Since 2017, OceanCare has been cooperating with Trash Hero World, an organisation with 162 local groups in 15 countries. In 2019, our support helped to enable the collection of nearly 656 tonnes of waste. A total of 137,398 volunteers, including 38,729 children, worked in 4,178 clean-up operations. By distributing 12,850 refillable bottles, the organisation ensured that 8,752,335 fewer single-use plastic bottles were consumed. In addition, 12,850 reusable bags were sold, reducing the number of single-use plastic bags consumed by 4,690,250. In South East Asia, the Trash Hero children's book raised about 9,500 children's awareness of the dangers of plastic, and Trash Hero Serbia won the Green Leaf Award, which recognises environmental achievements.

■ **I Care campaign:** In 2019, OceanCare continued its awareness-raising campaign to reduce single-use plastics. Via social media, it advertised products that reduce plastic pollution, such as the popular veggie bags for fruit and vegetables, and the Guppyfriend washing bag, which collects microfibres from synthetic clothing during laundry. In a design competition for the new SIGG bottle, members of the public were able to vote for their favourite design via social media and to take part in a prize draw for a bottle.

■ **Reduction of plastics in Swiss retail:** As a result of the OceanCare market study on plastic packaging for organic fruit and vegetables, Swiss retailers promised to reduce packaging in 2018. In February 2019, OceanCare checked whether their promises were being kept. Coop had reduced packaging by 7.7%, Aldi by 8%, Lidl by 8.7% and Migros by 0.2%. In mid-April, OceanCare presented these results to the retailers and called for greater effort in an open letter. In October, OceanCare participated in Coop's internal target-setting seminar on plastics reduction. This was followed by an invitation to attend the Coop Bau und Hobby stakeholder meeting, where OceanCare spoke about the impact of plastic pollution and stressed the need for a circular economy.

■ **Filler advertisements:** OceanCare continued its awareness-raising work with filler advertisements. Media in Switzerland, Germany and Austria printed advertisements on two new subjects, free of charge. These are helping to maintain public awareness of the dangers of plastic waste. Together with filler advertisements for the whale warning system in Greece, the total value of the advertising was CHF 859,000 (see p. 40).

■ **Raising awareness in air travel:** Since January 2017, Gebr. Heinemann has been charging a 30-cent fee on all single-use bags in its duty-free shops at many locations and, together with OceanCare, raising travellers' awareness of plastic pollution in the oceans. Already in the first year of this collaboration, the number of plastic bags in the shops fell by around 70 percent. The proceeds from these sales are donated to OceanCare. In total, between the start of the collaboration and the end of 2019, almost 500,000 Euros were raised in this way.



■ **Rose of Charity Sailing Cup:** In this sailing regatta, actors such as Hannes Jaenicke and representatives of companies such as SodaStream competed against each other in Greece. As the event's charity organisation, OceanCare communicated about the beauty of the seas, the threats they are facing and how we can all contribute to marine conservation. High-profile participants called for an end to single-use plastics and the TV programme ARD Brisant presented OceanCare's work in detail during prime time. Here is the Rose of Charity video: bit.ly/3aBvzZR

■ **#TOGETHERBAND:** The colours of the #TOGETHERBAND bracelet collection from Swiss bank UBS and British fashion label BOTTLETOP represent the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in the UN 2030 Agenda. The proceeds are used to support projects that implement these goals. UBS chose OceanCare as the Swiss expert for Sustainability Goal 14, Life Below Water. In this context, the Swiss newspaper SonntagsBlick presented a portrait of OceanCare's work and provided tips on how to avoid plastics.

■ **PolyProblem Stakeholder Dialogue in Berlin:** For the first time, the Röchling Foundation and consulting firm Wider Sense organised the PolyProblem Stakeholder Dialogue, so as to pool strengths with regard to the plastics crisis. Here, OceanCare presented its campaigns.

■ **Round table on plastic pollution:** OceanCare took part in the APPOLL Forum, which helps 57 organisations from the domains of research, industry, conservation, education and politics to interconnect, promoting an exchange on how to solve the problem of plastic pollution in Switzerland.

■ **Food Packaging Forum:** OceanCare attended a conference held in Zurich by the Swiss foundation Food Packaging Forum. This brought together representatives of non-governmental organisations and authorities, as well as those from the domains of research and industry, for an exchange of information on packaging. The presentations covered research results, innovative packaging options and environmental training for companies.

■ **The Klosters Forum:** This forum brings together civil society figures, entrepreneurs, investors, academics and creative media to find solutions to the plastics crisis. By invitation, Sigrid Lüber attended on behalf of OceanCare.

■ **fair-fish plastics petition:** In February, the association fair-fish, together with OceanCare and the foundation Tier im Recht, submitted the "Stop plastic pollution!" petition, with 2,886 signatures, to the Swiss parliament. This petition calls for plastic products to be recyclable, for a ban on cosmetics, detergents and cleaning agents that contain microplastics, and for a ban on washing machines without microparticle filters.

■ **G7 Summit:** OceanCare added its signature to Surfrider Europe's demands on plastics, species conservation and climate change, which were submitted to the G7 countries' heads of state and government at the G7 Summit in Biarritz.



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Climate Change

Healthy oceans are essential to life on Earth. They store around a quarter of the CO₂ produced since 1900 and absorb much of the rising temperatures on our planet. At the same time, they produce 50% of the oxygen we breathe. However, their capacity to compensate for our environmental transgressions is limited. This is becoming obvious in the polar regions, where pack ice is disappearing – and with it, many animals' habitat. For instance, if the trend is not reversed, around a third of the 22,000 to 31,000 polar bears still alive are in danger of disappearing by 2025. Against this backdrop, trophy hunting appears all the more macabre. In order to remove the incentive to hunt, OceanCare is campaigning for a trade ban on polar bear products. The melting of polar ice favours those hoping that the North-West Passage will become clear enough for shipping, as well as those hoping to access Arctic fishing grounds and raw materials. OceanCare is opposed to this. Within international bodies, it is campaigning for marine protected areas and quiet zones, which should put a stop to resource exploration in the seabed. Activities to reduce plastic consumption are also helping to reign in the oil and gas industry's growth plans. As the sea is an important climate factor, all efforts to keep it healthy also strengthen the protection of our planet's climate.

■ **Brussels Declaration:** The international conference Climate Change and Ocean Conservation, stemming from a Belgian initiative, took place in February 2019. Here, the Brussels Declaration was presented. This was signed by 33 governments and 11 non-governmental organisations, including OceanCare. Nicolas Entrup, Co-Director of International Relations at OceanCare, took part in a panel discussion and demonstrated the links between the energy revolution and reduction of underwater noise (see p. 5).

■ **UN General Assembly Climate Action Summit (UNGA):** In September, at the invitation of the Belgian government, Nicolas Entrup presented OceanCare's call for a binding roadmap to end oil and gas exploration in the seabed at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York. As described in detail in the Underwater Noise section (see p. 4), he took this opportunity to explain why quieter seas contribute to climate protection.

■ **Protecting polar bears from trophy hunting:** OceanCare, the foundation Tier im Recht and the organisation Animal Trust launched a petition demanding that the import and transit of animal trophies from protected or endangered species, such as the polar bear, be banned in Switzerland. Almost 12,500 people supported this demand. The Science, Education and Culture Committee (SECC) of the Swiss Council of States had already rejected the petition in 2018 and the Swiss National Council's SECC followed suit on the 22nd of March 2019: The councillors voted against the import ban by 12 votes to seven, with one abstention. However, a minority requested that the petition be sent back to the committee, along with the task of preparing a parliamentary initiative or procedural request along the lines of the petition. OceanCare is disappointed by the decision, as an appropriate ban would make a significant contribution to the protection of endangered animal species: Without trophies that can be transported back home, hunting loses its appeal.



Marine Protected Areas

The ocean covers 70 % of the Earth's surface and is the largest habitat on our planet. It provides us with oxygen and food, regulates weather and temperatures, and is of fundamental importance to life on Earth. Nevertheless, just 5 % of its area is currently protected.

■ **UN High Seas Agreement (BBNJ):** In 2019, there were two rounds of negotiations on the planned High Seas Treaty. OceanCare took part and campaigned for incorporation of issues such as underwater noise and plastic pollution into this protection of the high seas (see pp. 4 and 8).

■ **Whale migration corridor off the Balearic Islands:** The area between the Balearic Islands and the Spanish mainland is extremely valuable in an ecological sense. It serves as both an important migration route for the fin whale and as habitat for a variety of marine animals. In 2019, it was declared a Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance by the Barcelona Convention member states. After years of campaigning for this protected status, OceanCare will be able to contribute to the development of the corresponding management plan as a UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan partner (see p. 5).

■ **Antarctic Ocean Alliance:** Only 5 % of the Southern Ocean is currently under protection. Against the backdrop of climate change and species extinction, there is an urgent need to protect more zones in the Antarctic. At present, three are under discussion: East Antarctica, the Weddell Sea and the Antarctic Peninsula. As the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) member states were unable to reach a consensus due to vetoes from Russia and China, OceanCare added its signature to an urgent appeal by the Antarctic Ocean Alliance for the attention of global decision-makers.

■ **Marine Arctic Peace Sanctuary (MAPS):** In the Arctic, OceanCare is supporting the Parvati.org MAPS initiative, which aims to declare the Arctic Ocean north of the Arctic Circle an international peace park, where all forms of exploitation, including oil production plans, should be banned.



A photograph of a fishing boat on the ocean. The boat is white with a blue cabin and has a large net structure on its deck. The sky is clear and blue, and a bird is visible in the upper right corner. The word "Fishing" is written in a bold, orange font in the bottom left corner of the image.

Fishing

Every year, around 140 million tonnes of marine animals are taken from the ocean. Just under two thirds are used, whereas the rest ends up back in the water as by-catch, either dead or injured. If this trend is not reversed, the stocks of commercially exploited fish species will have disappeared in around 40 years. This threatens the marine ecosystem, along with three billion people's food security.

■ **General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM):** In February, OceanCare and GFCM jointly conducted a workshop about the impact of underwater noise on fish and fish stocks at the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) headquarters in Rome. It was attended by experts from Mediterranean countries' scientific institutes and by representatives of the European Commission. Recommendations were developed, which included a study on the socio-economic consequences of underwater noise on fish, invertebrates and fish stocks. The workshop was mentioned in the UN Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries. In June, at a GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee meeting in Cairo, OceanCare presented the alarming results of its 2018 study conducted on the Italian coast, which showed that 57% of fish samples purchased at markets contained microplastics (see p. 5). OceanCare also presented the recommendations from the aforementioned workshop and suggested that, at the GFCM session, the advisory committee should recommend conducting the corresponding socio-economic study. In November, OceanCare attended the 43rd GFCM session in Athens and, as one of the commission's partners, provided information on its ongoing activities. OceanCare successfully advocated for the socio-economic study to be effectively included in the GFCM work programme. This is to be jointly prepared by GFCM and OceanCare. The commission's decision to no longer allow single-use plastics at its conferences was noteworthy – an example that will hopefully be followed by other agreements.

■ **World Trade Organization (WTO):** Together with 59 other organisations, OceanCare called on the WTO to fulfil its 2017 mandate. Among other things, this mandate stated that WTO members must agree on measures against overfishing and, by the end of 2019, eliminate subsidies that lead to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing practices.

■ **EU Fisheries Council:** In June, the Fisheries Council negotiated on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) for the years 2021 to 2027, which the European Commission suggested should receive around 6.14 billion Euros. Seas at Risk, an association of environmental organisations in which OceanCare is actively involved, criticised the reintroduction of fishing subsidies that would significantly increase the number of catches and promote overfishing. These are being reintroduced behind a smokescreen of arguments in favour of modernisation, an improved energy balance and occupational safety.

■ **Survey of Sicilian fishers:** In 2019, OceanCare completed a survey of small-scale fishers in Eastern Sicily. The fishers made statements about fishing problems, interactions with dolphins and sea turtles, their assessment of marine plastic pollution, and the acceptance of marine protected areas. Around half of them mentioned the by-catch of sea turtles as a significant problem; 72% stated that dolphins had damaged their nets or plundered the contents thereof. The results of the study match a report on interaction between cetaceans and fishers in Eastern Sicily, published in 2019 by Monaco et al. This potential for conflict must be addressed.

■ **Sustainable fish procurement in Vienna:** Every day, about 100,000 people are provided with meals at the City of Vienna's public institutions. Here, according to the Austrian Nutrition Society, fish should be on the menu once or twice a week. As fishing and aquaculture cause considerable damage to the marine ecosystem, our partner organisation Shifting Values, on behalf of the City of Vienna's Environmental Protection Department, organised a meeting with scientists, food purchasers from hospitals and schools, and representatives of public authorities and non-governmental organisations. The city is aiming to make the procurement of fish products more sustainable. As this is also a topic in Switzerland, OceanCare attended the event and actively contributed to the discussion.

■ **Marine Stewardship Council (MSC):** MSC, the most recognised eco-label for the sustainability of sea fish and seafood, is increasingly being awarded to fisheries that catch endangered marine animals, have high by-catch rates, destroy the seabed and hunt overfished species. This certification practice calls into question the credibility of the label and misleads consumers. In 2019, OceanCare added its signature to several open letters from the alliance Make Stewardship Count and, together with international environmental organisations, researchers, photographers and filmmakers, called for more transparency in the awarding of the label and for compliance with the MSC sustainability criteria, especially with regard to shark finning. Certified fisheries that do not comply with the requirements should be sanctioned appropriately.

■ **Romania:** OceanCare, along with 16 other organisations, called on the Romanian Minister of Agriculture and the Romanian Ministry of Fisheries' Representative to the EU to take measures that ensure protected seabirds, whales, sharks and turtles do not get entangled in fishing gear.





Aquatic Wildmeat

Aquatic wildmeat refers to products that come from endangered and protected wild aquatic animals, such as dolphins, whales, manatees, turtles, birds or crocodiles. Meat, organs and bones aid self-sufficiency, have traditional uses or are used as fish bait. Aquatic wildmeat is a growing problem in the entire West African coastal region. The communities here are among the poorest in the world. For the local people, fish are an important source of protein, jobs and income. However, this livelihood is threatened by climate change and overfishing. Industrial fishing vessels from Europe and Asia, often operating illegally in West African waters, are destroying ecosystems that are vital to the survival of local communities: small-scale coastal fishers often come back with empty nets. To safeguard the lives of their families, some of them hunt endangered animals. Since 2017, OceanCare has been intensively addressing poaching in the oceans, and doing pioneering work involving local solutions and international forums. In order to tackle the problem on site in Benin, OceanCare is cooperating with Maximin Djondo, a local expert on species conservation and environmental protection. He is working with community leaders, fishing associations and environmental officials to determine which species are being hunted and to jointly identify sustainable sources of income, such as bird or whale watching. His findings are incorporated into OceanCare's advocacy work vis-à-vis West African environmental and fisheries ministries. As industrial fishing is part of the problem, OceanCare is also campaigning for European and Asian industrial fishing to be brought under control.

■ **Bonn Convention (CMS):** The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) or Bonn Convention aims to protect migratory wild marine animals. In 2019, OceanCare attended a meeting of the CMS Scientific Council in Bonn and called for more attention to be paid to the overlap between by-catch and aquatic wildmeat. Any sharks and rays killed listed in CMS Appendix I should also be classified as aquatic wildmeat and this assessment should be extended to include animals listed in CMS Appendix II as well. All requests were accepted by the Scientific Council.



■ **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES):** This trade convention aims to help ensure that Earth's animal and plant populations are used sustainably and preserved. OceanCare raised the Swiss government's awareness of the problem of aquatic wildmeat. The government considered our position and took relevant points into account at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in Geneva. OceanCare drew attention to the problem with a side event and, in a workshop with representatives of CMS, West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change (WA BiCC), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), planned a joint strategy for positioning the issue of aquatic wildmeat and emphasising its urgency.

■ **Study on aquatic wildmeat in the coastal regions of Benin and Togo:** In order to understand the extent of aquatic wildmeat and its socio-economic drivers, OceanCare and the Benin Environment and Education Society (BEES) conducted a pilot study within three communities in Benin and Togo. As poaching in the oceans is illegal, the surveys had to be carried out with extreme caution. The species most hunted are sea turtles, African manatees, marsh-bucks, dwarf crocodiles, West African Nile monitors and aquatic birds. The causes are the increasing fishing activities, the spread of prohibited fishing gear and the drastic decrease in catches near the coast. A total of 120 fishers were interviewed. In workshops, they were made more aware of the problems of aquatic wildmeat and alternative sources of income were identified. In 2019, the report on the pilot study, for which OceanCare and BEES worked together with fisheries ministries and local stakeholders, was completed, presented at a CITES side event and submitted to the CMS Scientific Council in Bonn. The Abidjan Convention and CMS agreed that a large-scale study on the sale of aquatic wildmeat at markets is necessary, because demand is growing not only in rural areas, where poached meat has traditional roots, but also in cities. Such a study should also collect data on the origins of the meat and the reasons for hunting. OceanCare will continue its work in West Africa, so as to understand the extent and causes of the problem. At the same time, it will continue to encourage civil society and national governments to tackle the problem as well.

■ **Abidjan Convention:** In 2018, OceanCare was involved in organising the founding workshop of the Abidjan Aquatic Wildlife Partnership (AAWP), an Abidjan Convention working group. The partners agreed that any solution strategy must combat the overfishing practised by foreign fleets, as well as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. In 2019, OceanCare attended the Abidjan Convention working session and presented the study from Benin and Togo. Due to its important activities in the field of aquatic wildmeat, OceanCare was invited to be accredited with Abidjan Convention observer status.

■ **UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4):** In March, the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly took place in the Kenyan capital Nairobi (see p. 8). Three people attended on behalf of OceanCare. Already in the run-up to UNEA-4, OceanCare sent a briefing document on aquatic wildmeat to the delegates, in order to raise their awareness of the problem, which is not yet widely known about. At a side event, OceanCare's aquatic wildmeat expert Maximin Djondo spoke about the situation in West Africa.



Animal Rescue

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Around the world, OceanCare supports rescue networks that free marine animals from plastic entanglement, heal their injuries, and return the whales, dolphins and whale sharks to the wild when healthy. Rescue teams also examine dead animals, so as to determine the cause of death and thus to identify sources of danger to other members of the species.

■ **Great Britain:** OceanCare has been supporting British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) since 2012. This organisation is one of the world's most competent rescue organisations for marine animals. In 2019, BDMLR was called to 1,558 rescue missions, 30 % more than in the previous year. A total of 212 grey seals and 118 harbour seals were brought to rehabilitation facilities and 10 animals could be set free again where found. Many animals needed help during strong tides and storms, or due to infectious diseases. Out of 43 stranded whales and dolphins, 23 could be returned to the sea, six had to be euthanised and 14 died. Common dolphins and porpoises were stranded particularly often.

■ **South Africa:** Since 2017, OceanCare has been supporting the efforts of Oceans Research to establish a professional stranding network for marine mammals in South Africa. This assistance has made it possible to purchase mobile rescue equipment and to test it in training sessions. The organisation has trained more than 50 people for rescue services. In 2019, Oceans Research organised two meetings for local stranding networks and was called to ten strandings of whales and dolphins. This was more than twice as many missions as in 2018. Unfortunately, six animals were already dead, and four that were still alive had to be euthanised, due to their poor condition. Some of the animals were undernourished, were entangled in fishing gear or had collided with ships. More protected whales and dolphins were stranded in 2019 than in previous years. Oceans Research will promote environmental awareness in South Africa with further educational programmes and lay the foundations for mobilisation to protect marine animals.

■ **Venezuela:** Whale sharks keep getting stranded in Venezuela, often after entanglement in fishing nets. Such creatures used to be killed by the local population for their meat or fins. Since 2017, OceanCare has been supporting the work of the Shark Research Center (CIT) to set up a stranding network for whale sharks. In 2019, there were 21 workshops on protection of these aquatic giants, held in seven provinces. At ten school events, awareness was raised among 172 children between the ages of six and twelve. A total of 21 whale sharks were rescued from fishing nets – instead of being killed and eaten, which would have been the case a few years ago. Fishing nets were given to 13 families to replace those destroyed by whale sharks, and 34 families are now securing their livelihoods with touristic activities. CIT joined the worldwide network People Not Poaching and presented the whale shark project at an International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) conference. Thanks to the success in Venezuela, the organisation was also able to resume the shark conservation programme in the archipelago Los Roques, one of the most important shark nurseries in the Caribbean. One growing problem is the demand for shark fins among Venezuela's Chinese community. Thresher sharks in particular are being killed, so CIT is also increasingly conducting workshops on the protection of these creatures.

■ **France:** OceanCare has been collaborating with the LPA seal rescue centre in Northern France since 2018. This institution in Calais cares for injured and sick seals, returning them to the wild when healthy. OceanCare was involved in the procurement of a transport vehicle and helped to ensure that enough food and medication is available. In 2019, there were 52 seals brought to the sanctuary, seven more than in 2018, including pups separated from their mothers too early, injured seals entangled in fishing nets, and those infected with pathogens. In total, 80% of the animals brought to LPA were successfully returned to the wild in 2019.

■ **International Whaling Commission Strandings Initiative:** In 2019, members of the IWC Expert Advisory Panel on Strandings, which is supported by OceanCare, attended a three-day symposium in Taiwan and carried out a strandings workshop. In December 2019, another workshop was held in Barcelona, where the specialist knowledge that is needed in order to help stranded marine animals was conveyed.





Whales

Whale Conservation in the Mediterranean

In many areas of the Mediterranean Sea, whale populations are poorly researched. In cooperation with partner organisations, OceanCare fills knowledge gaps and, based on scientific findings regarding the whales' distribution, ecology and endangerment level, defines conservation measures for the attention of relevant international bodies.

■ **Population structure of sperm whales in the Mediterranean:** OceanCare provided support for a doctoral thesis by Biagio Violi from the University of Genoa, in which genetic analysis was used to study the structure of the sperm whale population in the Mediterranean, which is classed as endangered. A comparison of 105 tissue samples from sperm whales found in the Mediterranean with 37 samples from sperm whales found in the Atlantic confirmed the suspected genetic isolation of the two populations. However, there is no evident division of the population within the Mediterranean into an eastern and a western group. This clearly shows that the Strait of Messina and the Sicilian Channel are important migration routes for sperm whales.

■ **Sicily:** During OceanCare's research activities in the east and north-east of Sicily (see p. 26), as well as between the Aeolian Islands, sperm whales were sighted three times and acoustically located five times. There were also documented observations of rare Cuvier's beaked whales, which appeared back in 2016 and 2017, but not in 2018. This confirms the assumption that the area south-east of Sicily is important to these animals.

■ **Greece:** OceanCare has been supporting the Pelagos Cetacean Research Institute's research and protection of sperm whales along the Hellenic Trench since 2008. In 2019, Pelagos was able to use drones for observation of these animals for the first time. In four sightings of several groups, six animals were clearly identified, including a female that the researchers had first encountered 15 years earlier. Striped dolphins were sighted much less frequently than in previous years. Their complete absence in the south of the Peloponnese and around Crete, where they have appeared often up until now, is a cause for concern. In contrast, there were more sightings of Cuvier's beaked whales again, giving reason to hope that the species is on its way back, after years of decline caused by military sonar exercises. Unfortunately, strandings also occurred in 2019. Two sperm whales are currently being examined to determine the cause of their stranding. Pelagos attended several conferences, campaigned for the protection of important marine habitats and presented the SAVE Whales project (see p. 7).

■ **Balearic Islands:** In 2019, OceanCare continued to support the Save the Med Foundation's research into marine animals south of Mallorca, where whales were sighted and documented 164 times during the research season (see p. 32).



■ **World Marine Mammal Conference in Barcelona:** At this important conference for whale conservation, OceanCare presented a paper on the extent and development of plastic pollution in the Mediterranean Sea, along with another on modelling geomorphic features on the seabed, such as chasms and continental shelves, and their possible influence on the occurrence of sperm whales and striped dolphins. Expert Dr Linda Weilgart took part in a workshop on underwater noise in the Mediterranean. At the conference, partner organisations presented findings from various projects supported by OceanCare (see pp. 42 and 43).

Whale Conservation Worldwide

Commercial whaling has been banned worldwide since 1986. However, some states consistently disregard the moratorium. OceanCare is doing everything in its power to ensure that the international whaling ban, one of the greatest achievements in international species conservation, remains in force and is implemented. This is essential for the conservation of many large whale species.

■ **International Whaling Commission (IWC):** At an IWC Scientific Committee meeting, over a hundred experts discussed threats to whales and drew up recommendations for the attention of the IWC member states. OceanCare submitted a report by Dr Linda Weilgart on the impact of noise on fish and invertebrates, which also covers the corresponding consequences for the food web, whales and the marine ecosystem.

■ **European Union:** In 2019, OceanCare attended consultative meetings between the European Council Presidency, the European Commission and the EU IWC member states in Brussels, criticised the whaling activities of Norway and Iceland in European waters, and addressed issues of importance with regard to the 2020 IWC meeting. At the invitation of the German IWC Commissioner, OceanCare attended a consultative meeting between German-speaking NGOs in Bonn.

■ **Norwegian whaling:** In 2019, Norway killed 429 minke whales. This commercial whaling is subsidised by the Norwegian government. The whale meat is offered on cruise ships, in restaurants, in schools and at festivals, as well as being exported to Japan. A survey commissioned by OceanCare and partners, and conducted by polling institute Opinion AS, shows the declining demand for whale meat in Norway. In February, OceanCare added its signature to a letter from AWI, calling on Royal Caribbean Cruises to stop offering whale meat on voyages to Norway, Greenland and Japan.

■ **Trend reversal in Iceland:** For years, Iceland has been unilaterally issuing quotas for hunting fin and minke whales. In 2019, OceanCare, partner organisations, the EU member states and 13 other countries delivered a



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demarche to Iceland, calling on it to end commercial whaling. More and more people are voicing criticism within Iceland too, including the prime minister. Nevertheless, the fisheries minister increased the fin whale quota to 209 in February. He explained this on the basis of a study by the University of Iceland, which blames whales for the decline in fish stocks and recommends intensifying whaling. Experts see this study as a travesty. In fact, financial and political links between the university and Icelandic fin whale hunter Kristján Loftsson, as well as between the author of the study and the fisheries minister, came to light. Good news came in June: Iceland is suspending the commercial hunting of minke and fin whales. Whale meat sales are sluggish, as Icelanders hardly eat it anymore and the Japanese are also eating less and less, so hunting is not lucrative enough. Whale watching, on the other hand, is flourishing in Iceland.

■ **Japanese whaling:** Japan's membership of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) ended on the 30th of June 2019, rendering the pretext of so-called scientific whaling in the Antarctic and North-West Pacific obsolete. It is now quite official again: Japan is hunting whales for commercial purposes. In the first whale hunt after IWC withdrawal, 187 Bryde's whales, 25 sei whales and 11 minke whales were killed in Japan's coastal waters. Despite low demand, 1,430 tonnes of whale meat was brought ashore. Japan's government keeps this absurdity going with millions in subsidies. OceanCare is backing Japanese animal welfare organisations that are taking a stand against whaling, because change can only be initiated within the Japanese population.

■ **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES):** The CITES Standing Committee reprimanded Japan for violating the principles of this convention by importing sei whales from the high seas into its national territory for commercial purposes. Although Japan has since stopped hunting sei whales on the high seas, the convention requires that all sei whale products already brought ashore be confiscated and destroyed. OceanCare added its signature to a corresponding demand from AWI for the attention of CITES.

■ **Yahoo! campaign:** In 2019, OceanCare supported research conducted by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) in Tokyo. EIA documented the sale of whale meat at markets and analysed meat from small whales sold on Yahoo! Japan. Five out of nine samples were found to contain levels of mercury above the Japanese limit. OceanCare backed EIA's demand that Yahoo! Japan remove all whale products from its range. The organisations pointed to possible violations of CITES regulations and warned of the products' worrying levels of mercury.

■ **The role of whales in the marine ecosystem:** A 2019 study by the International Monetary Fund demonstrated the importance of large whales to the climate. During their lifetime, they sequester up to 33 tonnes of CO₂ in their bodies. If they sink to the seabed after death, they store the greenhouse gas there for centuries. In 2019, OceanCare supported a scientific report on whales' important role in the marine ecosystem for an International Whaling Commission workshop.

■ **Blue whales in New Zealand:** Since 2016, OceanCare has been supporting an Oregon State University project researching blue whales along New Zealand's South Taranaki Bight. The project looks into these animals' health status, behaviour and habitat use. In 2019, results on the health of the blue whale population were accepted for publication in the journal *Frontiers in Marine Science* and an analysis of drone footage showing the blue whales' feeding behaviour was presented at the World Marine Mammal Conference. An acoustic data set from the research region should provide insight into the distribution of the blue whales and serve as a scientific basis for the designation of a protected area.

■ **Whale watching instead of whaling:** In 2019, three humpback whales and one killer whale were killed in the archipelago St Vincent and the Grenadines. OceanCare enabled an expert from WDC to travel to the archipelago, where she is now establishing relations with whalers, campaigning for respectful whale watching and collecting data on whale hunting. In January 2019, one whaler on the island St Vincent stopped hunting orcas and switched to whale watching. In November, two whale-watching boats were put into operation on this island.

■ **Whale Like Me:** In order to understand whalers, filmmaker Malcolm Wright travelled the world for ten years and spent time in whaling communities. The result is *Whale Like Me*, a unique film calling for dialogue between people with different interests and views, on equal terms. Change can only happen if people work together, rather than against each other. With this constructive approach, the filmmaker also encourages dialogue within whaling countries. In 2019, this documentary, which has not yet been released, was shown in exclusive screenings at CineCenter in Vienna and Hackesche Höfe Kino in Berlin. Each screening was attended by around 100 people. *Whale Like Me* follows Malcolm Wright as he, for instance, accompanies a whaling family from the Faroe Islands on their way to see protected pilot whales in Tenerife. The peaceful encounter with these animals on the open sea makes a lasting impression on the family members. In 2019, OceanCare made it possible for the filmmaker to bring the extended Faroese family to the whales in Tenerife and to let them experience the benefits of peaceful exploitation of whales through marine ecotourism. On the Faroe Islands, this is encouraging a rethink of the approach to pilot whales.





© Dolphin Biology & Conservation

Dolphins

Dolphin Conservation in the Mediterranean

With an area of around 2.5 mn km², the Mediterranean Sea accounts for just 0.8% of the World Ocean by area and 0.3% by volume. However, it is highly biodiverse. Eleven whale and dolphin species live here, but these animals are threatened, due to overfishing and chemical pollution. Populations of many previously widespread species are endangered. OceanCare makes scientific research possible, then uses the data to reduce threats to marine animals and to improve their protection.

■ **Northern Adriatic:** OceanCare supports the organisation Dolphin Biology and Conservation (DBC). Between 2009 and 2017, DBC studied dolphin populations in Greece's Gulf of Corinth. In 2018, it launched a new project in the Northern Adriatic Sea, where there is still little research into dolphins. This is one of the world's most intensively trawled marine zones. The studied area in the region Veneto includes the Po Delta and encompasses around 3,000 km². The researchers are studying the impact of fishing on bottlenose dolphins. In 2019, the team sighted 286 groups of these animals and identified 447 individuals. There were 138 more groups than in the previous year. The impact of fishing boats and trawlers on the dolphins was also observed. In 2019, the renowned DBC scientists summarised their research results in a book chapter, and a summary was also published in a renowned scientific journal. They presented their data at three research conferences and two further studies were accepted for publication. Furthermore, in response to a DBC initiative, specialists responsible for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species classified the common dolphin in the Gulf of Corinth as endangered. This shows how important it is to increase protection of these animals. With lectures at schools and universities, as well as workshops with fishery representatives and decision-makers, the researchers helped to improve understanding of the dolphins.



■ **Greece:** For 18 years, OceanCare has been supporting the Ionian Dolphin Project (IDP), a long-term monitoring project conducted by the Tethys Research Institute. Dolphins are endangered in Greece's coastal waters. Some populations are managing to cope with human impact for the time being, while others have disappeared from parts of their former home. The IDP aims to ensure survival of the marine mammals in the coastal waters of the Eastern Ionian Sea. The project includes observation of the animals, photographic identification of individuals, investigation of population trends, identification of critical habitats and research into factors that threaten local ecosystems, such as excessive fishing. The data is published and provides the basis of management proposals for international agreements on the protection of biodiversity. Tethys also raises public awareness of the threat to the dolphins and of the importance of not only taking measures to protect the animals, but also complying with existing regulations. To this end, the researchers also meet with local authorities and fishing associations. On a 1,160 km research trip in 2019, the IDP documented dolphins 37 times and loggerhead sea turtles 58 times. The photo-ID database contains 128,563 images of various dolphin species.

■ **Sicily:** From 2000 to 2015, OceanCare conducted a research project on the distribution of marine mammals in the Pelagos Sanctuary, off the coast of Southern France. In 2016, this was relocated to Eastern and North-Eastern Sicily. In 2019, around 50 lay researchers took part in eight expeditions. They recorded 57 sightings of whales and dolphins, counting 763 individual animals, as well as 41 sightings of sea turtles, while covering over 1,972 kilometres at sea in 207 hours. With 30 sightings, the social striped dolphins appeared most often and 636 individuals were counted. Sperm whales were sighted three times and acoustically located five times. Ocean sunfish, tuna shoals, swordfish and various jellyfish species were also recorded. It was disturbing to find a male bluntnose sixgill shark floating dead on the surface, not yet fully grown, with its tail fin missing and a fishing hook, complete with part of a fishing line, stuck in its lower jaw. This creature probably died as by-catch of longline fishing.

In late September 2019, OceanCare brought its field research around Sicily to a successful end. The data, collected since 2016, forms the basis of scientific publications being prepared under the direction of Dr Silvia Frey. For OceanCare, these publications provide an important basis for demanding effective conservation measures within international bodies. OceanCare would like to thank Silvia Frey for setting up the field research, developing it further and executing it passionately, all of which took place between 2000 and 2019. She masterfully filled participants with enthusiasm for the inhabitants of the Mediterranean Sea and made a significant contribution to the protection of marine life with her research work. Our thanks also go to the skippers and guides, and of course to all the participants, whose involvement made this project possible in the first place.



Dolphin Conservation in Peru

In Peru, although dolphin hunting has been banned since 1997, up to 15,000 dolphins are still being killed each year and used either as bait in shark fishing or for human consumption. In addition, up to 20,000 dolphins die in fishing nets in Peruvian waters. Thanks to undercover research, which OceanCare helped to make possible, dolphin hunters had to stand trial for the first time in 2016. The harpoons used to kill the dolphins were banned. It is now important to raise fishers' awareness of interrelationships and to make it understood that overfishing and the exploitation of shark and dolphin populations also endanger people's livelihoods.

■ **Cooperation with fishers:** OceanCare and WWF Peru address dolphin and shark hunting in workshops with fishers. In 2019, two workshops with 15 fishers from Salaverry took place. Cooperation has now also been established with ten fishers from Pucusana. In addition to imparting knowledge, the exchange also sheds light on the cultural and economic factors behind the hunting and allows possible solutions to be identified. Unfortunately, a cost-benefit analysis showed that dolphin meat, when used as bait, is as cheap as it is effective. However, the fishers are shown the ecological advantages of legal and less harmful bait, and existing laws for the protection of dolphins are explained to them. Alternative sources of income, such as boat repairs, harbour work, fish-market work or the use of fishing boats for touristic activities during the summer months, are also reflected upon. The fishers from Pucusana are demanding regular inspections of shark fishing boats so that prohibited harpoons will be found, state subsidies for the purchase of legal bait and a seasonal change of target species. They are confident that their community can self-govern, for example when it comes to preventing dolphins from getting entangled in nets or combating overfishing. Environmental education programmes on dolphin conservation have been implemented at three schools in Pucusana and Tambo de Mora.

■ **Documentary distributed and nominated for an award:** In 2013, OceanCare and BlueVoice helped Peruvian organisation Mundo Azul (blue world) to document the hunting of dolphins and sharks at sea. The footage from this undercover research was sent to the Peruvian authorities as a wake-up call in 2016 and used for an online campaign in 2017. In 2018, BlueVoice completed the 50-minute documentary *A Feather to Kill*. BlueVoice founder Hardy Jones sadly died in December after a long illness, so the film is also a tribute to his tireless wildlife conservationist. In 2019, *A Feather to Kill* received the attention it deserved: The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the United Nations Development Programme and the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival organised a film showcase for World Wildlife Day, the 3rd of March. Here, this documentary was among the finalists. It was subsequently shown worldwide in a travelling showcase. On the 9th of March, it was also screened as part of the International Ocean Film Festival programme in San Francisco, where directors Hardy Jones and Uli Pfortner were nominated for the Director's Award. In July 2019, OceanCare, BlueVoice and Mundo Azul signed an agreement with an international film distribution company whose digital channels include Amazon Prime, Hulu, Roku, Amazon fireTV, Google Play, IOS, Alliant's channel and MagellanTV, thus guaranteeing that this explosive material is internationally accessible.



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Dolphin Conservation Worldwide

OceanCare works together with partner organisations around the globe to protect dolphins.

■ **Vaquitas in trouble:** The vaquita, a Californian porpoise, is dying out. About ten of these small whales remain, living in the north of the Gulf of California. They were decimated by gill nets, which are used to catch crabs and (illegally) totoabas, whose swim bladders fetch high prices in Asia. Loss of habitat, consequences of global warming and chemical pollution are all having an adverse effect on the vaquita as well. Now, at the last minute, the Mexican government is doing everything it can to protect these porpoises. It is basing its efforts on data from the International Committee for the Recovery of the Vaquita (CIRVA), whose work has been supported by OceanCare since 1993. An immediate end to illegal totoaba fishing and to the illegal trade in totoabas, alternative methods of catching crabs, consistent penalties for breaches of conservation measures, and alternative sources of income for fishers are all essential, in order to prevent extinction of the vaquita. In 2019, OceanCare added its signature to an urgent appeal to save the world's most endangered whale species, sent by partner organisations AWI, NRDC, EIA and the Center for Biological Diversity to the Mexican government.

■ **Dolphins in the Black Sea:** Since 1988, Green Balkans has implemented over 110 conservation projects in Bulgaria. OceanCare has been supporting this organisation's research work on the distribution of whales and dolphins in Bulgarian waters since 2017. The development of three Black Sea whale species' populations within Bulgaria's 12-mile zone in the Black Sea is currently being studied. During a May 2019 survey, 168 Black Sea porpoises, Black Sea common dolphins and Black Sea bottlenose dolphins were sighted on a 400-kilometre research trip. This was fewer than in June 2017, but more than in June 2018. In October, the number of sightings was very low, at 54, with the Black Sea common dolphin appearing often and the Black Sea porpoise rarely. Green Balkans published its results at the end of October.

■ **Orcas in Russia:** Since 2018, OceanCare has been supporting the Russian organisation Far East Russia Orca Project (FEROP), which focuses on protecting and researching the orcas around the Kamchatka Peninsula in Eastern Russia. It will soon be 20 years since this organisation began documenting the occurrence of these animals in Avacha Bay. It has identified 31 different orca families to date. The feeding habits and prey spectrum of orcas in the studied area are also being investigated. In July 2019, the results from the 2011 – 2016 period were published in the journal *Mammalian Biology*.

■ **River dolphins in Bangladesh:** OceanCare supports the work of Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Bangladesh on protection of the Ganges river dolphin and the Irrawaddy dolphin. Both species live in rivers with large mangrove forests, in the Sundarbans. Three protected areas have been established so far. In 2019,



seven Ganges river dolphins and one Irrawaddy dolphin died after getting entangled in fishing nets. One other Irrawaddy dolphin was successfully freed from a net. Between 2007 and 2019, there were 118 dead freshwater dolphins documented. The animals were entangled in fishing nets in about half of these cases, but dolphins were also beaten to death, hunted with harpoons or fatally injured in boat accidents. With the aid of modern technology, entire sections of rivers were efficiently monitored and illegal fishing was punished. In 2019, two ships patrolled along the rivers. In total, they covered 42,691 kilometres. Ganges river dolphins were sighted 666 times and Irrawaddy dolphins 422 times. There were 378 arrests for illegal fishing, 146 seizures of fishing vessels and 157 seizures of illegal fishing gear. The last time the Ganges river dolphin was assessed in the context of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species was in 2012. OceanCare enabled a comprehensive revision of this assessment, based on the information obtained since then. Although the status of the species remains unchanged, the reassessment confirms that the main threats are fishing gear and hydraulic engineering projects.

■ **Dolphins in the Red Sea:** OceanCare supports the work of the organisation Dolphin Watch Alliance (DWA) on protection of the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin in Hurghada, Egypt. DWA has so far been able to identify around 300 dolphins in the region around Hurghada and El Gouna, by means of their individual dorsal fins. Unfortunately, the animals in this famous diving region are severely harassed and threatened by dolphin tourism. DWA has been working for years to protect these dolphins. As a result of its dedication, two tolled conservation zones were introduced in the Shaab El Erg and Shaab El Fanous reefs. In addition, swimming with dolphins is no longer offered in some regions – here, only dolphin watching is offered from now on. If dolphins appear, local providers must adhere to the code of conduct drawn up by DWA. In order to ensure that the regulations are implemented, DWA continuously negotiates with the relevant authorities and accompanies inspection trips at sea.

Campaigns Against Dolphin Hunting and Captivity

As migratory animals, dolphins travel distances of up to 100 kilometres at sea every day. They dive to depths of around 500 metres and orient themselves in the complex underwater world acoustically, using their sense of echolocation. Dolphins are very social and maintain close family ties. Their habitat cannot be recreated on land. For them, every pool is too small, too bare, too unattractive – simply too alien. If these highly intelligent animals are kept captive, they lose everything: their freedom, their family ties and their natural behaviour. Dolphinariums, however, represent a booming industry, as these can bring in a lot of money. As dolphins' mortality in captivity is high, they are constantly being captured at sea in extremely brutal ways. OceanCare is shedding light on the dark side of the dolphinarium industry and is urgently advising people to treat dolphins with respect.



■ **Dolphinaria-Free Europe (DFE):** OceanCare co-founded the coalition DFE with the goal to phase out dolphinaria in Europe. DFE publishes scientific studies, advises government representatives and monitors the dolphinaria industry. In 2019, the coalition campaigned for male orca Inouk to be released from the aquarium Marineland in French town Antibes, fought against the transfer of two beluga whales from Canada's Marineland to L'Oceanogràfic in Valencia, and was able to stop plans for a dolphinaria at Tropicarium in Budapest. DFE also supported an appeal to the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions for the release of female orca Morgan from Tenerife's Loro Parque and a campaign to shut down the illegally operated Attica Zoological Park in Greece.

■ **Martinha coalition:** The common dolphin Martinha was stranded in Portugal in 2007. This female, estimated to be six months old at that time, was restored to health at a care centre and meant to be released after recovery. This did not happen though. The animal led a miserable existence in a tiny pool until 2014. When experts intervened, the authorities moved Martinha to what they claimed was a larger, more natural facility. However, the location of this facility is still unknown. In 2019, OceanCare joined a coalition of organisations conducting investigations into where Martinha was taken and campaigning for dolphin rights.

■ **Capture of wild whales in Russia:** In Russia, 90 beluga whales and 12 orcas were captured in 2018 and kept in a small enclosure in the sea for over a year. The intention was to sell them to Chinese amusement parks. OceanCare and its partner organisations voiced severe criticism of this undertaking. In November 2019, the animals were returned to the wild. It is difficult to assess how great their chances of survival are after these traumatic events, but unlike countless others of their kind, they have been spared a life in captivity.

■ **Japanese dolphin hunting:** Japan has set a catch quota of 1,749 for dolphin hunting in 2019/20. During the notorious drive hunt near the fishing village Taiji, bottlenose dolphins, striped dolphins, melon-headed whales or Risso's dolphins are driven into the cove. Several of these animals are captured alive for dolphinaria, others are killed and some are released in a traumatised state. As the dolphinaria industry pays up to 150,000 Swiss francs for one dolphin, hunting is a lucrative business. A dead dolphin whose meat ends up in Japanese supermarkets brings in around 600 Swiss francs. Although the number of dolphins killed in Taiji is decreasing, more are being captured alive, due to the growing number of dolphinaria in Japan, China and Arab countries. In Taiji, 521 dolphins were killed and 179 captured between September 2019 and February 2020. As foreign criticism fuels hunting in Japan, OceanCare backs local dolphin conservationists, supporting their lawsuit against the governor of Wakayama over animal welfare and catch quotas, as well as a school programme that not only educates pupils in Tokyo about the links between dolphinaria and drive hunting, but also gives them a better understanding of dolphins as wild animals.



In 2004, Japanese protests ended the dolphin drive hunt near the coastal village Futo in Shizuoka Prefecture. From then on, Futo focused on whale and dolphin watching. In 2019 though, the Ito Fishery Cooperative decided to resume this drive hunt in October with a quota of 57, a bitter setback for species conservation. OceanCare added its signature to an appeal from the Asia for Animals Coalition and the China Cetacean Alliance to UNESCO's Geoscience and Geoparks Programme, which had granted Izu Peninsula the status of UNESCO Geopark in 2018. UNESCO should put pressure on the Ito Fishery Cooperative by making retention of the Geopark status dependent on cessation of the unethical and harmful drive hunt.

■ **Impact of drive hunting on animal welfare:** In 2019, leading scientists published a study on the impact that drive hunting and the capture of small whales in Japan has on the animals' well-being. OceanCare funded the study's translation into Japanese and its distribution in Japan. Together with lead author Courtney Vail, OceanCare wrote a letter to the Japanese government and to representatives of the Japan Association of Zoos and Aquariums (JAZA), referring to the published study and calling for an end to the purchase of wild dolphins captured by means of drive hunting. OceanCare also supported Courtney Vail's participation in the December 2019 World Marine Mammal Conference in Barcelona, where the study was presented, and facilitated a corresponding exchange of views with the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), which is also called on to refrain from wild dolphin capture.

■ **Basel Oceanarium:** Basel Zoo was planning to build the largest aquarium in Switzerland. It was estimated to cost 100 million Swiss francs and attract up to 700,000 visitors a year. The Swiss Green Party and environmental associations, such as OceanCare, criticised the project as backward-looking, purely commercial, and contrary to the principles of sustainability and animal welfare. Raising awareness of the marine ecosystem by damaging it cannot be allowed. An aquarium needs many animals, most of which are snatched from their natural habitat. The enormous energy consumption that the aquarium would have entailed was also a cause for concern. OceanCare corresponded with the director of Basel Zoo and criticised, among other things, the lack of a list of species intended for exhibition. In a referendum held on the 19th of May 2019, a clear majority of Basel's voters rejected the construction of the oceanarium.

■ **SeaWorld Indonesia:** OceanCare added its signature to an appeal from the Asia for Animals Coalition to the governor of Jakarta, to attend to wildlife put on display in travelling circuses under poor conditions. The coalition also called for the liberation and rehabilitation of the marine animals at Sea World Ancol in Jakarta.

■ **TripAdvisor:** In April 2019, the world's largest travel website updated its animal welfare policy. It stopped selling tickets to animal shows classed as demeaning or unnatural. Together with the Asia for Animals Coalition, OceanCare called on TripAdvisor to take this encouraging development all the way and to stop advertising animal shows altogether.



Sea Turtles

Sea turtles have been living in the world's ocean for 225 million years. They can be found in all tropical and subtropical seas. Seven species still exist today, but their numbers have declined dramatically over the last 100 years. The loss of habitat caused by increasing tourism poses a threat to these animals. Hatchlings, which have to find their way into the sea as quickly as possible, lose their orientation because of artificial lighting. In the sea, turtles die as by-catch in fishing nets, get entangled in ghost nets or rubbish, or eat plastic and starve to death with full stomachs. Near the coast, turtles are at risk of being injured by motorboats or jet skis. OceanCare is campaigning for these witnesses of the ancient past to be rescued and protected.

■ **Balearic Islands:** In 2019, the Save the Med Foundation project MEDTOP, which is also dedicated to sea turtle conservation, was supported by OceanCare. This involves data collection for the protection of loggerhead sea turtles, as well as the promotion of cooperation between research groups and rescue centres. There is also a focus on the reduction of by-catch and the removal of ghost nets from the sea. In addition, plankton samples have been collected for investigation of microplastic pollution. The project has been carried out under the umbrella of the EU, so as to also enable its integration into the European Union's Marine Strategy Framework Directive. After processing and analysis, the data collected in 2019 will be integrated into the MEDTOP database, as well as various authorities' databases. Thanks to presentations at the World Marine Mammal Conference in Barcelona and a series of scientific reports, MEDTOP achieved a wide reach in 2019. In order to actively incorporate society into sea turtle conservation, OceanCare supported volunteer work and educational projects involving almost 2,300 students at a total of 34 schools.

■ **Maldives:** Since 2018, OceanCare has been cooperating with the Olive Ridley Project (ORP), which protects the vulnerable Olive Ridley sea turtle around the Maldives. Ghost nets, which are nets that are abandoned or lost by fishers at sea, are particularly problematic. Many sea turtles get entangled in them and are injured or killed by the fibres wrapping around their fins or neck. ORP is well established in the archipelago and is called whenever sea turtles need help. In 2019, the project's rescue centre treated four hawksbill sea turtles, five green sea turtles and 35 Olive Ridley sea turtles. Out of 44 treated animals in total, 21 were released, eight are still in care, five were transferred to other centres to be rehabilitated before release and, unfortunately, 10 could not be saved. The majority of these animals had been injured by ghost nets, one turtle had been harpooned, another had probably been hit by a speedboat and two had been maltreated by poachers. In addition to rescuing and caring for the



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animals, ORP staff visited schools and raised 470 pupils' awareness of sea turtle conservation in 2019. In this way, the organisation ensures that animals entangled in nets are reported and that ORP can intervene promptly. During 16 research trips, 39 hawksbill sea turtles were recorded, ghost nets were removed from three reefs and one Olive Ridley was freed from a discarded cement bag. Dr Claire Petros represented ORP at the 39th International Sea Turtle Symposium and at a workshop on medical care for sea turtles. In England and Slovakia, she gave presentations at schools and zoological institutes.

■ **International Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance:** In addition to her work for the Olive Ridley Project, Dr Claire Petros has been working on her PhD thesis, with OceanCare's support since 2019. For this thesis, summarising the best treatment and rehabilitation methods for sea turtles, she visits rescue centres all over the world. To ensure that sea turtles worldwide receive the best possible care, she founded the international Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance on behalf of OceanCare, which facilitates an exchange of the latest knowledge on treatment of these animals.



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Monk Seals

The Mediterranean monk seal is Europe's most endangered mammal species and the rarest seal species in the world. These seals used to be found all throughout the Mediterranean region, in the Black Sea and along the north-west coast of Africa. Today, the species is classed as critically endangered; a total of 600 to 700 Mediterranean monk seals remain. There are a few colonies in the Mediterranean, but almost half of the animals live on Mauritania's Atlantic coast. In 1997, this last large colony of monk seals was nearly wiped out by an algae plague. In 2001, a 6.2-kilometre stretch of coast on Mauritania's Cap Blanc was placed under protection. Here, with OceanCare's support, CBD-Habitat is working tirelessly to help every single monk seal survive.

■ **Mauritania:** The protected area at Cap Blanc is a species-conservation success story. Thanks to the efforts of Spanish organisation CBD-Habitat, and of the rangers it trains, the Mediterranean monk seal population in Mauritania was able to increase again, to around 400, after the aforementioned algae plague. In 2019, the rangers continued their constant monitoring of the protected area on land and at sea. They reported illegal fishing activity and prevented the seals from being disturbed in their breeding caves or on the beach. The monitoring of the area also includes collection of research data on development of the population and on the threat that human activities pose to the animals.

■ **Greece:** Since 2018, OceanCare has been supporting the efforts of the organisation Archipelagos - environment and development, Greece to investigate the distribution of Mediterranean monk seals, for instance around the Ionian islands of Kefalonia and Ithaca, and to document critical resting and breeding areas. Since this conservation project began, 13 cameras have been installed in 11 caves. In 2019, two pups were born. A total of 22 animals were clearly identified photographically. The studied area was enlarged to include the island Lefkada and the south-eastern part of the Gulf of Argostoli in South Kefalonia. The observations suggest that the animals have increased in number around the Ionian Islands over the past 30 years. The researchers have repeatedly noticed the caves being visited by water sports enthusiasts. Measures are being taken to prevent these disturbances. The research data will be submitted to the Greek Ministry of the Environment in a final report, and is to be incorporated into regulations and conservation measures.

The caves on the island Atokos in the Inner Ionian Sea Archipelago also serve as key habitat for the Mediterranean monk seals, which are threatened by fishing and tourism. Here, the Tethys Research Institute's Ionian Dolphin Project (IDP), also supported by OceanCare, is actively involved in protecting the monk seals. Tethys is studying the animals' distribution and ecology, and wants to ensure that they are protected in their habitat. In 2019, there were 45 sightings of monk seals during 33 hours, about one third more than in the previous year. Locals sent in 27 sighting reports. The individual animals are identified photographically on the basis of distinctive markings. By the end of 2018, a total of 16 seals had been identified in this way. At the time of writing this report, photographic data from 2019 was still being analysed.

■ **Albania:** The organisations Archipelagos – environment and development, Italy and CBD-Habitat are investigating the occurrence of Mediterranean monk seals, and their use of habitat, along the coast of Albania in the Karaburun-Sazan National Marine Park, which covers 12,570 ha in the county Vlore. In 2019, the park's coast was surveyed, so as to identify the habitats available for Mediterranean monk seals. Only caves with an entrance above sea level and with beaches or platforms in their interior were selected, where the animals' presence was then studied. Monk seal faeces were found in one potential habitat. Meetings with fishers and other stakeholders, beach clean-up campaigns, the installation of infrared cameras in at least two caves, and an ongoing exchange of information with the management of the monk seal photographic identification project in the Ionian Sea are planned.





Sharks are heavily hunted worldwide. Every year, over 100 million sharks die as by-catch in huge fishing fleets' operations, or as a result of targeted hunting. Their meat and fins are traded internationally and the latter are considered a delicacy in Asia. These elegant predatory fish are of fundamental importance to the marine ecosystem and in urgent need of protection.

■ **Greece:** The seas of Greece are home to around 67 species of sharks, rays and chimaeras. Of these, 25 are protected. In order to collect data on the illegal trade in sharks and rays around the port of Thessaloniki, the organisation iSea, with the help of OceanCare, investigated the marketing of products from these creatures in the area. For this purpose, iSea used conventional sources of information, such as legislation, fishery data, fish market analyses and import/export data, but also unconventional sources, such as social media, and combined these with methods from the field of genetics. About 60% of the fish samples were found to be incorrectly labelled. This was observed particularly frequently with regard to blue and smooth-hound sharks. Greece is one of the three largest markets in the EU for products from these fish, as incoherent and complex legal framework conditions make efficient fishery management very difficult in the seas of Greece.

■ **Fiji:** At the UN Ocean Conference in June 2017, the Pacific island nation of Fiji made key voluntary commitments to ocean conservation contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2019, OceanCare supported the intention of Fiji's prime minister to protect all sharks and rays in Fijian waters from 2020 onwards, and encouraged the archipelago's Ministry of Fisheries to implement corresponding conservation measures.

■ **Azores:** In the waters around the Azores, sharks are killed in huge numbers by Spanish longline fishers and, to an increasing extent, by Azorean fishers as well. Alongside tuna, swordfish and marlin, sharks are now a major source of profit. The meat of the mako shark fetches high prices, as do the fins of the blue shark. As a result, sharks are no longer just by-catch, but an actual target species, with neither marine protected areas nor shark nurseries being spared. In 2019, OceanCare added its signature to a letter initiated by Sharkproject. Addressed to the president of the regional government, this drew attention to the wrongdoing. The president was called on to introduce effective



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conservation measures for sharks around the Azores. Fishing should be curbed and a marine protected area, where catching sharks and swordfish is prohibited, should be established around the archipelago.

■ **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES):** At the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in Geneva, more shark and ray species were added to the convention's Appendix II, thus granting them greater protection. These included shortfin and longfin mako sharks. As a member of the Species Survival Network, OceanCare had campaigned for improved protection of these two shark species and presented the delegates with important arguments in favour of this measure (see p. 17).



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Environmental Education

Raising Awareness

Environmental education is an essential pillar in ocean conservation. Only those who understand the interrelationships will become interested and actively involved in the conservation of marine ecosystems.

■ **Travel industry:** OceanCare conducted two workshops at the Zurich International School of Tourism Management (IST). Focusing on wildlife tourism, the workshops illustrated the problems and opportunities presented by attractions like whale watching, dolphinaria, cruises and shark diving. In a Kuoni Cruises internal training programme, OceanCare raised awareness of ocean conservation among this company's staff.

■ **Students:** In 2019, OceanCare assisted 71 students with semester papers, federal academic baccalaureate papers, diploma theses, bachelor's theses, master's theses, specialisation papers and practical aptitude papers. These covered topics such as microplastics, plastic pollution in Switzerland and at sea, the economic and ecological impact of the plastics crisis, the climate and plastics, zero waste, dangers of oil production at sea, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and whale watching.

■ **Lectures:** In 2019, OceanCare gave a total of 38 presentations on various aspects of ocean conservation and on the organisation's own work. These took place, for instance, at the Swiss Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office, Club der Optimisten Hamburg, Cruising Club Switzerland, ETH Science City, Globetrotter Fernweh festival, Children's Hospital Zurich, Kirchberg parish, various Rotary clubs, UBS Switzerland AG and an internal target-setting seminar held by Coop.

■ **School visits:** OceanCare gave lectures at 21 schools on topics such as whales and dolphins, the curse and blessing of plastics, how OceanCare protects the oceans, zero waste, and the possibility of making your own cosmetic products. Young people also had the opportunity to stop by the office and spend an hour learning about OceanCare's work.

■ **Lesson material:** OceanCare's whale box contains lesson material, such as films, games, information sheets, figures, non-fiction books, novels and experiments, enabling teachers to give pupils a better understanding of marine mammals and their habitat. It is lent out free of charge. In 2019, it was in use for almost eight months at primary schools in the Swiss cantons Aargau, Bern, Valais and Zurich.

■ **Training activities in the Mediterranean region:** In Italy, OceanCare conducted a three-day training module on plastics in both Viareggio and Trieste, with over 40 school pupils in total. Each module culminated in a collective beach clean-up and evaluation of the collected material. With extensive environmental education activities, OceanCare supported iSea in Greece and the Save the Med Foundation on the Balearic Islands (see p. 10).

■ **Scientific internships and participation in research:** A total of 50 people participated in OceanCare's Sicilian research project, 56 in the collaborative project with the Save the Med Foundation on the Balearic Islands and



39 in the Tethys Research Institute’s research work in Greece. By carrying out observation work, documenting sightings of marine animals and preparing identification photos, they assisted scientists’ marine research. In expert input sessions, the participants were given important knowledge about marine habitat. Three secondary school graduates each completed a week-long marine biology internship in Sicily.

- **Events on inheritance law:** In Zurich and Waedenswil, OceanCare held events on the subject of inheritance law, presenting opportunities to be involved in ocean conservation beyond one’s own lifetime.
- **Teaching aids:** In 2019, OceanCare provided information on microplastics to teaching-aid publishers Lehrmittelverlag Zurich (Switzerland) and Bildungshaus Schulbuchverlage (Germany). The edutainment video on plastic pollution has now been incorporated into the website oceanampus.eu.

Media Reports

In 2019, OceanCare was mentioned in over 170 articles in national and international media. These focused on the organisation’s 30th anniversary and Sigrid Lüber as founder and president, the resumption of commercial whaling in Japan, pollution of the oceans with plastic and noise, the declaration of the Spanish whale migration corridor as a protected area, and the Rose of Charity regatta.

Detailed portraits of Sigrid Lüber in the magazines Schweizer Familie, Tauchen and 50plus were among the highlights. The newspaper SonntagsZeitung included a portrait of Sigrid Lüber in its article on the Swiss people of the year for 2019. The Guardian dedicated a whole podcast series to underwater noise and interviewed OceanCare’s expert Nicolas Entrup. Media in Spain also reported on the topic of noise and the whale migration corridor. Thanks to the Rose of Charity regatta and TV reports as part of the programme ARD Brisant, OceanCare’s work was presented to a broad public audience.

- **Print media:** In Switzerland, 16 articles appeared in publications such as Schweizer Familie, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Tages-Anzeiger, SonntagsZeitung, 50plus and SonntagsBlick. In Germany, there were four articles, e.g. in Spektrum der Wissenschaft, WasserWirtschaft and Tauchen. In Austria, Wiener Zeitung and Die Presse reported on OceanCare’s work. One article appeared in Greek print media.

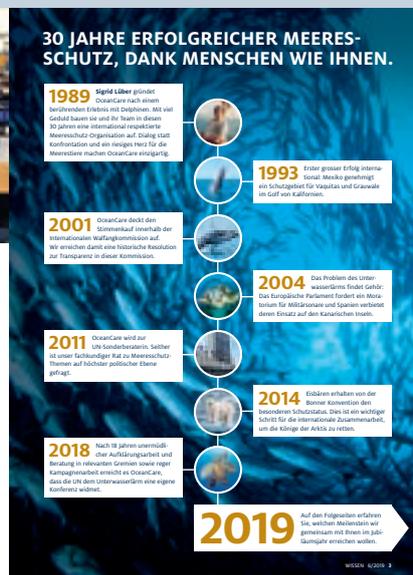


■ **Online:** In Switzerland, 37 articles appeared on the news portals blick.ch, beobachter.ch, higgs.ch and tagesanzeiger.ch, among others. In Germany, 34 reports appeared on news websites, such as spiegel.de, stern.de and focus.de. In Austria, vienna.at, krone.at, derstandard.at and others reported on OceanCare's work. In addition, articles were published online in Belgium, China, Spain, Great Britain, Korea and the Maldives, on platforms such as lavanguardia.com, planetcare.org, greenpostkorea.co.kr and lamarinaplaza.com.

■ **Radio:** The Guardian dedicated a podcast series to underwater noise and broadcast an interview with Nicolas Entrup. Spanish radio stations IB3 Radio, Formentera Radio and Onda Cero also reported on this topic. Rahel Beck was interviewed about the cruise ship boom by abouttravel.ch. On World Cleanup Day, Radio 1, Ratio Top and srf.ch each broadcasted a piece on plastics, featuring Fabienne McLellan. Radio FM4 reported on commercial whaling in Japan.

■ **TV:** Channels ORF and ARD interviewed Nicolas Entrup about commercial whaling in Japan. The programme ARD Brisant provided ongoing coverage of the sailing regatta Rose of Charity in prime time over the course of a week. The channel Arte reported on OceanCare's whale research.

■ **Filler advertisements:** OceanCare's advertisements on plastics and the whale warning system (see p. 9 and above) were printed free of charge in the following media, among others: 20 Minuten, Aargauer Zeitung, Basler Zeitung, Beobachter, Berner Oberländer, Berner Zeitung, Bündner Tagblatt, Bündner Zeitung, Der Bund, bz Zeitung für die Region Basel, g'plus Magazin für die grüne Branche, Glarner Nachrichten, Grenchner Tagblatt, Langenthaler Tagblatt, Limmattaler Zeitung, Linth-Zeitung, Migros Magazine, Natürlich, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, NZZ-Netz/audienzz.ch, Obersee Nachrichten, Oltner Tagblatt, Schweiz am Wochenende, Solothurner Zeitung, Thuner Tagblatt, Waveup Mag, Wir Eltern, WOZ Wochenzeitung, Zofinger Tagblatt and Zürcher Oberländer. OceanCare is sincerely grateful for this important and valuable support!



Means of Communication

OceanCare communicates through various channels, so as to draw attention to the urgency of ocean conservation and to raise awareness of important issues. The broader the support on these matters in society, the sooner it becomes possible to initiate urgently needed changes.

- **Wissen magazine:** OceanCare's magazine Wissen appeared in June and October. The June edition focused on the protection of sperm whales in the Eastern Mediterranean (Wissen 1/19, 19,395 copies) and the theme of the October edition was fishing (Wissen 2/19, 16,628 copies).
- **Fokus:** In 2019, four issues of Fokus were released, on the topics of turtle rescue in the Maldives (16,149 copies), Japan's withdrawal from the whaling commission (16,945 copies), microplastic pollution (15,686 copies) and dolphin hunting in Peru (16,367 copies).
- **E-newsletter:** In 13 newsletters, OceanCare provided information about projects, called for support of ocean conservation or drew attention to events. A total of 29,000 people have subscribed to the e-newsletter.
- **Social media:** OceanCare has 19,600 followers on Facebook and over 3,500 on Instagram. On both channels, OceanCare provides information two to five times a week. Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube are also used regularly.
- **Google AdWords:** OceanCare generated 300,000 ad impressions and 36,000 clicks in connection with the free Google Ad Grants programme for non-profit organisations.
- **www.oceancare.org:** OceanCare's website recorded over 410,000 page views. The home page, information on plastic and underwater noise, and the shop were accessed most frequently.
- **www.toxic-menu.org:** In 2019, this online library of studies on toxic substances in whale and dolphin meat, operated in partnership with Pro Wildlife, was accessed 451 times.
- **Portrait of the organisation:** In the year of its 30th anniversary, OceanCare published an online portrait in English, looking back on past activities and milestones, highlighting the organisation's values, and looking ahead to future goals.
- **Swiss Donation Guide:** The 2019/2020 issue of this guide includes a portrait of OceanCare. The Swiss Donation Guide is consulted by lawyers, notaries and private individuals when organisations are to be chosen for donations or bequests.

Publications

Articles, Book Chapters and Expert Reports

by OceanCare and cooperating partners

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Other Publications and Works by cooperating partners

Bearzi G. *Green New Human. Individuals aware of the climate and ecological breakdown.* Illustrations and text, 2019. www.dolphinbiology.org/green/human/

Silvia Bonizzoni and Giovanni Bearzi are co-supervisors for the following master's thesis:

Bregoli, M. *Factors affecting bottlenose dolphin social structure in the Gulf of Corinth, Greece.* MSc marine biology (2018 – 2019), Department of Biology, University of Padua, Italy

Meshkova G., Popov D. *Sea, Biodiversity, Ecology.* Environmental education booklet. greenbalkans.org/en/Sea_biodiversity_ecology-p7321-y

Giovanni Bearzi and Silvia Bonizzoni are among the 11,092 signatories to the following:

Ripple W.J., Wolf C., Newsome T.M., Barnard P. and others. *World scientists' warning of a climate emergency,* in *BioScience* 70, 2019: pp. 8 – 12. doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biz088

Networks



■ **Antarctic Ocean Alliance:** As a member of this alliance for the protection of Antarctica since 2013, OceanCare is working with international conservation organisations to create marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean. www.antarcticocean.org



■ **APPOLL Forum:** Founded in 2017 by UsitawiNetwork Club Basel, the APPOLL Forum is an informal network of organisations operating on various levels to understand and manage plastic pollution in Switzerland. www.appollforum.ch



■ **Asia for Animals Coalition:** Since 2018, OceanCare has been a member of this network, which works to secure better living conditions for pets and for wildlife in captivity. www.asiaforanimals.com



■ **Beat the Microbead:** OceanCare is part of this campaign, driven by over 90 international organisations, to ban microplastics from cosmetic products. www.beatthemicrobead.org



■ **Break Free From Plastic:** In 2016, OceanCare joined this coalition of over 1,400 international organisations working to reduce plastic pollution and to promote the circular use of plastics. In 2019, OceanCare became one of the coalition's active members and is part of the BFFP European Advisory group. www.breakfreefromplastic.org



■ **Dolphinaria-Free Europe:** This European coalition of NGOs campaigns for an end to dolphin captivity in Europe. OceanCare is part of its organising committee. www.endcap.eu



■ **European Cetacean Society (ECS):** The ECS has been committed to promoting scientific studies on marine mammals since 1987. Dr Silvia Frey, Senior Conservation Scientist at OceanCare, has been on the European Cetacean Society Council since 2016. www.europeancetaceansociety.eu



■ **Global Ghost Gear Initiative:** In the summer of 2019, OceanCare became a member of the Global Ghost Gear Initiative and is thus involved in campaigning for the recovery of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear and for compulsory marking of fishing gear, so that these can be traced back to their owners, With the intention of reducing the deadly danger that ghost nets pose to marine animals. www.ghostgear.org



■ **High Seas Alliance:** Since 2011, OceanCare has been part of the High Seas Alliance, whose members campaign for ecological management of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. www.highseasalliance.org



■ **International Ocean Noise Coalition:** OceanCare is a co-founder of this coalition against underwater noise and one of its leading organisations. Since the coalition was established in 2003, a total of 150 international organisations have joined. www.oceannoisecoalition.org



■ **Make Stewardship Count:** In 2018, OceanCare joined this alliance, which campaigns for MSC standards that actually deliver on the label's sustainability promise. www.make-stewardship-count.org



■ **Mission Blue:** OceanCare joined this global coalition, led by Dr Sylvia Earle, in 2017. It campaigns for the establishment of a worldwide network of marine protected areas and raises public awareness of the importance of such zones. www.mission-blue.org



■ **Ocean Clean Wash:** OceanCare joined this international campaign in 2016, which aims to end water pollution caused by plastic fibres from synthetic clothing. www.oceancleanwash.org



■ **Plastic Pollution Coalition:** In 2017, OceanCare became part of this global coalition working to free the environment of plastic pollution, especially that caused by single-use plastics. www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org



■ **Seas at Risk:** Since 2014, OceanCare has been a member of this alliance of 32 organisations working towards an effective maritime policy in European waters, so as to improve the protection of marine animals and living conditions in the oceans. www.seas-at-risk.org



■ **Silent Oceans Coalition:** This international coalition was founded in 2002 by OceanCare, so as to inform the general public about underwater noise and to mobilise for action against it. Together, its 27 organisations call for online protest against critical industrial and military activities at sea, and attract worldwide media attention. www.silentoceans.org, www.silentoceans.com



■ **Species Survival Network (SSN):** OceanCare has been a member of the SSN since 1997, campaigning to ensure that endangered animal and plant species are protected by the CITES trade convention. OceanCare is in the SSN working groups focused on protection of polar bears, whales, dolphins and fish. www.ssn.org



■ **STOPPP:** OceanCare is a member of the interest group Stop Plastic Pollution (STOPPP). In Switzerland, this group is socially, economically and politically active against environmental pollution caused by plastics and microplastics. www.stoppp.org



■ **Migratory Wildlife Network:** As part of this network since 2013, OceanCare has been promoting the protection of migratory animal species via international bodies. www.wildmigration.org

International Forums

■ **UN Special Consultative Status:** Since 2011, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has recognised OceanCare as an organisation with Special Consultative Status on marine issues. This status gives OceanCare the right to speak on important aspects of maritime law within UN bodies. www.un.org

■ **UNCLOS:** OceanCare has been attending the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) consultative meetings since 2004, where it has been raising awareness of the dangers of underwater noise in particular. www.un.org/depts/los

■ **UNEP/UNEA:** In December 2015, OceanCare received accreditation for both the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and its governing body (United Nations Environment Assembly, UNEA), and is part of the Major Group Science and Technology. The UN Environment Programme plays a leading role in global environmental protection and is the relevant United Nations body that deals exclusively with the environment. www.unep.org

■ **UNEP/GPML:** OceanCare is part of the UN Environment Programme's Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML). This worldwide network of government agencies, NGOs, scientific experts, and representatives of both the private sector and civil society develops solutions with which to reduce marine plastic pollution. web.unep.org/gpa/what-we-do/global-partnership-marine-litter

■ **UNEP/MAP:** In 2019, OceanCare was accredited as a UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan partner. UNEP/MAP is a framework agreement that addresses marine environmental hazards and coordinates the Barcelona Convention as the legal basis for protecting the Mediterranean Sea against pollution. web.unep.org/unepmap

■ **Abidjan Convention:** At the Conference of the Parties to the Abidjan Convention, which addresses the condition of the seas and coastal areas in West, Central and Southern Africa, OceanCare has been campaigning to protect endangered marine animals from poaching since 2017. www.abidjanconvention.org

■ **ACCOBAMS:** Since 2004, OceanCare has been a partner of the Agreement for the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS). In this role, OceanCare attends meetings of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee and prepares expert reports, in addition to campaigning for species conservation, and for the reduction of both underwater noise and overfishing. OceanCare's president Sigrid Lüber is Co-Chair of the CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Joint Noise Working Group in her private capacity. www.accobams.org

■ **ASCOBANS:** The regional Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North-East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) addresses all toothed whale species in these areas, except for the sperm whale. OceanCare's president Sigrid Lüber is Co-Chair of the CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Joint Noise Working Group in her private capacity. www.ascobans.org



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■ **CITES:** The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) governs international trade in endangered animal and plant species. Within this body, OceanCare is working together with the Species Survival Network to restrict or ban trade in products from whales, dolphins, manatees, seals, sharks and polar bears. www.cites.org

■ **CMS/Bonn Convention:** The Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals is part of the United Nations Environment Programme. OceanCare has been an official partner of the convention since 2016, working to protect marine animals and their habitat. OceanCare's president Sigrid Lüber is Co-Chair of the CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Joint Noise Working Group in her private capacity. www.cms.int

■ **European Commission:** Since 2014, OceanCare has been a member of the working group for implementation of the new Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), which obliges European countries bordering the sea to improve the state of the marine environment in their territorial waters by 2020. Since 2017, OceanCare's president Sigrid Lüber has been a member of the Advisory Board in her private capacity for quietMED, a consortium working on noise reduction in the Mediterranean. Dr Linda Weilgart and Nicolas Entrup work on behalf of OceanCare in the technical working group on underwater noise. ec.europa.eu

■ **FAO/COFI:** As part of the International Ocean Noise Coalition, OceanCare has been working since 2009 in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI) towards an investigation of the socio-economic impact of marine noise pollution on fish stocks and fisheries. www.fao.org/cofi

■ **FAO/GFCM:** Since 2016, OceanCare has been a partner of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). Here, OceanCare provides its expertise in the fields of underwater noise, marine debris, by-catch and illegal fishing activities, with the aim of conserving endangered species and protecting the Mediterranean Sea. A regular exchange of information has been agreed upon, as have measures for environmental education and the training of professionals. www.fao.org/gfcm

■ **IWC:** Since 1992, OceanCare has been campaigning for the protection of whales as an observer at International Whaling Commission (IWC) meetings. An expert from OceanCare has been attending IWC Scientific Committee meetings since 2016. www.iwc.int

Support

OceanCare thanks the following foundations, companies and private individuals for their valuable support of ocean conservation:

Foundations

Anna-Lisa Stiftung
Aptenia Stiftung
Heidi Demetriades Foundation
International Foundation for Sustainable and Ethical Evolution
Marianne Götti-Stiftung für Tierschutz
Foundation for the Third Millennium
Stiftung Ormella
Uniscientia Foundation
Our Earth Foundation
Walter und Inka Ehrbar Stiftung
Willy und Margherit Wölfli-Stiftung
Oak Foundation

Companies and Private Initiatives

■ **Designarmada:** Once again in 2019, Jens Kramer generously assisted OceanCare with the production of images and video material.

■ **NF Footstep:** In 2019, this centre for dogs and people supported OceanCare with articles in its monthly newsletter, a free advertisement in its annual programme booklet and a donation of 500 Swiss francs.

■ **Gebr. Heinemann:** By cutting down on single-use plastics and by financially supporting projects to reduce plastic waste in the oceans, this duty free company has made extremely valuable and important contributions to ocean conservation. Since January 2017, Gebr. Heinemann has been charging a 30-cent fee on all single-use bags in its duty-free shops at many locations and, together with OceanCare, raising travellers' awareness of plastic pollution in the oceans. Already in the first year of this collaboration, the number of plastic bags in the shops fell by around 70 percent. The proceeds from these sales are donated to OceanCare. In total, between the start of the collaboration and the end of 2019, almost 500,000 Euros were raised in this way (see p. 11).

■ **Globetrotter Travel Service:** In 2019, this expert on individual travel supported stranding rescue in South Africa once again to the tune of 5,000 Swiss francs, referred to OceanCare in its travel planner and shared information about OceanCare projects with the online community.

■ **Google:** In the context of the Google Ad Grants programme, OceanCare received 48,000 US dollars' worth of sponsored advertising on the Google search network.

■ **HALM:** This company from Germany manufactures glass drinking straws. In 2019, it produced an exclusive Sea Life Edition. From the proceeds, 3,140 Swiss francs went to OceanCare.

■ **help alliance:** Under the motto "change for change", passengers on board Edelweiss airline can donate their change to charity. In 2019, OceanCare was again one of the beneficiary organisations. For OceanCare, help alliance collected 41,859 Euros, which will be invested in environmental education to aid ocean conservation.

■ **Hotelplan Suisse:** Once again, Hotelplan Suisse supported OceanCare with a donation of 5,000 Swiss francs. In addition, the company continued to continue their dolphin conservation measures that were defined back in 2018 in cooperation with OceanCare.

■ **Johannesbad:** The Johannesbad Group, a German healthcare provider, ran a Christmas fundraising campaign in 2019 and forwarded 1,500 Euros to OceanCare.

■ **Youth Parliament:** In December, the Zollikofen Virtual Youth Parliament selected OceanCare as an organisation worthy of support and donated 3,000 Swiss francs.

■ **Kontiki Reisen:** Travel company Kontiki Reisen supported OceanCare with another donation of 4,000 Swiss francs, consulted the organisation on issues relating to whale watching tours, whaling and plastic pollution of seas and coastlines, and also shared information on OceanCare campaigns. Kontiki Reisen has been a partner of OceanCare since 2017.

■ **Manta Reisen:** In 2019, travel company Manta Reisen supported OceanCare with 3,000 Swiss francs, integrated ocean conservation messages into its own



publications and shared information on OceanCare campaigns with the online community. In addition, this diving holiday specialist continued its Foifliiber campaign, in which travellers could voluntarily donate five Swiss francs to OceanCare with each booking. This raised 8,111 Swiss francs.

■ **Michael Stünzi:** In 2019, Michael Stünzi supported OceanCare with adaptations of his edutainment videos on plastic and underwater noise, which serve as valuable aids for environmental education.

■ **migrolino:** Back in 2018, this subsidiary of the Federation of Migros Cooperatives voluntarily switched to plastic bags made of recycled plastic, levying a fee of five centimes on them, which went to OceanCare. In total, this campaign has already reduced the number of plastic bags consumed by 5,319,500. In 2019, migrolino supported OceanCare projects combating plastic pollution, to the tune of 75,500 Swiss francs.

■ **Money Penny Society Zurich:** OceanCare was this organisation's charity partner in 2019. The networking platform produced a Rossi bag made of recycled PET and veggie bags for its members. The proceeds amounted to 5,400 Swiss francs, which went to OceanCare's anniversary project SAVE Whales (see p. 7).

■ **Noe Fröscher Ito:** In April, this singer organised two benefit concerts for OceanCare and donated 3,100 Swiss francs for ocean conservation.

■ **School pupils' campaign:** In summer 2019, four students from Uster organised a campaign on marine plastic pollution. They made a globe from PET bottles and spent an afternoon collecting donations for OceanCare in a shopping centre. This raised the sum of 1,700 Swiss francs for ocean conservation.

■ **Lake crossing:** In connection with the City of Zurich Lake Crossing, OceanCare collected 12,055 Swiss francs for the protection of sperm whales in the Mediterranean. OceanCare would like to thank the event's organising association Verein Stadtzürcher Seeüberquerung for

the opportunity to partner the event, the companies PartnerRe, Hotelplan and Kontiki Reisen for supporting the staff who took part as sponsored swimmers to raise funds for sperm whale conservation, and all 53 sponsored swimmers for their great charitable contribution and sporting performance.

■ **SIGG:** The company SIGG Switzerland Bottles Ltd. donated 300 aluminium bottles with a special sperm whale design to OceanCare and also supported ocean conservation by donating 1,140 Swiss francs.

■ **SodaStream Germany:** In Hamburg, this company organised the first world championship in high-rise bottle carrying. Around 100 people each carried 12 plastic bottles up 27 floors. In this way, SodaStream drew attention to the fact that sparkling water can be made at home, which reduces the transport distances, resource depletion and waste that result from the purchase of plastic bottles. From this campaign, 5,000 Euros were donated to OceanCare for projects combating plastic waste.

■ **andrewedel.ch:** As a long-standing patron of OceanCare, painter Andrea Wedel spent two years continuing her artistic engagement with human beings' impact on the oceans, thus producing a series of fascinating pictures and objects entitled Commitment, which OceanCare was able to exhibit in its offices in January 2019, at the start of its 30th anniversary year. From the resulting sales, the artist donated 7,200 Swiss francs to OceanCare.

■ **Trinity Music:** In summer 2019, this Berlin concert organiser collected donations from people on events' guest lists. This raised 3,105 Euros for ocean conservation.

■ **UBS:** UBS staff in the Zurich region collected litter by getting involved in plogging. This activity's name combines the Swedish word "plocka" (gather) with "jogging". Instead of just running through the city and countryside, the staff also picked up litter on the way. UBS donated five Swiss francs for every rubbish bag filled. This raised 1,500 Swiss francs for OceanCare.

Annual Report

in accordance with Swiss GAAP FER 21

Income Statement ¹⁾

	2019		2018	
REVENUE	CHF	%	CHF	%
Membership fees	219,546	8.2%	103,553	3.6%
Sponsorships	279,349	10.4%	128,648	4.4%
Foundations	234,750	8.7%	139,480	4.8%
Revenue from bequests	39,431	1.5%	595,120	20.5%
Revenue from projects	834,363	31.1%	809,266	27.8%
Revenue from public relations work	1,027,757	38.2%	1,064,779	36.6%
Revenue from online shop	50,669	1.9%	66,441	2.3%
Revenue miscellaneous	600	0.0%	400	0.0%
Total revenue	2,686,465	100.0%	2,907,687	100.0%
EXPENDITURE				
Project expenditure				
Animal welfare and species conservation	688,937	23.1%	505,562	21.0%
Ocean conservation	839,098	28.2%	698,332	29.1%
Whale and dolphin research	187,456	6.3%	189,809	7.9%
Environmental education	624,393	21.0%	469,815	19.5%
Total project expenditure	2,339,884	78.6%	1,863,518	77.5%
Fundraising	416,697	14.0%	347,488	14.5%
Administrative expenditure	221,158	7.4%	192,351	8.0%
Total expenditure	2,977,739	100.0%	2,403,357	100.0%
OPERATING PROFIT	-291,274		504,330	
Withdrawal from funds	292,000		95,120	
Allocation to funds	-		-595,120	
Profit before allocation to project reserves	726		4,330	
Allocation to project reserves	-726		-4,330	

¹⁾The audit report and complete annual report can be requested and viewed at the OceanCare office.



Balance Sheet as of 31 December ¹⁾

	2019		2018	
	CHF	%	CHF	%
ASSETS				
Current assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	1,919,988	95.9%	2,146,782	97.1%
Miscellaneous current receivables	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Inventories	15,975	0.8%	13,166	0.6%
Prepaid expenses and deferred charges	29,047	1.5%	16,849	0.8%
Total current assets	1,965,010	98.2%	2,176,797	98.5%
Fixed assets				
Rent deposit	20,012	1.0%	20,012	0.9%
Tangible and intangible assets	16,250	0.8%	14,500	0.6%
Total fixed assets	36,262	1.8%	34,512	1.5%
Total assets	2,001,272	100.0%	2,211,309	100.0%
LIABILITIES				
Short-term borrowing				
Miscellaneous current liabilities	115,997	5.8%	34,760	1.6%
Total borrowing	115,997	5.8%	34,760	1.6%
ORGANISATION CAPITAL				
Tied-up capital				
Project reserves	258,918	12.9%	258,192	11.7%
Bequest funds	1,387,597	69.3%	1,679,597	75.9%
	1,646,515	82.2%	1,937,789	87.6%
Nominal capital				
Association funds	238,760	12.0%	238,760	10.8%
	238,760	12.0%	238,760	10.8%
Total organisation capital	1,885,275	94.2%	2,176,549	98.4%
Total liabilities	2,001,272	100.0%	2,211,309	100.0%



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Donations can be made to:
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BIC/SWIFT: CRESCHZ80A

OceanCare wishes to thank the following partner organisations and institutions for the successful cooperation:

