



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Contents

- Projects 4
 - Underwater Noise** 4
 - Deep-Sea Mining** 8
 - Plastic Pollution** 9
 - Climate Change** 14
 - Fishing** 16
 - Aquatic Wild Meat** 18
 - Animal Rescue** 20
 - Whales** 22
 - Dolphins** 27
 - Sea Turtles** 34
 - Monk Seals** 36
 - Sharks** 38
- Environmental Education 40
- Publications 44
- Networks 48
- International Fora 50
- Support 52
- Financial Statement 54



 **PRINTED MATTER**
CO₂ NEUTRAL
by Swiss Climate
SC2020030491



Dear Readers,

Year after year, I report here on the challenges ahead, as well as on the successes we have achieved. On the latter, I could easily mention the oil industry at this point, which pleasingly will no longer be allowed to explore in Spain's territorial waters in the future (see p.7).

For once though, I would like to focus not on our work, but on our future.

The time is now ripe for a long-planned generational change at OceanCare: Vera Bürgi and I are stepping down as co-managing directors. We are placing the responsibility for my life's work in younger hands. Fabienne McLellan, who has been responsible for international relations until now, will in future become our new managing director and set the course that OceanCare takes in ocean conservation.

Change of leadership, life's work, responsibility: these are big words which stir up big emotions. The greatest of these feelings though is one of joy – at the stroke of luck that manifests itself in Fabienne McLellan. I have complete faith in her: she protects marine life persistently, in a solution-oriented manner; she is well versed in this field; and she embodies the necessary leadership qualities that are important for our organisation.

Fabienne McLellan will safely navigate the OceanCare ship through all storms. Just as Vera Bürgi has done with me: for 20 years, Vera stood strongly by my side what allowed me to concentrate on working within international bodies. Her loyalty and dedication were crucial to build up this organisation. She will now be responsible for organisational communication, while I will continue to serve as president, act as a mentor and perform governance tasks.

In 33 years, OceanCare has grown to become an internationally respected organisation. I feel proud about the successes that we have achieved in ocean conservation – and grateful to the people who have accompanied me: to the team members in Wädenswil reliably providing the basis for our work, to the consultants working within international bodies on OceanCare's behalf, and to the scientists conducting research around the globe.

I am also thankful to you, dear Readers: your loyal support provides the necessary wind in our sails which is critical as the ocean and its inhabitants depend on us – today more than ever.

Best regards,

Sigrid Lüber
President



© Pino Covino



Projects

Underwater Noise

It is getting louder and louder under water. Noise is being generated, for example, by long-range acoustic devices used to explore the seabed for fossil fuels, by military sonar and by ships. To us humans, what happens acoustically below the water's surface is barely perceptible. People generally only become aware of the extent of this threat when whales and dolphins become stranded after intense acoustic events. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Underwater noise harms all marine life, from the largest mammal to the smallest invertebrate krill. Since 2004, OceanCare has been working within numerous regional and international bodies pushing to reduce noise emissions in the ocean. For these efforts, the organisation was granted Special Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC on marine issues in 2011.

■ **Ship speed reduction:** Essentially, the faster and larger ships are, the louder they are. Speed also correlates with fuel consumption and the emission of greenhouse gases like CO₂, as well as soot, sulphur oxides and nitrogen oxides. A speed reduction in shipping would have a positive impact on these factors and also decrease the risk of ships colliding with large whales. Two studies published in March 2021 by the Belgian Ministry of the Environment, with the assistance of OceanCare and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), specifically demonstrated that this would reduce CO₂ and noise emissions. OceanCare is working regionally, within the EU as well as globally to reduce speed in shipping.

■ **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS):** In June, the 21st meeting of the Informal Consultative Process (ICP) for the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea took place. The focus was on the consequences of rising sea levels. OceanCare urged the participating states not only to concentrate on the effects of climate change, but also to quickly implement tangible and effective measures, such as speed reduction in shipping.

■ **UN Environment Programme (UNEP):** Due to the pandemic, the UN Environment Programme held its fifth Environment Assembly (UNEA5) in two stages. The first part took place online, in February 2021, the second part will be held in person in March 2022. The first part focused mainly on tangible measures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, budgetary issues and the strategic direction of the UN Environment Programme up to 2025. OceanCare strongly emphasised the harmfulness of underwater noise as a transboundary form of pollution and called for its mitigation to be part of the UNEP strategy for 2022 to 2025.

■ **Global Pact for the Environment:** OceanCare continues to be actively involved in the negotiations for a possible UN Global Pact for the Environment, to strengthen international environmental law. Support for this, however, has been soberingly limited. In 2021, the parties struggled to reach a non-binding political declaration, in the pact's stead, which would have at least still contained some elements of the original global pact. In November, as part of the consultative process for the draft of this declaration, OceanCare underlined the need to close loopholes in international environmental law and to press ahead with the implementation of existing resolutions.



■ **UN Treaty of the High Seas (BBNJ):** Since 2007, OceanCare has been participating in negotiations for an agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. The fourth and final round of negotiations should have taken place in March 2020. It was postponed several times due to the pandemic and was also not able to be held in 2021 either. However, in online consultations and bilateral meetings with decision-makers, OceanCare continued to advocate intensively for underwater noise to also be regulated in the high seas, and for environmental impact assessments to be made mandatory prior to any noise generating activities at sea. We emphasised that it was also important to have more marine protected areas in place that offer sufficient protection from underwater noise. In the context of the High Seas Alliance, OceanCare made clear to many decision-makers that the Treaty of the High Seas represented a unique opportunity for keeping marine environment alive.

■ **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** At the Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, 14 countries signed a declaration calling for zero emissions from shipping by 2050. While it was step in the right direction, it does not go far enough as the declaration only envisages the development of new fuels and the modernisation of ship technology to achieve this goal. These measures are important, but take effect far too late. A reduction in ship speed (see p.4) is not contemplated in the declaration, whereas this is a measure that could be implemented immediately. In 2021, OceanCare urgently appealed for shipping companies and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) member states to adopt this solution.

■ **International Maritime Organization (IMO):** In response to a demand from OceanCare and other environmental organisations, the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee decided to review its guidelines on reducing noise emissions from ships, which were issued in 2014 but are considered not very effective. Within the IMO, Canada initiated the review with support from EU countries. The drafting of the new guidelines will begin in 2022 and is expected to take until summer 2023.

■ **International Whaling Commission (IWC):** Based on a proposal from OceanCare, the working group on the impact of underwater noise on cetaceans, established by the IWC Conservation Committee, decided to conduct a global investigation into planned seismic surveys from 2022 onwards.

■ **FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI):** In February, at the 34th session of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Committee on Fisheries, OceanCare explained how harmful underwater noise is to fish stocks and thus to fishing communities. There is evidence that fishing yields can drop by as much as 80 percent after intense exposure to underwater noise, for instance caused by seismic activities. For ten years, OceanCare has been calling for an investigation into the social and economic consequences of such impact to fish stocks. Together with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and with generous support from the Swiss government, OceanCare was able to carry out a primary case study in 2021 (see p.6). The study concept and initial information were already presented at the COFI session in February.



■ **General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM):** Since 2016, OceanCare has been a partner of the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, which is responsible for the conservation and sustainable use of fish stocks in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. In 2021, the GFCM confirmed the continuation of its partnership with OceanCare in the fields of underwater noise, plastic pollution, by-catch and illegal fishing. In November, at the Commission's 44th session, the GFCM and OceanCare presented a joint case study on the negative impact of noise on fish stocks in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit Fisheries Restricted Area in the Central Adriatic Sea. The research was designed in such a way that the study can be replicated for other marine areas. This is important so as to consistently capture the extent of the socio-economic consequences of damage to fish stocks caused by noise.

■ **EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD):** The EU member states were obliged by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive to restore or achieve "good environmental status" in European waters by the end of 2020. One of the eleven "descriptors" defining this status is a biologically tolerable number of noisy activities at sea. This requires limits that quantify how much noise is acceptable for marine life. OceanCare is involved in developing such limits for constant noise emissions (e.g., ships) and explosive acoustic events (e.g., long-range acoustic devices) within the EU technical working group on underwater noise. In the 2019 report "Reduce the Noise", OceanCare and its partners showed that although progress had been made towards "good environmental status", the targets of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive were largely not being met. OceanCare continued to remind the EU countries' representatives to fulfil their legal obligations regarding ocean conservation. In January 2021, experts, including some scientists from OceanCare, published the report "Underwater Noise – The Neglected Threat to Marine Life", exposing EU member states' failings in the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Based on this and other expert reports prepared for this purpose, OceanCare reinforced the call for a ban on fossil-fuel exploration at sea and for a reduction in ship speed. OceanCare representatives maintained contact with European decision-makers and submitted written comments to the European Commission to ensure that the Marine Strategy Framework Directive is not weakened and that existing obligations are accordingly met.

■ **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):** In 2021, OceanCare participated in various consultations so as to prepare for the 15th Conference of the Parties to the CBD and to develop a framework for a post-2020 global biodiversity strategy. The organisation made proposals regarding the development of indicators to enable the state of marine biodiversity to be recorded, and conservation measures to be defined and tested.

■ **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS):** OceanCare is continually involved in CMS work processes for the conservation of migratory marine species. This includes work in the context of the CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Joint Noise Working Group, of which our President Sigrid Lüber is co-chair. In addition, OceanCare is looking into measures against light pollution, to be incorporated into guidelines on mitigation of this threat to wildlife.



■ **Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS):** As a member of the ASCOBANS working groups on beaked-whale conservation and effective management of porpoise sanctuaries, Mark Simmonds, Director of Science at OceanCare, attended the 2021 meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee. Munitions detonation and the military use of active sonar systems to detect submarines pose a particular threat to beaked-whales and porpoises in the region.

■ **Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS):** In November, OceanCare attended a meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee. Recommendations on the protection of whales and dolphins were developed and will be presented to the parties for a decision in 2022. OceanCare focused on measures to combat pollution of the Mediterranean caused by noise and plastic, to prevent collisions between ships and whales and to protect threatened whale and dolphin species.

■ **Ban on oil and gas exploration in Spanish waters:** Civil society interventions initiated by OceanCare and partners were effective: in May, the Spanish parliament banned fossil-fuel exploration in its territory – on land and at sea. Spain thus joins France, Denmark and New Zealand among the countries pushing to decarbonise their economies. OceanCare succeeded in convincing a majority of Spanish parliamentarians to amend the draft law in such a way that as soon as the law came into force, new production applications could no longer be accepted. Valid production licences therefore definitively expire at the end of 2042. Spain's largest oil company Repsol shut down an oil rig near the whale migration corridor in June.

■ **Noise reduction in the whale migration corridor:** In November, OceanCare and regional partners gathered in Mallorca and presented the report "Quiet Waters", which includes a catalogue of measures to reduce underwater noise in the marine area between mainland Spain and the Balearic Islands, placed under protection as a whale migration corridor in 2018. The report analyses noise pollution in the region and lists a package of measures to measurably reduce noise emissions, which is particularly important because significant shipping routes pass through the protected area. Alongside noise pollution, shipping poses a collision risk to sperm whales and fin whales, which is usually fatal for the animals.

■ **Save the Arctic:** In 2021, OceanCare became part of a coalition of environmental organisations working to reduce shipping noise in the Arctic. In a report, WWF Canada showed that underwater noise in Arctic waters increased by between 10 and 15 decibels from 2013 to 2019, which amounts to a 10- to 30-fold rise from previous noise levels. The Canadian government agency Transport Canada is the world leader when it comes to reduction of shipping noise. It is working on a noise directive and wants to oblige its shipping fleet to draw up a management plan for underwater noise. OceanCare is appealing to the agency to make noise-reduction targets binding and helped Transport Canada to prepare a webinar planned for 2022, which is to present technical innovations pertaining to the reduction of shipping noise.



Deep-Sea Mining

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea describes the area of the seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction as the “common heritage of mankind”. This heritage is administered by the International Seabed Authority. The sensitive habitat in the dark depths of the sea is already under severe pressure from global warming, plastic pollution and bottom trawling. Deep-sea mining poses an additional threat. The necessary energy revolution and increasing digitisation are fuelling demand for minerals and rare-earth elements. These are also expected to be mined in the seabed, which would destroy huge areas of habitat that have formed over millions of years. It would also entail a critical increase in noise: mining would acoustically pollute the marine environment throughout the water column – from the water’s surface to the seabed. OceanCare is bringing this aspect into focus and supporting the call for a moratorium on mineral mining in the ocean.

■ **Noise report on deep-sea mining:** In November, OceanCare published “Deep-Sea Mining: A Noisy Affair”, an initial analysis of noise emissions from deep-sea mining, on the basis of which it must be assumed that the potential acoustic pollution is considerable. The authors urgently recommend banning such noise emissions, and thus deep-sea mining, in accordance with the precautionary principle, until the resulting impact on the marine environment has been clarified in a scientifically sound manner.

■ **Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC):** Since March, OceanCare has been part of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, contributing its expertise in the field of underwater noise. In this coalition, more than 80 non-governmental organisations, small-scale fisher associations and academic institutions are demanding a moratorium on deep-sea mining. Together, we are also addressing overfishing in the deep sea, and calling for political and legal frameworks that enable effective protection of ecosystems on the seabed.

■ **European Union:** In May, OceanCare, as part of the coalition Seas at Risk, appealed for EU member states to not allow deep-sea mining in their national waters and to support the call for a global moratorium. The coalition also made clear that it is essential to use minerals and rare-earth elements sparingly and to implement a circular economy, as the mining of raw materials in increasingly remote regions of the Earth is putting a heavy strain on the global ecosystem.

■ **International Seabed Authority (ISA):** In 2021, OceanCare participated in various ISA consultative processes and made submissions, e.g., with regard to conducting environmental impact assessments. In December, the International Seabed Authority member states granted OceanCare observer status. The delegations from Spain and Costa Rica expressed great appreciation of OceanCare’s commitment to reducing underwater noise.



Plastic Pollution

Plastic pollutes the ocean long before we use it – and for a long time afterwards. Plastic is harmful throughout its life cycle – from production, to usage and through to disposal. The problem already begins with exploration for the raw materials used to make it: at sea, oil and gas are only found by means of long-range acoustic devices, which are so loud that they cause marine animals to die or become deaf. Time and time again, accidents occur during the production and transport of oil, resulting in environmental disasters. The production of plastic also contributes to global warming, as it requires a lot of energy and releases large amounts of CO₂. In turn, a large proportion of plastic waste is incinerated, emitting carbon dioxide, or ends up polluting nature. Every year, around nine million tonnes of plastic waste finds its way into the ocean. Millions of marine animals die because they mistake plastic for food or get entangled in it. OceanCare tackles the problem at its roots and is campaigning for a globally binding agreement that regulates plastic throughout its life cycle.

■ **UN Environment Programme (UNEP):** Due to the pandemic, UNEP held its fifth Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) in two stages. The first (UNEA5.1) took place online, in February 2021. As a core member of the coalition Break Free From Plastic, OceanCare strongly pushed for a global plastics treaty, which 130 countries are now in favour of. The next task was to maintain the momentum for a plastics treaty until the continuation of the Environment Assembly (UNEA5.2) in Spring 2022.

In February, OceanCare attended the online session of the UNEP Science-Policy-Business Forum, in which climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution of the environment were addressed. There was a consensus that the plastic problem can only be curbed by means of international cooperation.

In June and September, as a member of the UN Science and Technology Major Group, OceanCare participated in the UN Environment Programme's Major Group consultations on UNEA-5 and on the strategic direction of UNEP.

In September, also in preparation for UNEA-5, the first ministerial conference was held in Geneva, to discuss a global strategy for curbing plastic pollution. OceanCare participated in a panel discussion beforehand and took part in virtual preparatory meetings for the conference. In Geneva, OceanCare made a verbal intervention on behalf of the UN Science and Technology Major Group. Rwanda and Peru made a convincing case with a ground-breaking draft resolution recommending a legally binding global instrument to tackle the plastics crisis, which met with considerable approval. Ministers from over 120 countries, including the EU member states and Switzerland, issued a joint declaration expressing their support for a global plastics treaty.



At the November meeting of the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives, partner organisation CIEL presented an appeal from the coalition Break Free From Plastic, in which over 700 organisations, including OceanCare, called for the creation of a global plastics treaty.

■ **UN Treaty on the High Seas (BBNJ):** OceanCare is committed to curbing transboundary forms of marine pollution, such as underwater noise (see p.5) and plastic pollution, within the framework of the new High Seas treaty. Due to COVID-19, one round of negotiations on the treaty, scheduled for 2020, had to be postponed until 2021. OceanCare used this time for an intensive exchange with UN delegates and, in the context of the High Seas Alliance, helped to refine the strategy on how to anchor ecological management of international waters within the Treaty on the High Seas. Alliance members carried this strategy into the March 2021 negotiating round, which took place online.

■ **General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM):** Since 2016, OceanCare has been a partner of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, which is responsible for the conservation and sustainable use of fish stocks in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. In 2021, GFCM confirmed the continuation of this partnership, which enables OceanCare to contribute its expertise on plastic pollution in the Mediterranean, among other issues.

■ **EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD):** The EU member states were obliged by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive to restore “good environmental status” in European seas by the end of 2020. One of the eleven “descriptors” defining this status is the extent of plastic pollution in the sea. Although the countries made progress in this respect, the targets of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive were largely not met. In 2021, as part of the coalition Seas at Risk, OceanCare reminded the EU countries’ environment ministers to fulfil their legal obligations regarding ocean conservation. OceanCare representatives remained in contact with European decision-makers and submitted written comments to the European Commission to ensure that the Marine Strategy Framework Directive is not weakened and that existing obligations are met (see p.6).

■ **EU consultation on chemicals in food packaging:** Chemicals can pass from food packaging into food and, in the event of littering, into the environment. According to current EU law, plastic food packaging may contain harmful substances such as hormonally active bisphenols. However, as part of the European Green Deal, the European Commission has committed itself to revising the regulations on food-contact materials and banning particularly hazardous substances. In January 2021, OceanCare attended an initial public consultation and, in a written intervention, pleaded for a strict ban on the most harmful chemicals.



Panel discussion "Rendez-vous Bundesplatz" in Berne

■ **EU International Ocean Governance Forum:** In the virtual EU International Ocean Governance Forum 2021 "Setting the Course for a Sustainable Blue Planet" in April, the EU debated how to put the blue planet on track towards greater sustainability. OceanCare was invited to contribute core messages pertaining to focal points of its work and, in particular, stressed the urgency of a global plastics treaty.

■ **Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA):** In September, as part of the Rendez-vous Bundesplatz event series, OceanCare and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs organised a joint panel discussion on approaches and solutions that can be gained from the plastics crisis. The panellists were: Ursula Schneider Schüttel (National Councillor, SP Fribourg), Roland Hediger (Head of Production, Energie Wasser Bern), Dr Jane Muncke (Managing Director, Food Packaging Forum) and Christine Wiederkehr-Luther (Head of Sustainability, Federation of Migros Cooperatives) as experts from the worlds of politics, science, business and waste management. The event was opened by Dr Karin Siegwart, Vice Director of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), and moderated by Max Akermann, former USA correspondent for Swiss Radio and Television. Jacques Ducrest, Delegate of the Federal Council for the 2030 Agenda, welcomed the participants together with OceanCare and pointed out the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals. A recording of the event can be seen at youtube.com/watch?v=RfyaLy93ESY.

■ **International Maritime Organization (IMO):** In May, a Singapore-registered container ship caught fire and sank off the coast of Sri Lanka. It was carrying 25 tonnes of nitric acid, 278 tonnes of heavy fuel oil, 50 tonnes of ship fuel and 1,500 containers – 28 of which contained polyethylene plastic pellets. The contents of at least eight of these containers ended up in the sea. As a result, tonnes of plastic pellets washed up on the coast of Sri Lanka. OceanCare, the Environmental Investigation Agency and the Clean Shipping Coalition sent a joint letter to the International Maritime Organization, calling for the guidelines on the transportation of plastic pellets to be improved, along with the action plan for reducing plastic waste on ships. A petition with 70,000 signatures, supported by OceanCare, was handed over to the IMO in November.

■ **Break Free From Plastic (BFFP):** Since 2016, as a core member of the BFFP coalition, OceanCare has been campaigning against plastic waste and for the circular use of plastics, while also contributing to a cohesive strategy for Europe. At the Climate Change Conference in Scotland, Break Free From Plastic submitted a demand for the regulation of plastic, in view of the significant CO₂ emissions generated by its production and disposal. In cooperation with partners Dogwood Alliance and Canopy, the coalition also launched a call to action, directed at the UN Environment Programme, for a ban on single-use products due to their high environmental and social costs. The call was signed by 188 international organisations, including OceanCare.



Clean-up campaign by the Save the Med Foundation

■ **Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI):** In July, GGGI hosted an initial discussion between organisations and institutions working against ghost nets and other stray fishing gear in the Mediterranean. OceanCare stressed the importance of a multidimensional approach: these dangerous objects must be removed from the sea – and marine animals that have become entangled in ghost nets, for example, must be rescued. However, there is also a need for legislative changes that allow fishing gear to be traceable, for instance, and a strategy that allows fishers to dispose of old material in ports, free of charge. OceanCare is doing important work in all these areas, together with its partners.

■ **Joanna Toole Internship:** The Joanna Toole Internship is supported by OceanCare, Ocean Conservancy, the Center for Coastal Studies and the Joanna Toole Foundation. It was created in memory of Joanna Toole, a passionate environmentalist and OceanCare staff member, who sadly lost her life in a tragic plane crash in 2019. Each year, the internship enables one young female scientist to work on projects run by members of the Global Ghost Gear Initiative. In 2021, Natalie MacDonald interned with the Center for Coastal Studies to help collect and analyse data regarding the extent of plastic pollution in the USA.

■ **Food Packaging Forum:** During a three-day online workshop run by Zurich's Food Packaging Forum, almost a hundred scientists, politicians and employees of environmental organisations, including OceanCare, exchanged views on how harmful substances contained in plastic and other packaging can be reduced.

■ **Retrieval of ghost nets in the Mediterranean:** In the Western Mediterranean, the organisation Alnitak, with the aid of OceanCare, is tackling the problem of ghost nets, the extent of which is alarming in this region. Alnitak maps the occurrence of such flotsam and uses traceability modelling to determine where it could have come from, so as to enable measures to be taken at the source. The researchers are also using this method to try to identify areas where there is a particularly high accumulation of ghost fishing gear, and where its retrieval and the rescue of animals entangled in it (see p.20) are to be prioritised. Alnitak began to set up an online platform that fishers, sailors, lay researchers, and representatives from the tourism and maritime-transport sectors can use to report sightings of ghost nets. It conducts training on how to retrieve such nets and on how to rescue animals entangled in them. The organisation also studied microplastics in the sea and found that, in some areas, the ratio of microplastics to plankton is already one to three, something which could cause enormous harm to plankton-eating creatures. In multimedia presentations, Alnitak has also raised awareness of the dangers of ghost fishing.



■ **Awareness-raising projects in the Mediterranean region:** On the Balearic Islands, the Save the Med Foundation, with support from OceanCare, raises schoolchildren's awareness of the plastics problem. With the school project *Dos Manos*, the organisation reached 2,126 youths aged between 15 and 18 in 2021, despite the pandemic. During 40 clean-up campaigns on beaches, 19,734 plastic items, or 119 kilos of plastic, were collected, catalogued and disposed of. As part of the *Changemakers at Sea* initiative, 22 groups of school pupils developed innovative ideas on how to reduce plastic consumption and raise awareness of plastic's harmfulness. The five teams with the best proposals were allowed to accompany the Save the Med Foundation on an excursion at sea and actively participate in research.

In Greece, partner organisation *iSea* continued the OceanCare-funded *#zeroplastic* programme, with which it raises awareness to promote a zero-waste lifestyle and actively tackles plastic pollution. In 2021, *iSea* co-operated with 16 diving centres, which retrieved 1,370 kilos of plastic waste in eleven underwater clean-ups and recorded this in the PADI Project Aware underwater-waste database. Each month, the diving centres analysed their consumption of products containing plastics or microplastics and forwarded the data to *iSea*, while at the same time reducing their plastic consumption on an ongoing basis. Two of the centres have now completely switched to zero waste. OceanCare was a guest speaker at a virtual *#zeroplastic* event hosted by *iSea*.

■ **Poster campaign:** At 1,200 locations in German-speaking Switzerland, in a poster campaign that benefited from special rates due to the COVID pandemic, OceanCare was able to draw attention to the problem of littering, which has been exacerbated by disposable masks both on land and at sea. Another 150 poster sites were provided free of charge by 15 municipalities and institutions.

■ **Clean-up campaign in Wädenswil:** At a World Cleanup Day event co-organised by OceanCare, both on land at the organisation's headquarters in Wädenswil and in Lake Zurich, 150 volunteers collected a large amount of litter, including twelve bicycles, a shopping trolley, a balcony rail, fishing nets, single-use plastic fast-food packaging, plastic bags, cans, glass bottles and over 20,000 cigarette butts, each with the potential to contaminate 1,000 litres of water. OceanCare conducted a brand audit of the collected waste items for the coalition *Break Free From Plastic*, the results of which were included in a global report published by BFFP in 2021. The aim of the brand audit is to identify the corporations that cause the most littering with their products and to hold them accountable for the environmental harm caused by their products.



Climate Change

The ocean is our planet's blue lung. It stores around a third of the human-caused CO₂ from the atmosphere, produces half of the oxygen we breathe and absorbs a large part of the excess heat that has been accumulating in the Earth system since pre-industrial times. Ocean conservation therefore always equates to climate protection at the same time. However, the ocean is reaching the limits of its capacity to compensate for our climate sins. In the Arctic, the ice is reaching an historic low, which has significant consequences for polar bears and seals who depend on ice floes for foraging or breeding. The North Pole could essentially be ice-free as early as the summer of 2050. This, in turn, will create additional consequences given commercial interests in the area: there is the threat of enormous shipping volumes when the North-West Passage becomes navigable as a sea route. Many countries are already securing rights to Arctic fishing grounds, as well as to deposits of oil and gas. However, accelerated economic development could cause great damage to the Arctic.

■ **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):** In August, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published its Sixth Assessment Report, which clearly shows that climate change is intensifying rapidly, with serious consequences for the ocean. The melting of the ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica is visible and contributing to rising sea levels. The seawater is continuing to get warmer, and there are more and more extreme temperature events, so-called marine heatwaves, which can, for example, lead to coral bleaching or toxic algal blooms, as well as influence not only the composition and distribution of species, but also fishing yields. Climate-induced acidification of seawater is harming coral and other calcifying organisms, such as phytoplankton species, crabs, squid, oysters and starfish. Ocean warming, an overabundance of nutrients and reduced water mixing lead to a decrease in seawater's oxygen content. In extreme cases, this process causes more and more marine areas to become "dead zones". Climate change is also affecting entire ocean currents. Models predict that the powerful current bringing warm water from the Caribbean to Europe will weaken in the course of the 21st century. In view of such scenarios, it is more important than ever to protect the oceans, which play an essential role in stabilising the climate.

■ **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** At the Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, 14 countries signed a declaration calling for zero emissions from shipping by 2050. It is a step in the right direction, but does not go far enough as the declaration only envisages the development of new fuels and the



modernisation of ship technology to achieve the goal. These measures are important, but take effect far too late. No reduction in ship speed is envisaged in the declaration (see p.4) whereas this could be implemented immediately and would reduce CO₂ emissions, as shown by two studies published in March 2021 by the Belgian Ministry of the Environment with the assistance of OceanCare and IFAW. OceanCare urgently pleaded for rapid implementation of this measure.

■ **Polar bears:** The melting of the Arctic ice is making it difficult for polar bears to hunt seals. It is estimated that there are between 15,000 and 30,000 polar bears remaining, of which around a third could disappear by 2025 due to climate change. Against this backdrop, the fact that trophy hunters are still allowed to kill polar bears reflects evident cynicism. Not only is the way in which they are killed intolerable from an animal-welfare perspective, but this hunting is also a gross act of contempt for species conservation. Every polar bear counts, and hunters are displaying particular negligence by targeting the largest animals which are essential for conservation of the species. Internationally, acceptance of trophy hunting also encourages poaching, illegal trade in threatened animal species and corruption. In order to remove the incentive to hunt big game, OceanCare is campaigning for a ban on importing animal trophies into Switzerland. In 2017, a corresponding motion by former National Councillor Maya Graf (Greens), supported by OceanCare, was rejected by the Swiss parliament. In 2019, National Councillor Isabelle Chevalley (Green Liberals) submitted a new motion for a ban on the import and transit of particularly threatened animal species. This was adopted by the Swiss National Council in spring 2021, with a two-thirds majority. The Swiss Council of States was supposed to decide on matters in the Autumn, but postponed this item of business until 2022. At the end of the year, OceanCare added its signature to an appeal from the foundation Tier im Recht, calling on the Swiss Council of States to finally, in keeping with the times, decide on banning the import and transit of animal trophies from big-game hunting.

■ **Whales and climate change:** Mark Simmonds, Director of Science at OceanCare, ran a workshop on whales and climate change in December, under the auspices of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). The workshop looked into the latest findings on the impact of climate change on whales. A corresponding report will be published in 2022.



Fishing

Around 140 million tonnes of marine animals are fished out of the ocean every year. One third are of no value to fishers and get dumped overboard, either dead or injured. If this depletion continues unabated, the stocks of all commercially exploited fish species will have disappeared in approximately 40 years. This is an ominous scenario for the marine ecosystem, which is severely damaged by overfishing and destructive fishing practices. The food security of around three billion people, who depend on food from the sea, is also at stake.

■ **FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI):** In February, OceanCare presented preliminary information to the Food and Agriculture Organization's Committee on Fisheries regarding a 2021 socio-economic study on the impact of noise on fish stocks, which it conducted with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).

■ **General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM):** Since 2016, OceanCare has been a partner of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean. In November, at the 44th session of the commission, GFCM and OceanCare presented a joint case study on the impact of noise on fish stocks in the Jabuka/Pomo Pit Fisheries Restricted Area in the Central Adriatic Sea (see p.6).

The organisation Alnitak submitted an OceanCare-funded report to GFCM, regarding its documentation of the number of ghost nets, fish-aggregating devices (FADs) and other fishing gear in the Western Mediterranean, and showed that an appallingly high number of protected animals are being caught as by-catch in ghost nets, as well as in both illegal and legal fishing activities. Alnitak researchers retrieved multiple fishing gear and freed animals entangled in it (see p.20).

■ **World Trade Organization (WTO):** As part of the coalition Stop Funding Overfishing, OceanCare addressed the harmfulness of fishing subsidies and appealed for WTO member states to end them.

■ **European Union:** Together with Seas At Risk, OceanCare campaigned for fishing to be conducted in a more environmentally-friendly way, in which by-catch is avoided and destructive fishing practices such as bottom trawling are banned. Fish populations should be allowed to recover so as to reproduce again.

As part of the alliance Seas at Risk and the EU Fisheries Control Coalition, OceanCare contributed to a review of the European fisheries control system, so as to ensure that illegal and harmful fishing is stopped, and that by-catch is reduced.

Remote electronic monitoring of fishing activities at sea, by means of cameras installed on vessels, serves to combat illegal and harmful fishing practices. There are moves to limit the cameras to certain vessels, which make up only 3.2 percent of the EU fleet. OceanCare supported an appeal from the Environmental Justice Foundation, calling on EU fisheries ministers to not plan such a restriction under any circumstances.



Aquaculture

■ **Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI):** This initiative against lost or abandoned fishing gear brings together representatives from intergovernmental organisations, governments, science, the private sector and environmental organisations such as OceanCare. GGGI members retrieve ghost gear and jointly campaign for compulsory tagging of fishing gear, so that it can be traced back to its owners. In 2021, a guide on the management of aquaculture gear was developed to inform aquaculture operators about how to avoid losing their gear. OceanCare has lobbied for Spain to also become a member of the initiative and has put Spanish government representatives in contact with GGGI. At an event concerning the situation in the Mediterranean, OceanCare presented its ghost-gear-related activities in the context of maritime policy, animal rescue and retrieval work.

■ **Supermarkets and aquaculture:** Fish from aquaculture are often touted as a sustainable alternative to wild fish. However, aquaculture promotes overfishing. This is because farmed fish devour several times their weight in wild fish. As the fish are kept in very confined spaces, animal suffering and disease are also an issue. OceanCare contributed to a report by the Changing Markets Foundation that sheds light on how European supermarkets are dealing with this issue. It summarises the results of a survey of 33 European supermarket chains, covering strategies for sustainable feeding of aquaculture fish, monitoring of fish mortality, animal welfare on aquaculture farms and transparency of supply chains. Supermarkets were accordingly identified as “leaders” or “laggards”. OceanCare publicised the survey results with an emphasis on Switzerland and Austria.

■ **Marine Stewardship Council (MSC):** In its regular standard review, the Marine Stewardship Council assesses whether its own certification practice for the MSC label is up to standard with regard to sustainable fishing. In 2021, as part of the coalition Make Stewardship Count, OceanCare again campaigned for the Marine Stewardship Council to finally rectify known shortcomings in its standard review. For instance, fisheries should be denied certification if they have threatened species in their by-catch, submit insufficient catch data or fail to meet MSC requirements regarding necessary improvements to fishing activities. It is also essential that the label is no longer awarded to fisheries that engage in shark finning (see p. 38). In general, it is important to bear in mind that fishing on the high seas is difficult to monitor and there is little sanctioning of violations.

■ **Saving salmon in the state of Washington, USA:** Jay Inslee, Governor of the State of Washington, USA, ignored a demand (from the coalition Whales Need Us, co-signed by OceanCare) that four dams be removed from the lower Snake River, so as to clear a path to important spawning grounds for the threatened Chinook salmon. This salmon species makes up about 90 percent of the diet of the endangered Southern Resident orca. In 2021, Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson acknowledged the relevance of the demand and proposed removal of the dams by 2030. Whales Need Us thanked Simpson in a joint letter, again co-signed by OceanCare, and pleaded for immediate removal of the dams, which are fundamental endangerment factors for the animals.



Aquatic Wild Meat

Along the West African coast, one of the poorest regions in the world, poaching of marine animals is on the rise. The term “aquatic wild meat” refers to products from threatened or protected dolphins, whales, manatees, sea turtles or sharks that have been killed illegally. The animals meat, organs, eggs and bones are used by the local population as a means of self-sufficiency. However, the products are also used as shark bait or for traditional rituals. One driving factor behind the harvest of protected marine animals is the overfishing of West African waters. Fishing fleets from Europe and Asia are plundering the region’s fish stocks, mostly illegally, and destroying marine ecosystems. Increasingly often, local fishers are returning with empty nets and hunting protected animals because they are otherwise unable to feed their families.

OceanCare has been addressing this problem since 2017, cooperating closely with the Benin Environment and Education Society (BEES), whose founder Maximin Djondo is well connected with numerous government representatives and fishing communities in West Africa. Together with his team, he carries out educational work in coastal communities, as well as within environmental and fisheries ministries, and generates scientific data to help define conservation measures for threatened marine animals in West Africa.

■ **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS):** OceanCare attended the fifth meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council, which was held online. Here, Maximin Djondo presented the joint work of BEES, OceanCare, the Benin government and the Abidjan Convention Secretariat, towards holding a regional workshop on the situation regarding threatened marine species in West Africa. The initiators want this to contribute into the development of an action plan for the Gulf of Guinea and to support the goals of the Abidjan Aquatic Wildlife Partnership, which works to protect the coasts and marine areas of West, Central and Southern Africa. As Chair of the CMS Aquatic Wild Meat Working Group, OceanCare consultant Dr Margi Prideaux, founder of Wild Migration, coordinated expert contributions to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and helped finalise a scientific article on the global scale of the harvesting of marine animals, for release in the publication *Frontiers in Science*.

■ **African Manatee Symposium:** In January 2021, Maximin Djondo attended the First African Manatee Symposium organised by the African Aquatic Conservation Fund. The meeting was held virtually due to COVID-19 and attended by 80 attendees from 17 countries with the aim to consolidate knowledge and exchanging research perspectives, addressing priority subjects, coordinating conservation actions, and reinforcing network. It was an opportunity for African researchers and students, conservationists, resource managers, educators, government wildlife agencies and other relevant NGOs from as many range states to present their works and share experiences. OceanCare contribute by presenting our work on Aquatic Wildmeat with a focus on the African manatee research. This was a first step in the path of consolidating the different and rich expertise that existed within the Africa region and to plan for research and conservation actions for the coming years, and to foster and strengthen network connections by bringing researchers together.



In memory of Dr Hermann Awo

In 2021, Dr Hermann Awo died in a traffic accident in Benin. The world has thus lost an outstanding manatee expert who, working closely with local fishing communities, campaigned to end the poaching of threatened marine species. Hermann Awo was an important member of the BEES team, and OceanCare had been cooperating with him since 2019. We appreciated him as a thoroughly virtuous person who loved the biodiversity of West Africa and was passionately committed to its conservation. His research data is of fundamental importance with regard to the creation of an action plan to help protect manatees in the Gulf of Guinea. Hermann Awo was a champion of conservation – the kind that West Africa desperately needs. His loss will be painfully felt. To his colleagues at BEES, for whom he was a source of inspiration, he leaves a basis of scientific findings, on which they can build.

■ **IUCN World Conservation Congress:** OceanCare attended the seventh International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) congress, where representatives from the worlds of politics, industry and science, as well as exponents from civil society and indigenous, religious and spiritual communities, deliberated on how to address urgent conservation challenges. At the World Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nature, held in conjunction with the World Conservation Congress, Maximin Djondo appeared as a speaker, to raise awareness of the need for greater protection of indigenous peoples' rights and their duties as stewards of the environment.

■ **Benin and Togo:** With a team of West African scientists, BEES continued its field research on marine species affected by the issue of aquatic wild meat harvest, and shed light on the social and cultural factors behind the often illegal hunting. The data is being collected to develop an action plan on threatened species in the Gulf of Guinea.

■ **Maldives:** Claire Petros started working on her dissertation at the University of Oxford. Using methods from behavioural science, she is studying the trade in sea-turtle products in the Maldives and investigating how it can be stopped. She is thus providing a basis that should enable OceanCare to take action against the poaching of sea turtles.

■ **Venezuela:** In Lake Maracaibo, manatees and Guiana dolphins are hunted deliberately or landed as by-catch. In a 2021 publication supported by OceanCare, the organisation CIT revealed the extent of the poaching and the factors behind it. This was based on 95 interviews conducted between 2017 and 2019 in seven fishing communities, encompassing 10 percent of the region's fishers. It was revealed that Guiana dolphins are used by the local population as a source of protein or as shark bait. All interviewees denied using manatee or dolphin products for religious rituals. The wastefulness of the dolphin hunting became clear: only the dorsal muscle is taken from the animals and the rest of the body is disposed of in the lake. Dolphin meat is not very popular and there is almost no demand for it. However, many fishers said they had tried the meat. Dolphins that are landed as by-catch get eaten by the fishers' families. About half of the interviewees generally fish less because of increasing oil spills in Lake Maracaibo.

In 2021, after years of maintaining a local presence, CIT was able to locate a remnant population of manatees in Lake Maracaibo, which are critically endangered in Venezuela. The organisation conducted interviews in another five fishing communities. It appears that Guiana dolphins and manatees are still being hunted deliberately, or landed as by-catch, on a significant scale. With the aid of an infographic that CIT distributed among coastal communities, and presented to regional authorities and sent to various media outlets, the organisation managed to bring the poaching problem to the public's attention. CIT entered into a partnership with two companies that are based in the city of Maracaibo and offer kayak tours for tourists. In future, these providers will raise their customers' awareness of the endangerment of dolphins and manatees in Lake Maracaibo, and persuade the local population to protect the animals.



Animal Rescue

© BDMLR

Many forms of human impact on marine habitat causes animals to suffer. For instance, animals get entangled in ghost nets, mistake plastic waste for food, lose their orientation after extreme noise events or collide with ships. Climate change also has consequences. In England, young seals are increasingly being found after being separated from their mothers, or injured, during violent storms. When marine animals are in distress, professional rescuers are needed to help quickly and competently. OceanCare makes their work possible.

■ **Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance:** All around the world, the Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance (STRA), co-founded by OceanCare and launched in 2021, interconnects rescue centres and veterinary surgeons specialising in sea turtles (see p.34). In a tightly coordinated exchange of expertise, they professionalise the treatment and care of injured and ill animals. In a database, members of the alliance record which dangers sea turtles are exposed to at which locations, and how many animals are found ill, injured or dead. The STRA model has the potential to become an important tool in the fields of animal welfare and species conservation.

■ **Maldives:** OceanCare supports the Olive Ridley Project, a leading competence centre for sea turtles, which researches these animals and carries out pioneering work on their veterinary care. In 2021, the Olive Ridley Project cared for 57 sea turtles at two rescue centres in the Maldives. Of these animals, 16 have already been released again (see p.35).

■ **Spain:** In the Western Mediterranean, OceanCare also provides the organisation Alnitak with support for the rescue of injured sea turtles. Many animals get entangled in ghost nets here. If they are carefully freed from them, they can often be released back into the wild immediately. Alnitak takes sea turtles in need of medical aid to the Equinac rescue centre in Almería, which OceanCare also assists with funds. More than 20 animals were treated there in the year under review. The centre's team also trains local fishers, sailors, life-guards and police officers in the rescue and emergency care of injured sea turtles at sea (see p.35).

■ **Great Britain:** British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) is one of the world's most important rescue organisations for marine animals. It has been supported by OceanCare since 2012. In 2021, BDMLR went on more than 3,200 missions and took 378 seals into care. The animal rescuers were able to free 22 seals from marine litter or nets and release them again on site. At nine strandings, the marine animals that BDMLR successfully returned to the sea included one orca and four white-beaked dolphins. In North Wales, the organisation found a weakened Kemp's ridley sea turtle. This is a critically endangered species that actually lives in the tropics. The animal was taken to a rescue centre for rehabilitation. In 2021, a hospital for seal



© Olive Ridley Project

Rehabilitation of a rescued sea turtle

pups, which OceanCare helped to build with respective funding, was opened in Cornwall, representing a significant milestone. In this region, BDMLR also trained over 200 people, who can give animal rescuers medical assistance during missions.

Wally the walrus attracted a lot of publicity. Despite being native to the Arctic, he appeared at various locations in Europe over a period of several months. One such location was on the Welsh coast. BDMLR built a pontoon, which the heavy animal, who often climbs onto vessels, could rest on. There, he was safe and posed no danger to humans. In the autumn of 2021, the walrus was sighted in Iceland. He seems to be making his way back to the Arctic.

■ **France:** With support from OceanCare, the LPA rescue centre in Calais rescues and cares for seals in distress on the French Atlantic coast. In 2021, the organisation cared for 26 harbour seals, 52 grey seals and one ringed seal – 20 animals more than in the previous year. All 79 patients were rehabilitated and all but four of the animals have already been released back into the wild. The appearance of a ringed seal here, which is actually native to the Arctic, was also a cause for concern. All animals cared for by LPA Calais are given an identification tag, which is registered in European databases. The staff consider it important to get the local population on board for seal conservation. People who are interested are invited to observe the release of animals that have recovered. Volunteers, firefighters and police officers are also given training on the correct procedure when finding an injured or ill seal on a beach.

■ **Venezuela:** After just four years of intensive work, supported by OceanCare, the Venezuelan organisation CIT reports that 70 percent fewer whale sharks are being caught along the country's central coast. This is mainly due to voluntary agreements that CIT has been able to reach with coastal fishers and local decision-makers (see p.39). In 2021, the organisation developed a new procedure for rescuing whale sharks from fishing nets. This was prompted by an incident in which a twelve-metre-long animal became entangled in a fishing boat's net and took the vessel down with it as it tried to escape. Fortunately, the fishers survived. Since then, in order to ensure both human and animal safety, large whale sharks entangled in fishing gear in deep water have been guided to bays where the water is less deep, and only freed once they get there. In 2021, OceanCare funded diving equipment and oxygen tanks, and enabled local families to replace or repair nets damaged by whale sharks. CIT rescued four whale sharks and various injured sea turtles, dolphins, manatees and birds. In Lake Maracaibo, the organisation also works to protect threatened Guiana dolphins and manatees (see p. 19).



Whales

Whale Conservation in the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean Sea accounts for less than one percent of the global sea area, but is home to around eight percent of marine fauna. Even large whales live here. The sperm whale, for example, which can grow to be up to 20 metres long and weigh as much as 50 tonnes, has the heaviest brain of all mammals, at 9.5 kilos, and dives as far down as 3,000 metres. Whales are exposed to many dangers in the Mediterranean, as this is one of the world's most intensively used marine areas. For instance, the animals collide with ships, mistake plastic for food, get entangled in ghost nets and are afflicted with acoustic and chemical pollution in their habitat.

■ **Reducing the risk of collision:** The North-Western Mediterranean is home to many whale species, including fin whales and sperm whales. For them, the risk of colliding with ships poses great and usually deadly danger. This is also the case in the existing protected areas: the whale migration corridor between mainland Spain and the Balearic Islands, and the Pelagos Sanctuary for whales, which stretches from the southern coasts of France and Liguria to Corsica. France, Italy, Monaco and Spain are considering proposing that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) designate the North-Western Mediterranean as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA). Any application must describe harm caused by international shipping in the area and show how it can be reduced or avoided. OceanCare campaigned for speed reduction in shipping to be included as the main measure to reduce the risk of collision, especially since moving shipping routes out of sensitive habitats is hardly possible in this part of the Mediterranean. Reducing speed by just ten percent would make it possible to avoid approximately half of the collisions (see p.4). OceanCare also helped the Secretariat of the Pelagos Agreement to hold a workshop on collision risk and entered into dialogue with shipping companies so as to promote the necessary speed-reduction measure.



■ **SaveWhales whale warning system:** In the Eastern Mediterranean, the Pelagos Cetacean Research Institute is studying around 250 sperm whales. This small population is endangered. Since 1997, more than 40 sperm whales have stranded in Greece, over half of which had injuries from collisions with ships. An acoustic warning system is to protect the whales from this danger. It locates the animals based on their clicking sounds and warns ship captains so that they can avoid potential collisions with the whales in time. The technology is being developed by Pelagos and the Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas (FORTH) in a project funded by OceanCare.

In 2021, the whale warning system's three-year pilot phase was completed in a high-collision-risk area, southwest of the island Crete. Two solar-powered buoys that had been lost in a heavy storm in 2020 were replaced. Currently, three buoys are in use, which have been secured by additional floats that provide greater buoyancy. It was pleasing to see that the system's instruments worked well despite bad weather and increased mobile broadband outages in the region. FORTH carried out maintenance work every two weeks and gained important insights into how the system's performance and stability can be improved further. Experts from the company MarineTraffic fine-tuned the mapping and warning software.

Between May and September, the whale warning system located sperm whales on 37 of its 100 days of operation. In July, Pelagos recorded five sightings of sperm whales near the buoys during research trips. Four of these sightings involved a social unit of eleven whales that the researchers have already been observing since 1999. The fifth sighting involved a single adult male, seen for the first time. A comparison between locating the animals visually and acoustically showed the detection technology to be highly precise.



OceanCare maintained contact with the Greek government and worked towards making it mandatory to use the whale warning system whenever shipping routes cannot be moved out of important whale habitats. Together, OceanCare, Pelagos, IFAW and WWF Greece pressed shipping companies to conduct such rerouting. In combination with a reduction in ship speed and use of the whale warning system, this measure enables reliable protection of sperm whales from collisions.

■ **Greece:** With support from OceanCare, the Pelagos Cetacean Research Institute carried out two additional data-acquisition operations along the Hellenic Trench, with photographic identification and hydrophone recordings of sperm whales. The use of drones allowed the researchers to measure the whales by means of photogrammetry. This was also successfully done with two calves born in 2019 and 2020, which will make it possible to determine the young sperm whales' growth rates in future. Pelagos is concerned to note that only one sperm-whale group appeared in different areas. It is still unclear whether this indicates a drastic decline in the local sperm-whale population or whether groups that used to be sighted frequently have since migrated. For the researchers, there was one ray of hope from Italy, where sperm whales that had been documented by PCRI in the Hellenic Trench, but not seen there again for years, were sighted. Surprisingly, there were several sightings of extremely rare Cuvier's beaked whales, which gives reason to hope for a possible comeback of this species in the Hellenic Trench. On the other hand, Pelagos registered 117 whale and dolphin strandings, including one of the largest female sperm whales ever measured.

Whale Conservation Worldwide

More than 200 years of whaling has caused the populations of many large whales to shrink drastically. In the 20th century alone, almost three million large whales were killed in commercial whaling operations. Despite a ban on commercial whaling being in force since 1986, which is considered the greatest achievement in species conservation, these giants of the oceans are still hunted – even in Europe, where whales and dolphins are strictly protected.

■ **International Whaling Commission (IWC):** In September, a special virtual meeting of the IWC was held, as the regular meeting had to be postponed until 2022 due to COVID-19. Urgent issues, such as the commission's precarious financial situation, were addressed and the work of the main IWC working groups was presented. OceanCare supported various interventions and again pledged financial support for the IWC Voluntary Fund for Conservation, which aids protection of small cetaceans and the reduction of by-catch. In the run-up to the meeting, OceanCare had appealed for the IWC member countries in the EU to push for and fund the protection of threatened whale populations and species, and to proactively participate in the process of fundamentally reorienting the IWC.



December marked the 75th anniversary of the Convention for the Regulation of Whaling and of its governing body, the International Whaling Commission. Thanks to the whaling ban, hundreds of thousands of whales have been saved since 1986. Today though, the commission is in need of reform. Structural deficits, absent budgets and unresolved competency issues are increasingly preventing implementation of the decisions made. Together with partner organisations, OceanCare developed the vision paper “A 50-Year Vision for the IWC”, which focuses on increased protection of whales and shows how corresponding measures can be financed. It is important to maintain the whaling moratorium and end the hunting of both large and small cetaceans. In addition, indigenous subsistence whaling must be clearly distinguished from commercial whaling. In November, the vision paper was presented in an online event (youtube.com/watch?v=db48Oa3yLXg). Here, OceanCare reported on current threats to whales and dolphins. The vision paper was sent to all IWC member countries in the EU. They were asked to state how they will contribute to the reorientation of the International Whaling Commission.

■ **Norway:** As the Norwegian government lodged an objection to the whaling moratorium, it is exempt from the ban. Between 2010 and 2020, almost 5,870 whales were killed in this Scandinavian country. Whale-hunting regulations are constantly being relaxed in Norway: there are no longer inspectors aboard whaling vessels, whales may be caught all year round and, since the pandemic, even shooting tests for whale hunters have been dropped, against which OceanCare and partner organisations have intervened. In 2021, Norway’s government set a catch quota of 1,286 minke whales. A total of 575 animals were killed, which is the highest number in five years. There are indications that the whalers had difficulties selling the whale meat and thus sold off some of it as dog food.

■ **Iceland:** The Icelandic government approved the shooting of 209 fin whales and 217 minke whales, even though the last minke whaler stopped hunting in April 2020 and the only company still killing fin whales decided against hunting in 2021 due to insufficient profitability. Fortunately, no whale was killed in Iceland in 2021. OceanCare lobbied the International Whaling Commission to ensure that this does not remain an exception but becomes the rule.

■ **Japan:** Since Japan withdrew from the International Whaling Commission in 2019, it is no longer bound by the whaling ban. Despite international conservation efforts, this country is once again hunting whales for commercial purposes, thus drawing domestic and international criticism. In 2021, the Japanese government approved the capture of 187 Bryde’s whales, 171 minke whales and 25 sei whales. However, demand for whale meat is low and whale hunting is only profitable because of state subsidies.

■ **Europe:** There are 33 whale and dolphin species living in European waters. By law, they are among the best-protected wild animals in the world – at least on paper. In reality though, they are exposed to many dangers,



and some species and populations are already critically endangered. In 2021, OceanCare published the report “Under Pressure”, in which leading experts provide an overview of the conservation status and endangerment level of whales and dolphins in Europe. Alongside stranding, disease, by-catch, the warming and acidification of the water, and the pollution of the sea with noise, plastics and chemicals, hunting is also addressed as a threat because more than 50,000 whales and dolphins have been killed in Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands in the last ten years. The report was sent to European and non-European government representatives, international bodies, and parties responsible for multilateral environmental agreements. It will be a standard reference in the coming years, when it comes to defining targeted conservation measures for whales and dolphins in Europe.

■ **Mexico:** Vaquitas are facing extinction, as only approximately nine individual animals remain. These porpoises live in the Gulf of California, where fishers’ gillnets are deadly traps – not just for fish, but for them as well. Since 1995, OceanCare has supported the International Whaling Commission’s efforts to protect small cetaceans, but neither the IWC nor the International Committee for the Recovery of the Vaquita (CIRVA) have been able to save the vaquita. In 2021, OceanCare again pleaded for the whaling commission to protect endangered cetacean species more consistently. Together with partner organisations, OceanCare is calling on IWC member countries to let the IWC know their concerns regarding Mexico’s failings in protection of the vaquita.

■ **Tenerife:** Since 2021, OceanCare has been supporting the efforts of Plataforma Ciudadana Salvar Fonsalía to protect the species-rich waters of the Fonsalía region in South-West Tenerife from the dangers of a port project. The marine area within which the coastal port is to be built is part of the European nature-conservation network Natura 2000 and classed as a Special Area of Conservation, but to benefit the project, the protected status was not applied to one stretch of coast. Construction and operation of the port, designed for cruise ships and up to 460 yachts and leisure boats, would threaten coastal reefs, seagrass landscapes, sea turtles and 20 cetacean species, including a resident population of short-finned pilot whales. In alliance with international organisations, Tenerife residents are putting up resistance. Tour operators are also being urged to dissuade the authorities from building the port.

■ **Scientific contributions to animal welfare:** OceanCare’s science team is expanding its work on the welfare of marine wildlife. It focuses on whale and dolphin strandings, as well as on dolphins that naturally live in social groups but are travelling alone, and works with experts to develop conservation plans for marine mammals found far from their ancestral habitats. In Autumn, OceanCare representatives led an international workshop on dolphins and whales living outside their ancestral habitats. Together with colleagues from the University of Bristol, Mark Simmonds, Director of Science at OceanCare, published a paper on whale euthanasia in the journal Animal Welfare.



Dolphins

Dolphins perform important functions in the ocean ecosystem. The distribution and condition of these animals are both indicators and factors with regard to the balance of marine communities and the health of marine habitats. Accordingly, the fact that the living conditions of dolphins are increasingly deteriorating, for instance due to overfishing, underwater noise, marine pollution or climate change, is worrying. As a result of such hazards, some dolphins are leaving their ancestral habitats and, as such, many dolphin populations are collapsing. Although the available scientific data clearly shows how difficult the situation has become for dolphins, decision-makers are still far too hesitant when it comes to protecting the animals. OceanCare is campaigning internationally to change this.

Dolphin Research and Conservation

OceanCare is funding research on dolphin and orca populations in the Mediterranean, in the Black Sea and around Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. Scientific data indicates the dangers that are prevalent in a particular region and which need to be contained.

■ **Status of whales and dolphins in the Mediterranean:** In December, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) published a current assessment of the status of whale and dolphin populations in the Mediterranean. Much of the research data on which this assessment was based on projects that OceanCare has been supporting for many years. It is becoming clear that marine mammals' living conditions are increasingly deteriorating in large parts of the Mediterranean. The IUCN now classifies nine out of eleven whale and dolphin species regularly sighted there as threatened, which suggests that the Mediterranean as a habitat is in a precarious situation. Four local populations are already critically endangered. These include the orca and pilot whale in the Strait of Gibraltar, the common dolphin in the Gulf of Corinth, where the organisation Dolphin Biology and Conservation conducted research until 2017, and the bottlenose dolphin in the Ambracian Gulf in Western Greece, where the Ionian Dolphin Project is active. In response to the IUCN assessment, the Scientific Committee for the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) recommended immediate measures for the threatened species and called on its parties to implement them consistently.

■ **Italy:** In the Northern Adriatic, OceanCare has been funding bottlenose-dolphin research conducted by Dolphin Biology and Conservation (DBC) since 2018. This organisation examines the dolphins' spatial distribution, social organisation and habitat usage, and identifies the threats that they are exposed to. As the studied area is intensively fished with bottom trawls, DBC records the animals' behaviour around fishing boats and gear in particular. In 2021, the researchers observed 655 trawlers, some of which fished in the protected three-nautical-



© Morigenos

mile zone along the coast, as well as 595 recreational anglers and 83 other fishing boats. They also documented 455 dolphin interactions with fishing gear. The animals hunted above and behind trawl nets, preyed on fish that were sticking out of the mesh while nets were being hauled in, and ate prey thrown back into the sea by fishers.

A total of 545 dolphin groups were recorded, 131 more than the previous year and comprising 1 to 120 animals each, but also hundreds of sightings of sea turtles, tuna, cormorants, Mediterranean shearwaters, barrel jellyfish and fried egg jellyfish. During its research trips, DBC collected large amounts of marine litter from the sea. The organisation has been filing photos of dolphins in its photographic identification catalogue for many years. This catalogue now contains 39,060 images and allows 510 animals to be clearly identified. In 2021, DBC wrote eleven scientific publications and was intensively involved in environmental education: many media outlets reported on its work, and the researchers gave various interviews and lectures, produced high-quality educational videos (such as the excellent short documentary “Dolphins of a Wounded Sea”) and supervised student projects. They also provided members of the organisation Turtles of the Adriatic with training in field research and laboratory work, and helped them to design their research and prepare data-acquisition templates.

■ **Slovenia:** In the Slovenian part of the Northern Adriatic, OceanCare provides the organisation Morigenos with support for its research on bottlenose dolphins. Using visual observation and passive acoustic monitoring, the researchers determined whether two existing protected areas cover the dolphins’ actual habitats. It turned out that although this is the case, the protected areas are too small to provide effective protection for the animals. Morigenos submitted a request to the management authorities to enlarge the protected areas and made recommendations on how to better protect the dolphins. The organisation monitors the intensity of underwater noise in the region and also studies the dolphins’ vulnerability to fishing, by mapping where their habitats overlap with zones that are fished using bottom-set gear. The risk of by-catch appears to be greater than previously assumed. This is where Morigenos benefits from the respectful relationship that the researchers have been maintaining with fishers for many years. As the latter’s awareness of the dolphins’ ecological relevance is increasing, their willingness to contribute to the protection of the animals is growing. For example, Morigenos was called out to a site in 2021 when a dolphin calf had become entangled in a net. On this basis of trust, more and more fishers are motivated to report unintentional dolphin by-catch, so that the extent of the problem can be understood. In 2021, Morigenos published several scientific studies and supervised a student project.

■ **Greece:** The area studied by the Ionian Dolphin Project (IDP), founded by Italy’s Tethys Research Institute, is located in the Central Ionian Sea. IDP documents the occurrence and distribution of common dolphins, bottlenose dolphins and monk seals (see p.37). Between 1995 and 2007, the researchers saw overfishing cause a population of around 150 common dolphins collapse to 15. Monitoring the impact of fishing activities on the dolphins is still an important part of the project today. In 2021, IDP met two old acquaintances: the common dolphin Aethos was first identified in 1995 and the bottlenose dolphin Spiti in 2001. It is almost miraculous that the latter can swim stably and hunt efficiently despite missing a large part of his dorsal fin due to injury. Comprising 120 animals, the bottlenose dolphin population in the Central Ionian Sea is low, but proving to be



stable. On the other hand, an isolated subpopulation of around 150 bottlenose dolphins in the Ambracian Gulf is threatened by increasing pollution and nutrient enrichment in the water. In 2021, IDP managed to get the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to list this subpopulation as critically endangered. The Greek authorities invited the Ionian Dolphin Project to develop a national action plan on bottlenose dolphins and porpoises. The organisation also made an important contribution by developing marine-mammal-monitoring guidelines and installing a platform on its website, where sighting data can be reported. In 2021, IDP again provided training on various scientific methods for team members from iSea, another OceanCare partner. The exchange with local decision-makers and fishers also continued, as did the raising of public awareness of dolphins' role in the marine ecosystem, by means of events, lectures, multimedia productions and school visits.

The Pelagos Cetacean Research Institute in Greece is also devoted to dolphin conservation, in the context of its long-running research on sperm whales along the Hellenic Trench. In 2021, the organisation observed that among striped dolphins, an inexplicably high number were carrying suckerfish. The latter are fish that attach themselves to larger predators and can become a nuisance to them. Pelagos is keeping an eye on the phenomenon. The researchers were worried by the high number of strandings: 117 whales and dolphins were found dead. Necropsies were performed on some of the animals and a shocking amount of plastic was found in one dolphin's stomach. Another threat to the animals is posed by cargo ships. Their high traffic volume represents a considerable collision risk, especially for sperm whales (see p.23). The ships are also polluting the water with noise. OceanCare is campaigning for cargo ships to be required to slow down, which would reduce the risk of collisions, as well as the underwater noise (see p.4).

■ **Black Sea:** For five years, OceanCare has been providing Green Balkans with support for its research on threatened Black Sea common dolphins, Black Sea bottlenose dolphins and Black Sea porpoises in Bulgarian coastal waters. This organisation collects essential data on the occurrence and distribution of the animals, studies their population development and investigates the species' need for conservation. As in previous years, the number of sightings fluctuated greatly from season to season in 2021. Longer-term data acquisition is required, in order to reliably identify population trends and to determine what leads to the presence or absence of the animals. It is possible that climate-induced ocean warming is playing a role, perhaps causing the dolphins' prey to temporarily migrate to cooler and deeper marine areas further from the coast. In 2021, Green Balkans identified three areas in the Black Sea that are particularly important for the marine mammals. An independent expert panel is now assessing whether these areas meet the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria for designation as an Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA).

■ **Russia:** Since 2018, OceanCare has been providing the Far East Russia Orca Project (FEROP) with support for its research on orcas around Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. In Avacha Gulf, the organisation is monitoring a local population of these animals, and documenting their numbers, distribution and population structure. An impressive volume of data from 20 years of fieldwork enables FEROP to identify individual orcas photographically and assign them to social groups. The researchers are gaining important insight into, among



© FEROP

other things, orcas' social behaviour, feeding habits, feeding behaviour and hunting strategies, as well as the dynamics of social bonds within and between orca families. FEROP uses acoustic monitoring to record the animals' highly differentiated vocal dialects. In 2021, the researchers documented 14 sightings of fish-eating orca families during 38 days at sea. There were six sightings of the mammal-eating variety, including one that encompassed forty animals distributed among four groups. FEROP succeeded in making rare sound recordings of the mammal-eating variety for more than two hours. The organisation also collected data around Cape Shipunsky where another important orca feeding ground is located, which has now been proposed as a marine protected area, partly on the basis of FEROP's data. In 2021, due to the fact that tourism affects orca behaviour, FEROP published guidelines on responsible orca watching, gave captains and local tour guides training, and distributed brochures and posters in the nearby ports.

Measures Against Dolphin Hunting

Around 100,000 dolphins and other small cetaceans are still being killed every year, for instance in Peru, Japan and Russia, as well as in Denmark's Faroe Islands and Greenland. Their meat is used as shark bait, processed into cat and dog food or destined for human consumption. OceanCare is calling for the international whaling ban to be extended to include dolphins and other small cetaceans.

■ **Dolphin hunting in Europe:** In April, OceanCare published the report "Under Pressure" (see p.26), in which leading scientists provide an overview of the conservation status of whales and dolphins in European waters, and shed light on endangerment factors such as strandings, diseases, by-catch, pollution of the sea with noise, plastics and chemicals, and climate-induced acidification and warming of the water. Hunting is also addressed: in Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, more than 50,000 whales and dolphins have been killed in the last ten years. OceanCare sent "Under Pressure" to European and non-European decision-makers, as well as to parties responsible for multilateral environmental agreements: the International Whaling Commission and the Bonn Convention, for instance. The report gives them information that allows them to take targeted measures for the survival of whales and dolphins in European waters: for example, a ban on deliberate hunting and on fishing gear that is particularly dangerous to marine mammals. The extremely noisy seismic exploration for oil and gas in the seabed must be stopped, additional marine protected areas are needed, and shipping can make an important contribution to reducing underwater noise levels and the risk of collision by reducing speed. It is also important that EU countries work towards a legally binding international plastics agreement.



■ **Faroe Islands:** OceanCare has long been campaigning for an end to the Faroe Islands' cruel hunting of pilot whales and dolphins. In September 2021, a massacre took place: at least 1,428 white-sided dolphins were killed in the Bay of Skálafjørður and on top of that, 52 pilot whales were killed elsewhere just ten days later. Disturbing images went viral around the world. Even on the Faroe Islands, there was widespread horror, as the number of dead animals and the brutality of the hunting were unprecedented, even by local standards. The islands' government was forced to consider regulating this hunting. OceanCare launched a petition addressed to the European Commission and the governments of the EU member states, which was signed by 40,000 people, demanding that European decision-makers condemn the massacre and call on Denmark (and its semi-autonomous region, the Faroe Islands) to end the drive hunting of dolphins and whales. An appeal to this effect was also sent in a letter to the International Whaling Commission member countries in the EU, as well as to non-European countries. Numerous bodies and decision-makers responded from October onwards, such as the European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, the European Commission, 29 members of the European Parliament involved in animal welfare, as well as all representatives (except Denmark) of the 26th meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS). Some German states' environment ministers also called on the German federal government to make a clear statement. In December, the International Whaling Commission member countries in the EU condemned the killings in remarkably strong terms and, for the first time, publicly called for an end to the Faroe Islands' hunting. This is a turning point, as the EU countries had previously avoided taking such a direct stand. In December, OceanCare, as part of an animal-welfare coalition, contacted retailers in the German-speaking world who offer fish from the Faroe Islands and asked them to make their opposition to dolphin and whale hunting clearly known to their suppliers.

To better understand the threats to the Atlantic white-sided dolphin, OceanCare commissioned independent scientist Susannah Calderan from the Scottish Association for Marine Science to write a corresponding report. She showed how significant the knowledge gaps are with regard to the numbers and population structures of this dolphin species. Several separate populations are thought to exist in the North Atlantic, but estimates of the number of animals are extremely imprecise. In the available research projects inquiring into Atlantic white-sided dolphin numbers, fewer than 20 sightings have been recorded. The killing of at least 1,428 white-sided dolphins is also extremely alarming from a species-conservation perspective.

■ **Peru:** In Peruvian waters, up to 20,000 dolphins a year die as by-catch in fishing nets. And although dolphin hunting is banned, up to 15,000 of the animals are still being killed illegally on an annual basis. Dolphin meat is



© Mundo Azul

being used as shark bait or peddled at local markets for consumption. In 2013, OceanCare and the organisation Mundo Azul documented the hunting in undercover research. The resulting film footage led to dolphin hunters being taken to court for the first time in 2016. Bringing wrongdoing to light is important. However, it is equally important that fishers understand why they should protect dolphins. They have to realise how drastic the consequences of their actions are for marine life and thus also for their own economic existence. OceanCare and WWF Peru raise fishers' awareness of dolphins' role in the marine ecosystem and discuss the legal situation regarding protection of the animals.

To curb dolphin hunting, stricter laws are needed, as well as measures to ensure that they are complied with. It is important to explicitly prohibit the use of dolphin meat as shark bait. This is the only way to enable the inspection of fishing boats and sanctioning of rule violations. In 2021, with support from OceanCare, WWF Peru tested the installation of cameras on fishing boats, so that any dolphins or other protected species in by-catch could be detected. Once the usefulness of such cameras had been proven, WWF Peru recommended this measure to the authorities. The organisation also submitted scientific evidence of the urgency of dolphin conservation and presented legislative proposals. Through ongoing outreach, WWF Peru ensures that dolphin conservation remains on the political agenda of Peru's government. With regard to shark fishing, the organisation submitted recommendations to the authorities, covering how to update the national action plan on sharks and which shark species must be added to it because their conservation status has been raised by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Measures Against Dolphin Captivity

At sea, dolphins cover distances of up to 100 kilometres a day and dive up to 500 metres. Their underwater world is extremely diverse. These animals' habitat cannot be recreated artificially on land. For them, every pool is too small, too bare, too unattractive – simply too alien. In captivity, dolphins lose their freedom, their close family ties and their natural behaviour. However, a lot of money can be made with dolphinariums, so this industry is booming – and as captive dolphins usually die early, there is a constant need for new replacement animals, which are brutally stolen from the sea.

■ **Dolphinaria-Free Europe (DFE):** This coalition, co-founded by OceanCare, wants to get dolphinariums phased out in Europe. DFE publishes studies, advises government representatives, and influences the dolphinarium industry and the tourism sector. In 2021, the coalition was active as follows:

- **France:** In April, Parc Astérix, located north of Paris, closed its dolphinarium. DFE, together with One Voice,



© Shutterstock/Robert Spriggs

a member of its coalition, had spent years campaigning for this move. Eight dolphins and five sea lions were transferred to other European parks, which is somewhat dispiriting, but on the other hand, with every dolphinarium that closes its doors, the demand for new animals decreases.

- **Spain:** In 2019, when it became known that two beluga whales were to be transferred from Canada's Marineland to an oceanarium in Valencia, DFE launched a public appeal, calling on the Canadian government not to allow this transfer. The coalition remained in contact with both countries' authorities until April 2021, when the plans were officially off the table.

- **Denmark:** Fjord&Bælt, a combined tourist attraction and research facility in Denmark, holds porpoises that were caught in the wild. DFE, together with World Animal Protection (WAP), a member of its coalition, demanded that the Danish government arrange an independent assessment of whether the two porpoises most recently acquired by Fjord&Bælt are in a suitable condition for release back into the wild. Keeping porpoises in captivity for research is unjustified according to the coalition, which is demanding that Denmark ban holding these animals in captivity.

- **Travel company Expedia Group:** DFE's educational work on dolphin tourism is making an impact. In November, the Expedia Group announced that it would no longer offer attractions that feature captive dolphins or whales. Until now, this travel company had been advertising such facilities, like the oceanarium in Valencia and Tenerife's Loro Parque. The company only makes exceptions for so-called dolphin sanctuaries, where show dolphins spend their twilight years. However, this is on the condition that the facility is licensed and does not organise any animal shows.

- **Japan:** As experience has shown that foreign criticism fuels dolphin hunting in Japan, OceanCare concentrates on supporting local dolphin conservationists, such as Mineto Meguro. As a lawyer and representative of the Japanese organisation Animal Liberator, he is campaigning to end the drive hunting that dolphinaria get their supply of dolphins from, by 2035. In various petitions, Meguro is calling on Wakayama Prefecture to ban the hunting of juvenile and female dolphins by law. To raise awareness among Japanese tourists visiting Taiji, he has published information on dolphin hunting and captivity. The fact that more and more Japanese are speaking out against dolphin hunting raises hope for an end to the cruel treatment of these animals.

- **Russia stops the capture of orcas and belugas:** In 2021, Russia banned live capture of orcas and belugas. Previously, the country was dolphinaria's only supplier of these two species worldwide. Already in 2020, following international protests in which OceanCare participated, the Russian government released almost a hundred young beluga whales and orcas back into the wild, which were being held captive in the east of the country for sale to dolphinaria.



Sea Turtles

Sea turtles have been living in the sea for around 100 million years. Today though, their numbers are declining sharply and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) already lists six of the seven sea-turtle species as threatened. These animals, which even survived the last ice age, are being exposed to hazards that exceed their ability to adapt: climate change is causing increased flooding of nesting beaches, while warmer temperatures are leading to more females than males hatching from the eggs. There are repeated cases of people plundering sea-turtle clutches and, in some places, light pollution is drawing hatchlings towards the land instead of the sea. If a sea turtle does manage to mature, it risks being hunted, getting entangled in fishing gear or dying with a stomach full of plastic. OceanCare is pleading for increased protection of sea turtles within international bodies and helping to save these primordial animals around the globe.

■ **Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance:** The Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance (STRA), co-founded by OceanCare and launched in 2021, interconnects sea-turtle experts and rescue centres worldwide. At the end of the year, the alliance comprised 30 members, e.g., from Australia, French Polynesia, Greece, Haiti, Israel, Italy, Kenya, the Maldives, La Réunion, the Seychelles and South Africa. Asociación Mexicana de Veterinarios de Tortugas, to which 38 veterinary surgeons specialising in sea turtles belong, has also joined. STRA documents specialists' knowledge in the form of video interviews, tutorials and medical protocols on an online platform. Members of the alliance can also obtain veterinary advice. This allows even small rescue centres with limited resources to provide professional care for sea turtles. In cooperation with the software provider Provet Cloud, STRA is developing a cloud solution that enables patient data to be entered online. In a 2021 pilot phase, the software was implemented for the Olive Ridley Project in the Maldives. As soon as all members of the alliance can feed in data on injured and ill sea turtles, it will be possible to draw conclusions about hazards globally and define regional conservation measures. Thus, the Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance has the potential to become an important tool in the fields of animal welfare and species conservation.

■ **West African sea-turtle workshop:** In autumn, veterinary surgeon Dr Claire Petros took part in a West African sea-turtle workshop in Guinea-Bissau on behalf of the Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance. She discussed the medical care of animals that are victims of oil spills or by-catch and presented the alliance's work.



OceanCare an der Tauchmesse InterDive

■ **Maldives:** The Olive Ridley Project (ORP) is a world-leading competence centre for sea turtles. It researches the ecology, biology and distribution of the animals, investigates endangerment factors and conducts pioneering work in veterinary care. ORP cares for injured and ill sea turtles at two rescue centres. In 2021, 57 animals received medical care, 16 of which have already been released again. At the end of the year, the organisation put the number of ghost nets that it has retrieved from the sea at 919 since the project began. OceanCare made it possible for ORP to purchase important medication, as well as an endoscope that can be used to examine so-called buoyancy syndrome, a barely researched condition affecting sea turtles that have become entangled in ghost nets. In a pleasing development, the Olive Ridley Project was granted permission to expand a clinic in 2021, which will enable it to care for even more animals in future. The organisation maintains one of the most comprehensive databases pertaining to photographic identification of sea turtles and to ghost nets in the Indian Ocean.

■ **Spain:** In the Western Mediterranean, Alnitak retrieves ghost nets, freeing sea turtles and other marine animals that have become entangled in them. The researchers bring injured sea turtles to a rescue centre in Almería, which is run by Equinac, whose work OceanCare also supports. In 2021, the Equinac team treated more than 20 sea turtles. As more and more of these animals are getting entangled in nets, the organisation is working to make local fishers, sailors, lifeguards and police officers more willing and able to help sea turtles at sea. If the animals are freed in the proper way, they can often be released again. It is also important that sightings of ghost nets get reported, so that they can be retrieved. In cooperation with Spain's 112 emergency call centre, Equinac's animal rescuers are on standby around the clock, ready to respond to reports of strandings. Loggerhead sea turtles or striped dolphins are often washed ashore – usually already dead. Necropsies can then give clues about the cause of death. In the stomach of one leatherback sea turtle, for example, a large amount of plastic was found. In 2021, Equinac became a member of the Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance.

■ **InterDive:** In September, OceanCare had a stand at the diving fair InterDive in Friedrichshafen. Based on the sea turtle as an example, the organisation's staff made clear to visitors how dangerous ghost nets are to marine life. They raised awareness of the need for mindful handling of plastics and gave presentations about the Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance, underwater noise and marine plastic pollution.



© Archipelagos Greece

Monk Seals

Along with the Hawaiian monk seal, the Mediterranean monk seal is one of the last two remaining monk-seal species. It is critically endangered and, with around 750 individuals in existence, it is one of Europe's rarest mammals. Mediterranean monk seals live in isolated subpopulations within a fraction of their ancestral dispersal area. Individual subpopulations appear to be increasing their numbers slightly: new pup-rearing areas are being discovered and the seals are appearing more and more often in places where they have not been sighted for decades. OceanCare is cooperating with three partner organisations that are contributing to this trend reversal and are doing everything they can to ensure that the Mediterranean monk seal has a future.

■ **Mauritania:** Around 350 Mediterranean monk seals live on Mauritania's Atlantic coast. OceanCare has been supporting the efforts of the organisation CBD-Habitat to protect these animals since 2005. After an algae plague that nearly wiped out the colony, CBD-Habitat and local animal conservationists successfully campaigned to have the seals' habitat on Cap Blanc placed under protection. This reserve, Costa de las Focas, has been steadily monitored by local rangers since 2001. This project is a species-conservation success story: the birth rate has risen from 25 to 64 births per annum in the past 20 years. The rangers monitor the birthing caves and ensure that the seals are not disturbed in the protected area. The research work allows conclusions to be drawn about the monk seals' habitat usage, population development, health, reproductive cycles, and birth and death rates. Among other things, the animals are threatened by industrial fishing. As the fishing ban in the protected area is not always respected, the rangers monitor the sea from 14 posts along the coast. They determine the position of fishing boats via the Automatic Identification System (AIS) and report violations of the fishing ban to the authorities. In total, 3,828 hours of such monitoring took place in 2021 and 209 vessels were noticed fishing illegally in the protected zone. Almost all of these were sailing under foreign flags, with China, Spain and Turkey accounting for 60 percent.

■ **Greece:** The number of Mediterranean monk seals in Greek and Turkish waters is now estimated to be between 350 and 400. One of the largest subpopulations lives in the Central Ionian Sea and has been the subject of research by Archipelagos – Environment and Development for 35 years. Around the islands of Kefalonia, Ithaca, Atokos, Meganisi and Formicula, the researchers seek the animals' resting places and birthing caves. They identify the individual seals photographically and install infrared cameras in caves. On this basis, they can study the animals' behaviour, and record the dynamics, structure and size of the subpopulation. In 2021,



Installation of cameras to monitor Monk seals in Mauritania

with support from OceanCare, the seals were monitored in 15 caves. For the second year in a row, a renewed lockdown hampered field research and replacement of infrared cameras. One welcome finding compensated for the difficulties: the seals pupped in eight caves instead of the previous five, producing a record eleven pups. The researchers are now able to identify 22 individual monk seals. Archipelagos – Environment and Development is confident that the seal subpopulation in the Central Ionian archipelago is capable of surviving and can continue to grow. As there were also more sightings of seals in previously unused caves, the organisation assumes that the animals are reclaiming ancestral habitats. In 2021, it submitted a research report to the Greek Ministry of the Environment as a basis for conservation regulations.

Since 2004, OceanCare has been supporting the Ionian Dolphin Project (IDP) as well, which also works intensively to protect monk seals in the Central Ionian Sea. One of the places it focuses on is the island Formicula, an important nursery area for the seals. Although there have been more seal sightings here too, the researchers are concerned to note that the animals are being disturbed by tourists and fishers. In 2021, they sent the Monk Seal Alliance an urgent appeal for protection of the monk seals around Formicula from such interaction and published a code of conduct for seal watching on the IDP website. To date, the organisation has been able to identify 26 individual monk seals photographically. Some seals have also been measured by means of drone photography. The researchers are still on the lookout for as-yet-undiscovered resting places and nursery caves in the area.

■ **Mediterranean region:** The organisation Archipelagos – ambiente e sviluppo, Italia, which OceanCare has also been supporting since 2018, monitors seal colonies in Greece, Israel and Croatia. Alongside scientifically collected data, it also relies on observations from lay researchers (i.e., citizen science) for this work. In Albania, Israel, Italy and Montenegro, the researchers investigated monk seals' habitat usage and compared habitats that are actually in use with potentially suitable ones. In Albania, where monk seals are considered extinct, they found evidence of their presence. It is assumed that although the seals do not form stable subpopulations here, they do migrate along the coast. This assumption fuels hope that previously isolated seal populations are beginning to mix and that the animals might reclaim their original habitats. In 2021, Archipelagos – ambiente e sviluppo, Italia used faecal samples from Albania, Greece, Italy and Croatia to analyse the composition of the monk seals' diet and the degree to which it is contaminated by plastic.



Sharks

Since 1970, shark and ray populations have declined by 71 percent worldwide. One third of all shark species are critically endangered. This is disastrous for the marine ecosystem because sharks are very important for its balance. One major driving factor behind hunting is the lucrative global market for shark fins. In a practice known as finning, fishers cut the fins off live sharks at sea and throw the severely injured animals back into the ocean, where they are unable to move and end up suffocating. This practice is cruel and hinders careful management of shark populations, as determining the species of a killed animal based only on its fins requires expensive DNA analysis. The number of sharks killed cannot be ascertained either because dried fins are easily smuggled, unlike carcasses. To address the problem, regulations have been put in place stating that fishers are only allowed to carry, trans-ship or land intact shark carcasses with fins naturally attached (FNA) – and no loose fins. This makes the boats' cargo bulkier and heavier, so yields decrease and the financial incentive for shark fishing diminishes.

■ **Marine Stewardship Council (MSC):** In 2021, OceanCare continued to support the Make Stewardship Count coalition's calls for the MSC label, which denotes sustainably caught fish, not to be awarded to fisheries that engage in shark finning. OceanCare has spread the [FinFreeMSC campaign](#) far and wide via its social-media channels. The Marine Stewardship Council has announced its intention to enforce the FNA guidelines in 2022.

■ **European Union:** Shark finning has been banned in European waters since 2013. Vessels flying the EU flag are not allowed to have loose shark fins on board and may only land intact shark carcasses in EU ports. Nevertheless, the European Union plays a key global role in the fin trade. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) showed that in 2020, 45 percent of all shark fins imported by the main trading hubs in Asia came from the EU. Spain, which in total supplied 51,795 tonnes of fins between 2013 and 2020 according to Asian import data, is the top source. IFAW also proved that the official EU export data is lower than Asian countries' corresponding import data. OceanCare supported the EU Citizens' Initiative StopFinningEU, which has been signed by 1.2 million people since 2020. The initiators will soon have their case heard by the European Commission.

■ **Greece:** Around 60 shark and ray species live in Greek waters. Of these, 25 are protected. With support from OceanCare, the organisation iSea has spent years building up trusting relationships with fishers in the north of the Aegean Sea. iSea examines their catches, documenting which sharks and rays become by-catch, and how this can be prevented. In 2021, despite a lockdown lasting until May, the organisation covered a high percentage of catches in the studied area. Links were established between the occurrence of threatened species in by-catch and the fishing method, target species and other factors. An analysis showed that in this region, fishing depth is the most important aspect with regard to by-catch, followed by fishing gear. More than half of the fishers landed sharks found in by-catch instead of releasing them. iSea raised awareness of the importance of sharks and rays to the marine ecosystem and encouraged fishers to spare the threatened animals. In some cases, the organisation helped to release captured sharks and rays.



■ **Venezuela:** With support from OceanCare, the organisation CIT developed a science-based voluntary agreement with fishers and local decision-makers on small-scale fishing along Venezuela's central coast. As a result of the measure, the number of whale sharks caught fell by over 70 percent and significantly fewer animals became entangled in nets. A new method for rescuing whale sharks was tested, which ensures maximum safety for the rescuers, but also for the sharks. A corresponding publication for the journal *Conservation Biology* is being prepared. In 2021, CIT constantly monitored marine areas where whale sharks often get entangled in nets. In emergencies, the organisation was quickly on the scene. Animals entangled in fishing gear were guided to shallow waters and rescued. OceanCare funded oxygen tanks and diving equipment, and enabled local families to replace or repair nets damaged by whale sharks. In 2021, CIT rescued four whale sharks and various injured sea turtles, dolphins, manatees and birds.

CIT's work also focuses on reforestation of mangrove forests that provide shelter for young sharks. The mangroves in the Venezuelan archipelago Los Roques constitute one of the most important shark breeding grounds in the Caribbean. Another important area is in the Gulf of Venezuela. In 2021, CIT planted more than 3,000 mangrove trees in a 1.8 km² area, thus providing the basis for restoration of a healthy ecosystem. The local population collected seeds, took care of the seedlings and was made more aware of ecological interrelationships.

■ **Costa Rica:** OceanCare added its signature to a letter addressed to President Carlos Alvarado Quesada, in which international organisations objected to the Costa Rican government's inadequate protection of sharks. In Costa Rica, there is unchecked hunting of threatened hammerhead, thresher and silky sharks. Despite stressing, in a 2020 interview, that threatened shark species are to be protected as per the requirements of the Wildlife Conservation Law, President Quesada allows them to be legally caught and traded in his country. In doing so, he torpedoes conservation efforts and facilitates overfishing of sharks.

■ **International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT):** The shortfin mako shark may be the fastest shark in the world, but it does not escape its hunters. It is a popular quarry because of its fins and meat. In the North Atlantic, the decline of this shark species is particularly alarming. Together with partners, OceanCare campaigned for the European Union to lobby ICCAT for a ban on mako-shark fishing. The request was heard: in November, the fifty ICCAT member states, including major fishing nations, decided to end overfishing of the shortfin mako shark in the North Atlantic.

■ **Maldives:** In March, the Maldives government considered relaxing the protection of sharks. Together with over 200 partner organisations, OceanCare protested against these plans. The local decision-makers gave in and announced that they would maintain the conservation measures.

Environmental Education

Raising Awareness

Environmental education is an important pillar in ocean conservation. Those who understand interrelationships are more willing to get actively involved. Due to COVID-19, many events shifted to the digital domain in 2021.

■ **Lectures:** At 37 live or online events in 2021, OceanCare spoke about plastics, underwater noise, deep-sea mining, biodiversity, maritime policy, dolphin tourism and ocean conservation. The organisers included: boot Düsseldorf, Business and Professional Women Zurich and Basel, NEFU Network One Woman Business, the German Environment Agency, Eawag, the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, the University of St. Gallen (HSG), the Kompanima "Animal Conservation Specialist" training programme, Pacific Asia Resource Center Japan, Sorbonne Université, the St. Gallen Scientific Society, the Foundation for the Third Millennium symposium and the Zurich Film Festival / Eye On Science.

■ **Students:** OceanCare assisted 18 students with their academic baccalaureate papers, diploma theses, bachelor's theses, master's theses and practical aptitude papers on topics relating to ocean conservation.

■ **Lesson material:** OceanCare's whale box was used at two Swiss primary schools (Schule Lyssbach and Scola Sedrun), which commented positively on the abundance and variety of the material it contains.

■ **Joanna Toole Internship:** OceanCare is one of four organisations supporting the Joanna Toole Internship, which enables one young female scientist each year to work on projects run by members of the Global Ghost Gear Initiative. In 2021, Natalie MacDonald assisted the Center for Coastal Studies in the context of a study on the extent of plastic pollution in the USA (see p. 12).

■ **Clean-up campaigns and raising awareness:** On World Clean-up Day, 150 helpers in Wädenswil, where the organisation OceanCare is headquartered, collected litter on land and in Lake Zurich, including fishing nets, plastic packaging, plastic bags and over 20,000 cigarette butts (see p. 13). On three Saturdays, OceanCare also offered zero-waste workshops for visitors to Knies Children's Zoo in Rapperswil.

On the Balearic Islands, the Save the Med Foundation made 2,126 youths aged 15 to 18 more aware of the plastics problem and collected 19,734 plastic items during 40 beach clean-ups. As part of the initiative Changemakers at Sea, 22 groups of school pupils developed innovative ideas on how to reduce plastic consumption. In Greece, iSea and 16 diving centres conducted eleven underwater clean-ups, retrieving 1,370 kilos of plastic waste (see p. 12).

■ **InterDive diving fair:** In September, OceanCare had a stand at this four-day event in Friedrichshafen, the only diving fair held in Europe in 2021. Here, it raised awareness of the need for mindful handling of plastics and gave presentations about sea-turtle rescue, underwater noise and marine plastic pollution (see p. 35).



© Manuela Matt

Clean-up in Wädenswil

■ **Events for supporters:** In 2021, an online event on the subject of pension and inheritance planning with regard to the new Swiss law of succession was held, followed by a second one focusing on deep-sea mining.

Media Reports

OceanCare's activities were addressed in more than 600 media articles in the following countries and regions: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Borneo, Canada, Chile, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Greenland, Guam, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, the Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey and the USA.

They focused, for instance, on the Faroe Islands' mass killings of dolphins (see p.31) and the call for a speed limit for ships (see p.4). OceanCare was able to place both of these topics in important media, such as NZZ, Der Spiegel, Süddeutsche Zeitung, La Vanguardia and The Indian Express. Renowned TV broadcasters, such as Deutsche Welle, TV5MONDEplus, ORF and FranceSoir, also ran corresponding reports.

The pollution of the oceans with underwater noise (see pp.4–7), which was discussed in The New Yorker for example, and the report "Under Pressure" on the endangerment of whales in European waters (see p.26) also attracted attention.

OceanCare was present in the media in the context of the plastics problem, e.g., with articles on personal protective equipment, i.e., the littering of pandemic-related masks and in connection with the clean-up campaign on World Clean-up Day (see p.13).

Nicolas Entrup, Co-Director of International Relations, was interviewed about ocean conservation and climate change (see p.14) by t-online.de and stern.de, among others. The Austrian Broadcasting Corporation interviewed him on its main news channel, Ö1, about whaling in European waters and overfishing of the world's oceans.

Traum

Albtraum



Spanish media, such as El Español and La Vanguardia, quoted Carlos Bravo, Ocean Policy Expert at OceanCare, with regard to the ban on oil and gas exploration and production in Spanish waters (see p.7).

Swiss newspapers and magazines paid tribute to the life's work of Sigrid Lüber, founder and President of OceanCare. A detailed portrait of her appeared in The Philanthropist, for instance.

Fabienne McLellan, Co-Director of International Relations, commented on overfishing of the oceans in an SRFglobal TV interview (see p.16). Internationally, she provided information about the Faroe Islands' drive hunting, e.g., on heute.de and mongabay.com (see p.31). The change in the management of OceanCare, which passed to Fabienne McLellan in January 2022, also attracted media attention.

■ **Filler advertisements:** OceanCare advertisements on plastic waste and whale conservation were published free of charge in the following Swiss media: 20 Minuten, Aargauer Zeitung, Basler Zeitung, Beobachter, Berner Oberländer, Berner Zeitung, Berner Zeitung Emmental, Bilanz, Blick, Bündner Tagblatt, Bündner Zeitung, Coopzeitung, Der Bund, FACES, Fit for Life, Glarner Nachrichten, g'plus – Magazin für die grüne Branche, Grenchner Tagblatt, Handelszeitung, Hotel Revue, Langenthaler Tagblatt, Limmattaler Zeitung, Linth-Zeitung, Migros Magazine, Neue Fricktaler Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Nordwestschweiz, Obersee Nachrichten, Oltner Tagblatt, Persönlich, Sarganserländer, Solothurner Zeitung, Sonntagsblick, Südostschweiz, Thuner Tagblatt, Transhelvetica, Wave Magazin, Wir Eltern, WOZ Wochenmagazin, Zeitung für die Region Basel, Zofinger Tagblatt, Zürcher Oberländer and Zürichsee-Zeitung. *OceanCare is deeply grateful to these media for their important and valuable support of ocean conservation.*



Means of Communication

OceanCare uses a variety of communication channels to raise awareness of threats to the oceans and to make clear how each and every one of us can help to keep the underwater world alive. The broader the support for ocean-conservation concerns in society, the better the basis for initiating the necessary changes.

■ **Wissen magazine:** The June edition of OceanCare's magazine Wissen was about the life cycle of plastics (Wissen 1/21, 19,944 copies) and the October edition focused on the situation of whales in European waters (Wissen 2/21, 18,926 copies).

■ **Fokus:** In 2021, OceanCare released four issues of Fokus, with the following themes: Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance (20,533 copies), the whale warning system SaveMoby (19,565 copies), overfishing (19,061 copies) and seal rescue in England (19,633 copies).

■ **E-newsletter:** In 19 newsletters (in German and English), OceanCare provided information on ocean-conservation projects, while also drawing attention to events and possible ways to provide support. At the end of 2021, the e-newsletter had 70,000 subscribers.

■ **Social media:** At the end of 2021, there were 21,379 people following OceanCare's established Facebook page and 831 following the newly created English-language Facebook page "OceanCare International". On Instagram, there were 6,131 and 1,145 followers respectively. The frequency of reports has slightly increased to between five and seven messages a week. OceanCare regularly reported ocean-conservation news on Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.

■ **Video blog:** Nicolas Entrup, Director of International Relations at OceanCare, released the seventh episode of the video blog "It's About World", on the threat to whales in European waters.

■ **www.oceancare.org:** OceanCare's website recorded around 401,000 page views.

■ **Google Ads:** Via the Google Ad Grants programme, which is free for non-profit organisations, OceanCare generated 113,000 ad impressions (worth USD 23,000) and 11,000 connections with the website.

■ **Display of posters:** At 1,200 locations in German-speaking Switzerland, as part of a poster campaign that benefited from special rates due to the COVID pandemic, OceanCare was able to draw attention to the problem of littering, which has been exacerbated by disposable masks – both on land and at sea. Another 150 poster sites were provided free of charge by 15 municipalities and institutions.

Publications

Professional Articles, Policy Briefings, Book Chapters and Expert Reports

by OceanCare and cooperating partners

Bearzi, G.: [Opinion piece: on the conservation of european cetaceans and life at sea](#), in: Nunny, L. (ed.): [Under pressure: the need to protect whales and dolphins in European waters](#). An OceanCare report, 2021.

Bravo, C., Entrup, N., Sagarminaga, R.: [Quiet waters for Whales and Dolphins: the one-time opportunity to avoid, reduce and mitigate noise-generating activities in the Mediterranean Cetacean Migration Corridor](#). An OceanCare report, 2021.

Frey, S.: [Marine plastic pollution – sources, sinks and impacts on cetaceans](#), in: Nunny, L. (ed.): [Under pressure: the need to protect whales and dolphins in European waters](#). A report by OceanCare, 2021.

Genov, T.: [The impacts of chemical pollutants on cetaceans in europe](#), in: Nunny, L. (ed.): [Under pressure: the need to protect whales and dolphins in European waters](#). A report by OceanCare, 2021.

Genov, T. & Železnik, J.: [Final report on the implementation of ecological monitoring of mobile species in Landscape Park Strunjan, Slovenia](#). Report for the Landscape Park Strunjan in the framework of the Interreg project MPA Networks, 2021.

Genov, T. & Železnik, J.: [Guidelines for the monitoring and management of mobile species in Landscape Park Strunjan](#). Study for the Landscape Park Strunjan in the framework of the Interreg project MPA Networks, 2021.

Genov, T., Železnik, J., Palmer, K.J., Žilavs, N.: [Final report on pilot monitoring to evaluate the effects of underwater noise from shipping and recreational boat traffic on marine mammals in Slovenian waters](#). Report to the Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia, 2021.

IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Taskforce: [Dhofar IMMA Fact Sheet](#). Fact Sheet by IUCN with support of Gobi, SSC, Tethys, WDC, WCPA, 2021.

Martin, C., Weilgart, L., Amon, D.J., Müller, J.: [Deep-sea mining: a noisy affair](#). An OceanCare report, 2021.

Notarbartolo di Sciarra, G. & Nunny, L.: [Overview of cetacean species in european waters \(including red list status\)](#), in: Nunny, L. (ed.): [Under pressure: the need to protect whales and dolphins in European waters](#). A report by OceanCare, 2021.

Nunny, L. (ed.): [Under Pressure: the need to protect whales and dolphins in European waters](#). An OceanCare report, 2021.

Nunny, L. & Simmonds, M.P.: [Climate change and ocean acidification – a looming crisis for europe's cetaceans](#), in: Nunny, L. (ed.): [Under pressure: the need to protect whales and dolphins in European waters](#). A report by OceanCare, 2021.

OceanCare & General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM): [Study on the potential effects of underwater noise on demersal fisheries in the fisheries restricted area of the Jabuka/Pomo Pit in the Adriatic Sea](#). Study presented to the Contracting Parties of the GFCM, November 2021.

Panou, A.: [Mediterranean monk seal photo-identification project *Monachus monachus* in the central Ionian Sea, April 2019 – March 2021](#). Report to the Greek Ministry of Environment, 2021.

Popov, K., Mihaylov, K., Delov, V., Zaharieva, Z., Popov, D., Dimov, P.: [National Action Plan for the conservation of cetaceans in Bulgaria](#). Action Plan submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Water of Bulgaria, 2021.

Simmonds, M.P., Entrup, N., Weilgart, L.: [The threat posed by ocean noise pollution to europe's cetaceans](#), in: Nunny, L. (ed.): [Under pressure: the need to protect whales and dolphins in European waters](#). A report by OceanCare, 2021.

Simmonds, M.P., McLellan, F., Entrup, N., Nunny, L.: [Whaling in Europe: an ongoing welfare and conservation concern](#), in: Nunny, L. (ed.): [Under pressure: the need to protect whales and dolphins in European waters](#). A report by OceanCare, 2021.

Scientific Publications

Articles, abstracts, poster presentations and lectures by OceanCare and cooperating partners

Andrés, C., Cardona, L., Gonzalvo, J.: [Common bottlenose dolphin \(*Tursiops truncatus*\) interaction with fish farms in the Gulf of Ambracia, western Greece](#). Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems 31 (8): 2229-2240, 2021.

Bearzi, G.: [Marine biology on a violated planet: from science to conscience](#), in: Bearzi, G., Stergiou, K.I., Macer, D. (eds.): [Marine Biology in a World of Wounds](#). Theme Section in Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics 20: 1-13, 2021.

Bearzi, G., Bonizzoni, S., Riley, M.A., Santostasi, N.L.: [Bottlenose dolphins in the north-western Adriatic Sea: abundance and management implications](#). Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems 31: 651-664, 2021.



Bearzi, G. & Genov, T.: Imperilled common dolphins of the Mediterranean Sea, in: DellaSala, D., Goldstein, M., Costello, M.J. (eds.): *Imperilled: the encyclopaedia of conservation*. Elsevier, Amsterdam, 2021.

Bearzi, G. & Reeves, R.R.: Food for Thought: Shifting baselines of cetacean conservation in Europe. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, fsab137, 2021.

Bonizzoni, S., Furey, N.B., Bearzi, G.: Bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in the north-western Adriatic Sea: spatial distribution and effects of trawling. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 31: 635-650, 2021.

Borrell, A., Vighi, M., Genov, T., Giovos, I., Gonzalvo, J.: Feeding ecology of the highly threatened common bottlenose dolphin of the Gulf of Ambracia, Greece, through stable isotope analysis. *Marine Mammal Science* 37: 98-110, 2021.

Briceño, Y., Sánchez, L., Trujillo, F., von Fersen, L., Ramírez, S.: Aquatic wildmeat consumption of Guiana dolphins (*Sotalia guianensis*) in Lake Maracaibo system, Venezuela. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 8: 625801, 2021.

Bundone, L., Hernandez-Milian, G., Hysolakoj, N., Bakiu, R., Mehillaj, T., Lazaj, L.: Mediterranean monk seal in Albania: historical presence, sightings and habitat availability. Abstract to the 1st International Conference on Water Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development WEPSPD-2021, Tirana, Albania, May 2021.

Bundone, L., Hernandez-Milian, G., Hysolakoj, N., Bakiu, R., Mehillaj, T., Lazaj, L.: Mediterranean monk seal in Albania: historical presence, sightings and habitat availability. *Journal of Natural and Technical Science* 53: 89-100, 2021.

Charitou, A., Aga-Spyridopoulou, R.N., Mylona, Z., Beck, R., McLellan, F., Addamo, A.M.: Investigating the knowledge and attitude of the Greek public towards marine plastic pollution and the EU Single-Use Plastics Directive. *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 166: 112182, 2021.

Dombrovskaya A.A., Filatova O.A., Ivkovich T.V.: Demographic parameters of families of fish-eating killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) in Avacha Gulf. Abstract to the 11th International Conference on Marine mammals of the Holarctic, virtual event, March 2021.

Entrup, N. & Müller, J.: Progressing prevention, mitigation and reduction of anthropogenic noise. Poster presentation at the 5th Conference on the Conservation of Cetaceans in South Mediterranean Countries, virtual event, April 2021.

Fernández De Larrinoa, P., Baker, J.D., Cedenilla, M.A., Harting, A.L., Hays, M.O., Muñoz, M., et al.: Age-specific survival and reproductive rates of Mediterranean monk seals at the Cabo Verde Peninsula, West Africa. *Endangered Species Research* 45: 3125-329, 2021.

Frantzis, A.: Nomadic giants off the Greek coasts: will we allow them to survive?. Presentation at the Environmental Challenges: Pollution and Ecology Workshop organized by FORTH and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, virtual event, November 2021.

Genov, T., Kotnjek, P., Centrih, T.: Occurrence of common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) in the Gulf of Trieste and the northern Adriatic Sea. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 31: 69-75, 2021.

Giovos, I., Aga Spyridopoulou, R.N., Doumpas, N., Glaus, K., Kleitou, P., Kazlari, Z., et al.: Approaching the “real” state of elasmobranch fisheries and trade: a case study from the Mediterranean. *Ocean and Coastal Management* 211: 105743, 2021.

Guzeev, M.A., Danishevskaya, A.Y., Ivkovich, T.V., Hoyt, E.: Fish-eating killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) increase vocal activity after playback of biphonic discrete calls of their dialect. Abstract to the 11th International Conference on Marine mammals of the Holarctic, virtual event, March 2021.

MacLennan, E., Hartny-Mills, L., Read, F.L., Dolman, S.J., Philp, A., Dearing, K.E., et al.: Scottish Entanglement Alliance (SEA) – understanding the scale and impacts of marine animal entanglement in the Scottish creel fishery. *NatureScot Research Report* 1268, 2021.

Milazzo M., Cattano C., Al Mabruk S.A.A., Giovos I.: Mediterranean sharks and rays need action. *Science*, 371 (6527): 355-356, 2021.

Nelms, S., Easman, E., Anderson, N., Berg, M., Coates, S., Crosby, A., et al.: The role of citizen science in addressing plastic pollution: challenges and opportunities. *Environmental Science and Policy* 128: 14-23, 2021.

Nunny, L.: Wandering Belugas. Presentation at the IWC Climate Change Workshop, virtual event, December 2021.

Nunny, L.: A brief overview of solitary-social dolphins. Presentation at the Out of Habitat Workshop, virtual event, September 2021.

Petitguyot, M.A.C., Bearzi, G., Pierce, G.J.: Historical records reveal the magnitude of dolphin killings in the Mediterranean and Northeast Atlantic. Abstract to the 24th Biennial Conference of the Society for Marine Mammalogy, Palm Beach, USA, December 2021.

Saavedra, C., Petitguyot, M., Bearzi, G., Pierce, G.J.: Common dolphin, *Delphinus delphis* (Linnaeus 1758), in: Weir, C.R., Evans, P.G.H., Rasmussen, M.H. (eds.): *Handbook of the mammals of Europe: cetacea*, in press. Springer, Heidelberg, 2021.



Sayer, S., Allen, R., Bellman, K., Beaulieu, M., Cooper, T., Dyer, N., et al.: Post release monitoring of rehabilitated grey seal pups over large temporal and spatial scales. *Marine Mammal Science*: 1-18, 2021.

Sánchez, L.: Education and citizen science for the study and conservation of sharks in Venezuela. Presentation at the conference of the Latin American Education Network for the Ocean, virtual event, May 2021.

Sánchez, L.: Impact of oil spills on the fauna of sharks, whales, dolphins and manatees. Presentation at the conference of the Sociedad Venezolana de Ecología, virtual event, August 2021.

Sánchez, L.: Venezuela whale shark project: stranding care network. Presentation for the Venezuelan Olympic Commission, 2021.

Segura, N., Sagarminaga, R., Moure, B., Ruiz Halern, S., March Morla, D.: Ghost gear entanglement on loggerhead sea turtles in the Mediterranean Sea. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, in press, 2021.

Simmonds, M.P.: Solitary dolphin management plans. Presentation at the Out of Habitat Workshop, virtual event, September 2021.

Simmonds, M.P. (convener): IWC Climate Change Workshop, including Workshop Report, virtual event of the IWC, December 2021.

Simmonds, M.P. & Nunny, L. (conveners): Out of Habitat Marine Mammals Workshop, including Workshop Report, virtual event, September 2021.

Striegel, S.: A summary of the latest IPCC report. Presentation at the IWC Climate Change Workshop, virtual event of the IWC, December 2021.

Weilgart, L., & Leaper, R.: Anthropogenic underwater noise and its impacts on marine wildlife. Webinar on Underwater Radiated Noise from Shipping, organized by the Belgian Federal Public Service on Health, Food Chain Safety, and Environment, the Belgian Federal Public Service on Mobility and Transport, and the Royal Belgian Shipowners' Association, on the initiative of the Minister for the North Sea, Vincent Van Quickenborne, virtual event, March 2021.

Wells, R.J.D., Rooker, J.R., Addis, P., Arrizabalaga, H., Baptista, M., Bearzi, G., et al.: Regional patterns of $\delta^{13}C$ and $\delta^{15}N$ for the European common cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis*) throughout the northeast Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. *Royal Society Open Science* 8: 210345, 2021.

Other Publications and Works
by cooperating partners

Bearzi, G., Genov, T., Natoli, A., Gonzalvo, J., Pierce, G.J.: *Delphinus delphis* (inner Mediterranean subpopulation). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: e.T189865869A189865884, 2021.

Braulik, G., Jefferson, T.A., Bearzi, G.: *Delphinus delphis*, common dolphin. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021: e.T134817215A50352620, 2021.

Gonzalvo, J. & Notarbartolo di Sciara, G.: *Tursiops truncatus* (Gulf of Ambracia subpopulation). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021: e.T181208820A181210985, 2021.

Natoli, A., Genov, T., Kerem, D., Gonzalvo, J., Holcer, D., Labach, H., et al.: *Tursiops truncatus* (Mediterranean subpopulation). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: e.T16369383A50285287.



Networks



■ **Aliança Mar Blava:** Since 2014, OceanCare has been part of this Spanish alliance, which has 120 members from tourism, agriculture, fishing, shipping, administrative bodies, trade unions and non-governmental organisations, and aims to stop oil and gas exploration and production in the Mediterranean Sea. www.marblava.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:** Since 2014, OceanCare has been part of this campaign, driven by 100 international organisations, to ban microplastics from cosmetic products. www.beatthemicrobead.org



■ **Break Free From Plastic:** In 2016, OceanCare joined this coalition of almost 2,500 international organisations striving to reduce plastic pollution and promoting the circular use of plastics. Since 2019, OceanCare has been a core member of BFFP, working on a global level and contributing to its European policy strategy. www.breakfreefromplastic.org



■ **Deep Sea Conservation Coalition:** OceanCare joined this coalition in 2021, as part of its programme to prevent deep-sea mining with a substantial focus on underwater noise. DSCC is committed to the protection of vulnerable deep-sea ecosystems and the conservation of biodiversity in the high seas. www.savethehighseas.org



■ **Dolphinarium-Free Europe:** OceanCare is a co-initiator of this European coalition, founded in 2013, in which non-governmental organisations campaign for an end to dolphin captivity in Europe. www.dfe.ngo



■ **Global Ghost Gear Initiative:** In 2019, OceanCare became a member of the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, which campaigns for the retrieval of lost fishing gear and for compulsory tagging of fishing nets in future, so that these can be traced back to their owners. 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 international 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 the Marine Stewardship Council to deliver on the sustainability promise that it makes with its MSC label. www.make-stewardship-count.org



■ **Mission Blue:** Since 2017, OceanCare has been a partner to this coalition of more than 200 organisations, led by Dr Sylvia Earle, which is campaigning to have 30 percent of the ocean placed under protection by 2030. www.mission-blue.org



■ **Ocean Clean Wash:** OceanCare joined this international campaign in 2016, which wants 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



■ **Plataforma Ciudadana Salvar Fonsalía:** As part of this coalition since 2021, OceanCare has been supporting efforts to protect the species-rich waters of Tenerife's Fonsalía region from the dangers that a planned port project would bring. www.noalpuertodefonsalia.com



■ **Sea Turtle Rescue Alliance:** In 2021, OceanCare launched and funded this alliance for the rescue and care of injured sea turtles, in which rescue centres around the world cooperate, and exchange medical expertise and data with each other, under the leadership of Dr Claire Petros. www.seaturtlerescuealliance.org



■ **Seas at Risk:** Since 2014, OceanCare has been a member of this alliance of 30 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 to inform the public about underwater noise and to mobilise 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



■ **Species Survival Network:** OceanCare has been a member of this network since 1997, campaigning to ensure that threatened 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, sharks, rays and other fish species. www.ssn.org

International Fora

■ **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 entails a right to speak on important aspects of maritime law within UN bodies. www.un.org/en/desa

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

■ **UNEP/UNEA:** In 2015, OceanCare received accreditation for both the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and its governing body, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). The UN Environment Programme plays a leading role in global environmental protection and is the only United Nations body that deals exclusively with the environment. In 2018, due to its consistently scientific approach, OceanCare was able to switch from the NGO Major Group to the Science and Technology Major Group, whose votes carry more weight. www.unep.org

■ **UNEP/GPML:** Since 2014, OceanCare has been 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. www.gpmarinelitter.org

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

■ **Abidjan Convention:** Since 2017, OceanCare has been involved in Conferences of the Parties to the Abidjan Convention, which addresses the condition of the seas and coastal areas in West, Central and Southern Africa, as well as the protection of threatened marine animals from poaching. www.abidjanconvention.org

■ **ACCOBAMS:** Since 2004, OceanCare has been a partner of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS). In this role, OceanCare contributes expertise in the fields of species conservation, underwater noise, plastic pollution and by-catch. OceanCare's president Sigrid Lüber is Co-Chair of the CMS/ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS Joint Noise Working Group. 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. www.ascobans.org



Renewal of the partnership between OceanCare and FAO/GFCM

■ **CBD/Convention on Biological Diversity:** In 2021, OceanCare gained observer status in the context of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. In this role, it contributes expertise, both in the field of underwater noise and with regard to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. www.cbd.int

■ **CMS/Bonn Convention:** CMS is part of the United Nations Environment Programme and devoted to the conservation of migratory species of wild animals. OceanCare has been a partner 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. 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 obliged European countries bordering the sea to improve the state of the marine environment in their territorial waters. From 2017 to 2020, OceanCare's president Sigrid Lüber was part of the external Advisory Board for quietMED, which worked on noise reduction in the Mediterranean. Since 2021, she has been part of the external Advisory Board for QUIETSEAS, a programme that supports EU countries' efforts to prevent underwater noise. Dr Lindy Weilgart and Nicolas Entrup work in the EU's 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 fishing. 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), contributing expertise in the fields of underwater noise, by-catch, plastic pollution and illegal fishing activities. In 2021, GFCM and OceanCare cooperated on implementation of a socio-economic pilot study on the impact of noise on fish stocks and fishing. www.fao.org/gfcm

■ **ISA:** In 2021, OceanCare was accredited as an observer organisation by the International Seabed Authority (ISA), which manages mineral deposits as the heritage of humanity and is the main point of contact regarding deep-sea mining. www.isa.org.jm

■ **IWC:** Since 1992, OceanCare has been campaigning for the protection of whales as an observer at International Whaling Commission (IWC) meetings. www.iwc.int

Support

OceanCare would like to thank its partnered service providers and specifically the following foundations, companies and private individuals for their valuable support of ocean conservation:

Foundations

A. Michael und Ursula La Roche Stiftung
Albin-Pedrotti-Stiftung
Anna Lisa Stiftung
Aptenia Stiftung
Dr. Elfriede Backhaus Stiftung zum Schutze der Tiere
Gallifrey Foundation
Fondation Gérard Pierre
Heidi Demetriades Foundation
Humanatura-Stiftung
Int. Foundation for Sustainable and Ethical Evolution
Malou-Stiftung für Tierschutz
Marianne und René Lang-Stiftung
Poristes Stiftung
Foundation for the Third Millennium
Stiftung Farald von Wedekind u. Fiorimonde Wedekind
Stiftung Kofmel-Schwab
Stiftung NAK-Humanitas
Stiftung Ormella
Stiftung Temperatio
Uniscientia Stiftung
Our Earth Foundation
Walter und Eileen Leder-Stiftung für den Tierschutz
Walter und Inka Ehrbar Stiftung
Willy und Margherit Wölfli-Stiftung

Companies and Private Initiatives

■ **Amazon Logistik Frankenthal & Menue2000:** Amazon staff donated the deposit on returnable bottles in their logistics centre's restaurant, thus generating 1,566 euros for ocean conservation.

■ **Apotheke-Drogerie am Marktplatz:** This pharmacy in Büren an der Aare asks customers who buy plastic bags to make a donation to OceanCare. This raised 610 Swiss francs for the plastics programme.

■ **feelhome:** Once again, this company granted OceanCare generous discounts on the purchase of "veggie bags" made from 100-percent-recycled PET.

■ **Fenster Keller:** This company from Bütschwil (Canton of St. Gallen) supported ocean conservation with a Christmas donation of 1,000 Swiss francs.

■ **Foundation for happy dogs and people:** 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 1,000 Swiss francs.

■ **Fundsachenverkauf:** This Zurich-based company, which sells lost and found items, gave its staff a total of 23 animal sponsorships, worth 3,450 Swiss francs.

■ **Gebr. Heinemann:** This globally active company charged 30 cents for all single-use bags in its Heinemann duty-free shops at Budapest Airport. The proceeds amounted to 2,404 Swiss francs, which the company donated to OceanCare, to help reduce marine plastic pollution. Gebr. Heinemann has already been making extremely valuable contributions to ocean conservation since 2017, reducing the number of plastic bags in its shops by around 70 percent in cooperation with OceanCare. In this campaign, it has raised a total of almost 500,000 euros in donations to support ocean conservation. The company is continuing to cut down on single-use service items and expand its range of future-friendly products.

■ **Globetrotter Travel Service:** This expert on individual travel provided 5,000 Swiss francs to support the establishment of professional animal rescue in the regions of Mauritius, La Réunion, Seychelles and Mozambique, referred to OceanCare in its travel planner and raised awareness of ocean conservation in its online community.

■ **Google:** In the context of the Google Ad Grants programme, OceanCare received 23,000 US dollars' worth of free advertising on the Google Search Network.

■ **Guerilla yoga:** In summer, yoga instructors gave outdoor classes on a donation basis. In this campaign, over a hundred participants supported OceanCare, donating a total of 3,543 Swiss francs.



Exhibition of artwork by Tony Künzli



Marianne Götti and Swiss Casinos

■ **help alliance:** Under the motto “change for change”, passengers on board Edelweiss aircraft can donate their change to charity. In 2021, OceanCare was again one of the beneficiary organisations. help alliance, the Lufthansa Group’s and staff’s aid organisation that makes sure the donated change and foreign money from the aircraft is converted into “real” money, transferred 10,921.38 euros to OceanCare. The entirety of this donation is going towards environmental education on ocean conservation.

■ **Hotel Engel:** The Engel team provided drinks and sandwiches for the well-being of the 150 volunteers at the clean-up in Wädenswil.

■ **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, and also shared information on OceanCare campaigns via its online channels.

■ **Loop – nachhaltig werben:** This online shop for sustainable advertising material supported OceanCare’s projects by donating 4,246 euros.

■ **Marianne Götti and Swiss Casinos:** Photographer Marianne Götti sold two of her photos of Louis Armstrong to Swiss Casinos and waived her fee. Swiss Casinos rounded up the corresponding amount and donated 10,000 Swiss francs to OceanCare.

■ **novaCapta Switzerland:** This IT partner for digital solutions supported ocean conservation with a Christmas donation of 1,000 Swiss francs.

■ **PartnerRe:** At a New Year’s Eve run, PartnerRe staff ran for whales and dolphins. The company rewarded this with a donation of 5,000 Swiss francs to OceanCare.

■ **Planet Movrs:** In the context of online fitness courses, Planet Movrs motivated people to get involved in ocean conservation and collected 1,519 Swiss francs for OceanCare.

■ **Searchtalent:** This recruitment agency ran an appeal on social media to support OceanCare and doubled the amount donated, resulting in a total of 1,155 Swiss francs.

■ **Smilodox:** This sportswear company launched a collection of clothing made from recycled materials and donated 5,000 euros to OceanCare from the resulting sales.

■ **SodaStream:** In 2020, SodaStream hosted the second world championship in “carrying”. Participants ran while carrying six-packs and were able to document their performance online, in terms of distance covered. In 2021, SodaStream made a donation to OceanCare for every kilometre run, transferring a total of 5,000 euros for projects to counter marine plastic pollution.

■ **Synapticon:** This German company, which operates in the field of industrial motion control, donated 1,600 Swiss francs to OceanCare.

■ **Teradata:** This technology provider donated 2,000 US dollars for ocean conservation, from a Christmas campaign that was part of the charity programme Teradata Cares.

■ **TGW Logistics Group:** This company specialising in highly automated intralogistics solutions made a major contribution towards curbing plastic pollution with its donation of 10,000 euros. This amount came from a 2020 Christmas campaign that involved refraining from sending gifts, in favour of healthy oceans.

■ **Tony Künzli:** This artist has been supporting welfare and charitable institutions for years. His November exhibition “Painting for Ocean Conservation”, held under special conditions at the gallery ART333 in Au (Wädenswil), raised a valuable 11,500 Swiss francs.

■ **Wädi-Brau-Huus:** To mark the occasion of the clean-up in Wädenswil, a special beer was brewed, offered in local shops and given to the clean-up campaign’s participants. The proceeds from this refreshing campaign went to OceanCare.

■ **Waveup magazine:** At this Swiss surf magazine’s Chixx on Board event, OceanCare presented projects combating plastic pollution and received the proceeds from the event’s flea market.

■ **WebStages:** This company gave each of its 22 employees an animal sponsorship for Christmas and supported OceanCare with a total of 3,300 Swiss francs.

Financial Statement

in accordance with Swiss GAAP FER 21

Income Statement

	2021		2020	
	CHF	%	CHF	%
REVENUE				
Membership fees	422,937	15.0%	385,731	9.5%
Sponsorship	375,492	13.3%	377,892	9.3%
Foundations	260,894	9.3%	216,887	5.3%
Revenue from bequests	17,000	0.6%	1,384,749	34.0%
Revenue from projects	650,239	23.0%	595,015	14.6%
Revenue from public relations work	1,085,972	38.5%	1,090,123	26.7%
Revenue from online shop	8,314	0.3%	23,224	0.6%
Miscellaneous revenue	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Total revenue	2,820,848	100.0%	4,073,621	100.0%
EXPENDITURE				
Project expenditure				
Ocean conservation	236,564	8.0%	186,944	6.5%
Plastic pollution	232,269	7.9%	288,902	9.9%
Underwater noise	346,590	11.7%	240,004	8.3%
Species conservation	669,083	22.7%	692,737	23.9%
Animal rescue	124,908	4.2%	179,072	6.1%
Environmental education & mobilisation	734,956	24.9%	726,727	25.0%
Total project expenditure	2,344,370	79.4%	2,314,386	79.7%
Fundraising	421,077	14.3%	400,930	13.8%
Administrative expenditure	186,512	6.3%	189,240	6.5%
Total expenditure	2,951,959	100.0%	2,904,556	100.0%
OPERATING PROFIT	-131,111		1,169,065	
Withdrawal from funds	131,111		-	
Allocation to funds	-		-1,169,065	
Profit before allocation to project reserves	-		-	
Allocation to project reserves	-		-	

At the OceanCare office, the audit report and complete annual report can be requested and viewed.



© Shutterstock/Richard Whitcombe

Balance Sheet as of 31 December

2021

2020

ASSETS

CHF

%

CHF

%

Current assets

Cash and cash equivalents	3,120,170	97.6%	3,104,712	98.1%
Miscellaneous current receivables	13,988	0.4%	5,170	0.2%
Inventories	19,862	0.6%	14,572	0.4%
Prepaid expenses and deferred charges	6,912	0.2%	4,941	0.1%
Total current assets	3,160,932	98.8%	3,129,395	98.8%

Fixed assets

Rent deposit	20,010	0.6%	20,012	0.6%
Tangible and intangible assets	20,000	0.6%	17,000	0.6%
Total fixed assets	40,010	1.2%	37,012	1.2%
Total assets	3,200,942	100.0%	3,166,407	100.0%

LIABILITIES

Short-term borrowing

Miscellaneous current liabilities	168,281	2.3%	37,066	1.2%
Accrued expenses and deferred income	72,432	5.2%	70,000	2.2%
Total borrowing	240,713	7.5%	107,066	3.4%

ORGANISATION CAPITAL

Tied-up capital

Project reserves	174,081	5.4%	263,919	8.3%
Bequest funds	2,546,662	79.6%	2,556,662	80.7%
	2,720,743	85.0%	2,820,581	89.0%

Nominal capital

Association funds	239,486	7.5%	238,760	7.6%
	239,486	7.5%	238,760	7.6%
Total organisation capital	2,960,229	92.5%	3,059,341	96.6%
Total liabilities	3,200,942	100.0%	3,166,407	100.0%



Gerbestrasse 6, P.O.Box 372
CH-8820 Wädenswil (Switzerland)
T +41 (0)44 780 66 88, F +41 (0)44 780 68 08
info@oceancare.org, www.oceancare.org

Our donation accounts
PostFinance: PC 80-60947-3
Credit Suisse: CH83 0483 5040 8744 0000 0
BIC/SWIFT: CRESCHZZ80A



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

