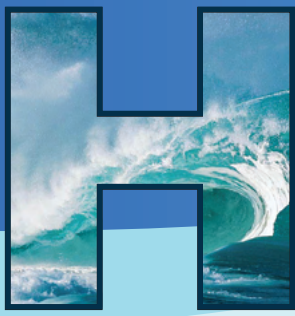




# OCEANIC PRESERVATION SOCIETY

2021 IMPACT REPORT





# How Revolutions Begin

**Louie Psihoyos**

**OPS Executive Director and Academy Award-winning Filmmaker**

As 2021 came to a close, I was bracing myself for some very bad news. A massive firestorm, driven by gusts of wind up to 115 mph, had just ripped through the suburbs of Boulder County, devastating the towns of Superior and Louisville.

Eight years ago, Boulder – my former hometown – got hit by a flood of biblical proportions. Our house wasn't supposed to be in a flood zone, but when furniture started floating up against the ceiling of the downstairs, we thought it would be a good time to evacuate. My photo collection, 50 years of work and much of it for National Geographic Magazine, survived. After this epic flood, we placed my collection in a storage locker in Superior, Colorado. This same storage locker just barely survived the Marshall Fire. Authorities are calling this the most destructive fire in the state's history. While I am grateful to have had my life's work spared again, my heart goes out to my community. And I know this will not be the last severe weather event we will face.

The irony is that when the flood hit, I was making a film called *Racing Extinction*. Climate change back then was something we thought would impact polar bears and icecaps before it would reach our suburban backyards. Nobody thought the ravages of the climate crisis would escalate this fast. The good news is that radical changes can work in both directions and can take as little as ten years. And once they are started, they are unstoppable. Scientific studies in social change reveal that once 10% of the population is 100% committed, change is inevitable. This is fortuitous considering a group of climate scientists around the world have recently calculated that we have ten years to get the climate crisis under control or we face a planetary disaster.

**I know it sounds like a crazy dream,  
but we've done this kind of thing before.**

What are we doing about it at OPS? Looking forward, we're working with the UN to produce an epic scale projection event on the east side of the Secretariat Building in June, with the goal of reaching a billion people to help solve the climate crisis. I know it sounds like a crazy dream, but we've done this kind of thing before. When we projected endangered species on the side of the Empire State Building in 2015, to alert the world that there was a mass extinction event going on, within five days we had 939,000,000 media views. We thought we'd never be able to top that kind of exposure – but then the Pope called. The Vatican projection event was surreal. 225,000 people watched it live and 600 media were in attendance, along with 6,000 police. The projection event for the Pope reached 4.4 billion media views.

When we made *The Game Changers*, a film about the plant-rich diets of super athletes, the first 30 days the film was on Netflix, searches for "plant diets" went up 350% worldwide. Searches for "Vegan Food Near Me" is up 5000% in just this last year. If you want to start a revolution, films and projection events are the most powerful weapons in the world for social change, but the actual impact can be hard to measure. However, sometimes, we get a glimpse of what our work can mean to others. Our team was invited to create a projection event on the "Armadillo Building" during the recent COP in Glasgow, Scotland while world leaders were meeting about climate goals. We were so understaffed and underfinanced that I didn't get a minute to go to the COP itself.

I was up for more than 48 hours processing images for the media – but the highlight for me was when several of the youth climate leaders told me that watching *Racing Extinction* was event that inspired them to lead the movement. One Indigenous activist started crying when she learned we were the ones who made the Armadillo projections. She told me she finally felt that she had been heard.

I'm not sure what tomorrow brings, but we're not going to stop fighting the good fight. We may lose our homes and our life's work, but as long as there's life on this planet, it will be worth fighting for.

For the Wild,



## Courtney Vail

### OPS Campaign Director

As the director of campaigns and impact initiatives at OPS, I work to extend the life of our films beyond the box office, while focusing on the most critical issues facing the planet. While we made our mark with the Academy Award-winning film *The Cove* (2009), forever changing how the world will view the small town of Taiji, Japan, we sealed our legitimacy as a leader in documentary filmmaking with our subsequent films, including *Racing Extinction* (2015), *The Game Changers* (2019), and *Mission: Joy* (2021).

Similarly, we paved the way for a whole new generation of innovators and artists by illuminating the night sky through the projection of compelling imagery onto iconic buildings like the Empire State Building and The Vatican in 2015 – subsequently inspiring a movement of global projection events by activists everywhere.

Building upon these impactful films and projection events is the current work of OPS. As we look back at 2021 and forward to 2022, there are so many opportunities to make a difference and extend our impact – we have multiple films in production, more projection events planned, and our strategic campaigns are growing.

It is in our DNA to seek more from each one of us – to seek more awareness, more compassion, more responsibility, and more determination to actively participate in changing the course of planetary collapse towards a more sustainable, more humane, and brighter future. To put it simply, we are working to ‘scale up’ social change through our films and impact campaigns, inspiring and empowering people to care and to act.

It might not seem like a lot of work to watch a documentary film, but it takes a lot of work to care – and even more work to personally do something about the issues that inspire, or terrify, us. Watching a film might be the first and best place to start, and once inspired to act, we want to know what to do next. This is where our impact campaigns come in to provide our supporters with tangible solutions to contribute to our common future.

We are in a dawning era of increasing personal and social responsibility. The science tells us that our future is dependent upon the health of the planet. As individuals and as a society, we must consciously decide how we want to live, and who we want to be.

At OPS, we know that our storytelling will challenge you and compel a sense of urgency that is a prerequisite for saving our planet. Our campaigns, collaborations, and partnerships will support your journey towards action – the ultimate antidote to despair and our best chance to manifest a brighter future.

We hope you enjoy this look inside the issues and initiatives where we continue to make our mark.

Courtney S. Vail





## Welcome to our year in review!

We have done some amazing things with you by our side, and we can't wait to launch into the new year with a renewed sense of urgency and hope.

While the pandemic has continued to rage throughout the better part of this year, we have been working to produce more documentary films and projection events, reach more people through our education and outreach initiatives, and grow our impact campaigns.

This year, we have been able to advance our campaign work through partnerships and collaborations. While we are a small team, it is our strategic relationships that allow us to contribute to global issues while not forgetting some of the local ones.

As we look back at 2021, we want to reflect upon the challenges and achievements over this past year even as we look forward to new ones.

# Films & Projection Events

**OPS films and projections are who we are. We have always viewed films as a powerful way to scale social change. The way we see it, we are not making movies, we are starting movements.**

### Voices for Earth

OPS once again illuminated the dark veil of night to offer messages of hope and possibility with our projection event at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) on November 5th. Directed by OPS Executive Director and Academy Award-winning filmmaker, Louie Psihoyos, "Voices for Earth" was an hours-long projection event that showcased the climate crisis and framed the critical actions needed to ensure a path to a regenerative future. With the conference venue's "Armadoillo" as the backdrop, our program of content magnified the voices and imagery of Indigenous and youth leaders, artists, scientists, and other luminaries.



**COP26 Conference brought together 120 world leaders**

**Over 40,000 registered participants**

**Including 22,274 party delegates, 14,124 observers and 3,886 media representatives.**

### Racing Extinction – Best Green Film of the Decade.

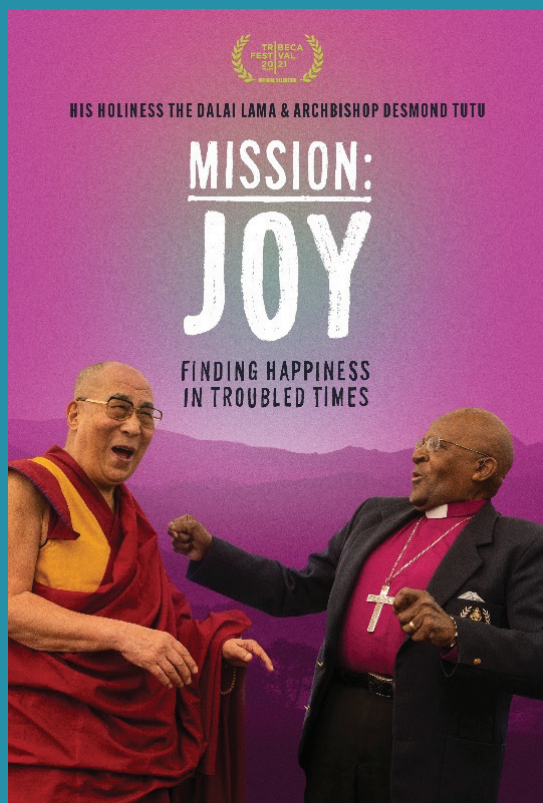
Nominated in 2020 and announced in April 2021, OPS' documentary *Racing Extinction* won the Green Film Network's most distinguished award for the Best Green Film of the Decade, sealing the film's status as one of the world's most impactful and inspiring films of the past decade. The awards honor the most inspiring and impactful environmental films of the past year, exploring critical issues such as climate, food, energy, wildlife, and oceans. Nominated by the world's leading environmental film festivals and selected by an international jury, the 2020 Awards featured 42 films competing for Best Green Feature Documentary, Best Green Short, and a special award for Best Film of the Decade.

Released in 2015 in collaboration with the Discovery Channel, *Racing Extinction* garnered over 36 million views within the first 24 hours. Now, we are honored to have won the Green Film Network's Best Green Film of The Decade Award!



**36 Million Views in 24 Hours**





### **Mission:Joy**

We live for the moments when we can announce the completion of another film project, representing years of labor, love, and creative teamwork. You have come to expect great things from us, and we couldn't be more excited about this film collaboration. Produced by Joy Film, LLC in association with OPS Productions, *Mission:Joy* premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in June!

Inspired by the New York Times bestseller, *The Book of Joy*, the documentary details the enduring friendship between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The documentary will now serve as a living legacy to both men, and a poignant tribute to Archbishop Tutu who passed away in late December 2021. The film has been screened around the world in 70 countries and will be available for general distribution in early 2022. The Big Joy Project – a citizen science initiative with a goal to create more happiness, resilience, connection, and kindness – is now available to everyone!

**We are not making movies,  
we are starting movements.**



### **The Last Place on Earth**

OPS' fifth film project launched into production in 2021 after a focused fundraising drive from our supporters and private donors in 2020. Although the pandemic caused unexpected disruptions and delays, our team is back in the field working alongside local conservation heroes as they fight for the protection of the Leuser Ecosystem in northern Sumatra. This unique ecosystem is the last place on earth where orangutans, rhinos, elephants, and tigers live together in the wild. Our team is never far from danger as they work to document wildlife trafficking, logging operations, and other illicit activity.

Preserving this ecosystem is integral to the survival of the many species who live there, the Indigenous communities who depend on healthy forest for clean water and air, and the rest of us who rely on the Leuser ecosystem to mitigate climate change. Filming and production will continue through 2022 with an expected release in early 2023.

**More films to come in 2022!** During 2021, OPS continued its work on **eight other exciting film projects** that are in various stages of research, filming, and production – which means more award-winning films are underway and will be ready for release over the next several years.







# Campaign Highlights

Our impact campaigns are a love letter to the planet. Without action, we are left with good intentions, and pledges and policies mean very little unless laws are enforced and plans are implemented to address global threats.

While our films are our primary campaigns, serving to expose the most critical issues of our day, highlight solutions, and inspire action, our impact campaigns enable us to collaborate with a global network of partners – from frontline activists and legal defenders who are challenging the systems that perpetuate environmental destruction to YOU – the best agents of change and our first lines of defense in creating a more sustainable and humane future.

In 2021, the OPS community came together in an extraordinary way and rallied behind some of the world's most pressing issues. We engaged with global partners, activists, and allies to defend our oceans, wildlands, and other species that share our common home.

Our participation in global coalitions enables our small team to contribute to issues ranging from the wildlife trade and endangered species protection to whale and dolphin hunts, plastics proliferation, fossil fuel reform, Indigenous rights, and deforestation, among others.

In 2021, we added more information about our campaign work to our website to keep you better informed, along with our brand new Action Center – a place where you can take focused and time-sensitive action for key issues.

***We are sharing just a few of our campaign highlights for 2021, made possible with your support and in coalition with global collaborators.***



Twisted Myrtle



## Wildlife Trafficking

**Endangered species and other wildlife are being poached and smuggled on an unprecedented scale across the globe to feed an organized and lucrative trade in their parts and products. The global wildlife trade is a multi-billion-dollar business, often involving corrupt and sophisticated international crime syndicates. During filming and the course of our field investigations, we are sometimes able to intervene and assist local authorities in bringing wildlife traders to justice or confiscate and liberate wildlife.**

## Ending Pandemics

The spread of zoonotic diseases is accelerating. Such diseases are more likely to emerge when humans and wild animals come into close contact through the commercial trade in wildlife, deforestation, and intensive animal agriculture. Approximately two-thirds of known infectious diseases in humans and 75% of all emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic. OPS joined forces with two coalitions to advance federal and state legislation addressing the wildlife trade and pandemics, and raise awareness to the connection between wildlife trade and pandemics.

## IMPACT

- As a founding member of the Endpandemics Alliance, OPS supported the development and delivery of a global solutions roadmap to prevent pandemics in June, a virtual roundtable with United for Regeneration and the Vatican's Covid-19 Commission in September, and an official appeal to G7 leaders in October. The Alliance has grown to 75 participating organizations. Since launching in early 2020, EndPandemics.earth has reached over 650 million viewers on CNN, YouTube, social media and over 105 million readers/viewers of our publicized stories.
- We developed and shared every day solutions that individuals can take to help combat the wildlife trade and prevent the next pandemic.
- As part of the US Wildlife and Health Alliance, OPS joined with coalition partners in Washington, DC to rally support for federal legislation to address live animal markets, the commercial trade in terrestrial wildlife for consumption, and increased funding for enforcement and monitoring of wildlife imports into the United States. While the Preventing Future Pandemics Act did not move through congress this year, the bill garnered over 170 cosponsors in the House and establishes measures to address global public health risks posed by wildlife markets.





## Global Trade in Sharks and Rays

As an apex species, sharks play a critical role in maintaining healthy ocean ecosystems and have helped regulate the balance and biodiversity of the oceans for hundreds of millions of years. Sharks are vilified, sensationalized, and pursued not only for their unearned reputation, but are targeted for their fins and are the unfortunate victims of bycatch in global fisheries.



## Blood Lions

Currently, 8,000-12,000 lions and thousands of other big cats, including tigers and cheetahs, are bred and kept in captivity in more than 350 facilities in South Africa. These predators are bred for commercial purposes, including interactive tourism, "canned" hunting, lion bone trade and live exports.

### IMPACT

- OPS partnered with Blood Lions to support their enduring campaigns to end the commercial captive lion breeding industry. In May, the South African Minister of Forest, Fisheries and the Environment announced that South Africa will no longer breed captive lions, keep lions in captivity, or use captive lions or their derivatives commercially.

## Fly Without Fins

Launched in June 2020 with lead campaign partner Shark Guardian, this ongoing social media campaign has targeted airlines over Twitter, seeking their commitments to not fly shark fins in their cargo. Banning the transport of shark fins in air cargo is an important step in shark conservation because shipments perpetuate the deadly trade in shark fins, and link consumer demand with supply.

### IMPACT

- Over 60 airlines have stated that they do not transport shark fins in their cargo. Of these, at least 25 new airlines committed to a shark fin-free carriage policy since the launch of the campaign and in response to our tweets, including Austrian Airlines, Corsair, Aegean Airlines, Africa World Airlines, and others. Olympic Air (Greece) and Cargolux declared publicly that they don't fly fins in response to OPS outreach over social media.

## Spring Cleaning for Sharks

OPS teamed up with Shark Allies to launch a targeted consumer education campaign to raise awareness around the use of shark squalene in cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. Squalene is believed to help slow down the aging process of the skin and is included in many cosmetics and skin care products. Although plant-based options exist, historically squalene sourced from sharks was considered the cheapest and easiest.

### IMPACT

- Our Instagram Live chat with Stream2Sea and Shark Allies reached hundreds of viewers to announce our joint consumer campaign to educate about #SharkFreeProducts and drive the market towards plant-based squalene products.

## Stop EU Finning

Although the removal of fins on board of EU vessels and in EU waters is prohibited and sharks must be landed with their fins naturally attached, the EU is among the biggest exporters of fins and a major transit hub for the global fin trade. This initiative, proposed by EU citizens, is a once in a lifetime opportunity to change EU legislation, and requires at least one million signatures be collected before the end of January 2022.

### IMPACT

- OPS amplified this important petition to help the campaign reach its signature goals.

## Shark Protection in Hawaii

With an OPS staffer on Oahu, we supported local efforts to pass bipartisan legislation (HB 553) to protect sharks from intentional capture, entanglement, and killing in the waters of Hawaii.

### IMPACT

- The Hawaii Shark Protection bill (AB 553) was signed into law by Governor Ige in June.

## Shark Protection in the Maldives

In collaboration with the Blue Marine Foundation, OPS engaged with authorities in the Maldives to encourage them to retain a decade-long ban on shark fishing. Discussions to open a managed shark fishery were undertaken despite the fact sharks are a huge dive tourism draw in the Maldives, and incidents of illegal shark finning are increasing.

### IMPACT

- The Ministry of Fisheries of the Maldives released a public statement confirming the country's shark fishing ban will be maintained.

## Make Stewardship Count

Currently, the Marine Stewardship Council's policy against shark-finning in its certified fisheries does not uphold the universal 'fins naturally attached' standard. FNA is world-best practice in fishery management and has been adopted by jurisdictions around the world yet is still not required by the Marine Stewardship Council ecolabel. This is completely inconsistent with MSC's stated zero tolerance approach on finning. OPS is working with this coalition to reform the MSC's policies towards shark finning and removing current exemptions for this activity.

### IMPACT

- OPS coauthored a scientific report aimed at exposing the loopholes in the MSC's shark finning policies, with a focus on encouraging MSC to adopt a 'Fins Naturally Attached' policy. We also participated in consultations with MSC during their Standard Fisheries Review, including Shark Finning Solutions in May and June.



# Campaign Highlights

Animal agriculture utilizes precious water resources, releases climate altering greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and reduces the planet's ability to sequester carbon by destroying diverse ecosystems. Adopting a plant-based diet will reduce your individual carbon footprint and animal suffering.



## Plant-based Diets

### OPS Veg Pledge

This ongoing OPS campaign continues to raise awareness about the benefits of a plant-based diet to the planet.

#### IMPACT

- Over 100 supporters have taken the OPS Veg Pledge, committing to adopt a plant-based diet for personal and planetary health.

### Plant-Based Film Projects

Although OPS' focus on plant-based diets and the benefits to human and planetary health didn't just start with *The Game Changers*, our commitment to a plant-based society is personal and underpins all that we do.

#### IMPACT

- Stay tuned in 2022 for exciting updates on film projects and collaborations that explore plant-based diets and their role in arresting some human diseases.

### Plant Based Treaty

As a companion to the Paris Agreement, The Plant Based Treaty initiative is a grassroots campaign designed to put food systems at the forefront of combating the climate crisis. Modeled on the popular Fossil Fuel Treaty, the Plant Based Treaty aims to halt the widespread degradation of critical ecosystems caused by animal agriculture and to promote a shift to healthier, sustainable plant-based diets.

#### IMPACT

- OPS was profiled in an Earth Day piece on sustainability which identified environmental organizations and institutions that are paving the way to a more sustainable food system with their internal food policies and practices.

## Unsustainable Fishing

Fish populations are in decline globally with over 90% of the world's fisheries considered fully exploited, over-exploited, or depleted. Bycatch, or entanglement in fishing gear, is one of the greatest direct threats to whales, dolphins, and other marine species, including fish species not targeted for the marketplace. Attention has been focused on the detrimental impacts of land-based animal agriculture, leading to calls to reduce meat consumption – but the acquisition, transport, and consumption of seafood is a primary contributor to greenhouse gases and the destruction of fragile ocean ecosystems.

### Fish Free Friday

OPS teamed up with Fish Free February and Good Catch® to focus on solutions to this crisis by launching our Fish Free Friday campaign in February, encouraging our supporters who have the choice to reduce or eliminate their fish consumption by replacing their seafood with plant-based options.

#### IMPACT

- 504 individuals from 45 countries pledged to go Fish Free in February alone. We asked our supporters to pledge to take fish off their plate for the month of February, on Fridays, or forever. Good Catch created a special recipe just for OPS to make the transition easier. OPS Executive Director Louie Psihoyos joined Good Catch Co-founder and chef Chad Sarno for a chat on Clubhouse in June, engaging nearly 700 listeners over this new social media channel. We created a social media kit enlisting others to become a Fish Free Friday influencer to raise awareness and share the campaign.





### Cocos-Galapagos Swimway

OPS endorsed The Cocos-Galapagos Swimway as one of the world's first bilateral marine protected areas that would protect highly migratory endangered marine species including sea turtles, whales, and sharks from industrial fishing. This marine corridor connects the biological hotspots of Ecuador's Galápagos Marine Reserve and Costa Rica's Cocos Island National Park.

#### IMPACT

OPS joined the petition and full-page ad in the NYT calling on the governments of Costa Rica and Ecuador to create the Cocos-Galapagos Swimway marine corridor. Ecuador's president recently announced an expansion of the existing Galápagos Islands marine reserve at COP26, coinciding with the announcement by Panama, Colombia, and Costa Rica that the four countries intend to create the large marine corridor between their four countries by extending and joining their current marine protected areas.

### Legislation to Protect Whales from Fishing Gear

Between 2015 and 2020, more than 283 whales were reported entangled in fishing gear off the West Coast. Ropes utilized in crab fisheries wrap around the mouths, tails, and flippers of whales, affecting their ability to surface for air, feed, or care for their young. Many entangled animals suffocate and die. OPS actively supported two pieces of legislation at the state and federal level to address whale entanglement and bycatch.

#### IMPACT

OPS mobilized support for the California Whale Entanglement Prevention Act and the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act which would protect countless endangered species by requiring the use of ropeless fishing gear for trap fisheries and prohibit the use of driftnets in federal waters off the west coast, respectively. These bills did not get signed into law in 2021 but remain active legislation.

### Don't Cage Our Ocean

As part of this coalition, we are working to halt industrial ocean finfish farming and aquaculture projects that can damage fragile ocean ecosystems. Marine finfish aquaculture uses giant floating net pens and cages that routinely discharge fish waste, excess feed, and chemicals into open waters, and can entangle marine mammals and other marine life.

#### IMPACT

OPS supported the Keep Finfish Free Act of 2021 and worked to encourage legislators to support this important legislation to protect our oceans from factory fish farms that pollute, entangle, and endanger native marine life. The bill has been introduced in the House and is still in motion.

### The Dark Hobby

OPS supported the release and distribution of *The Dark Hobby*, raising the profile of the global aquarium trade which is responsible for the hunting, capture, and death of millions of exotic marine fish each year.

#### IMPACT

We joined *The Dark Hobby* team for a webinar about ocean conservation on Respect for Fish Day in August and promoted the pledge to leave reef wildlife in the oceans, out of aquariums.

### Rethink Fish

OPS partnered with Compassion in World Farming and their Rethink Fish campaign to support an undercover investigation of Scottish salmon farms to galvanize the Scottish Government to halt the unsustainable expansion of this industry. Scottish salmon farms supply over 50 countries.

#### IMPACT

The investigation exposed serious fish welfare and environmental issues causing fish suffering on an alarming scale and threatening wild fish populations. Because of the investigation and findings, over 130,000 individuals signed an open letter to the Scottish Government calling for a moratorium on the expansion of the industry.





# Campaign Highlights

## Protecting Whales and Dolphins

Our Academy Award-winning film, *The Cove*, exposed the tradition of chasing and herding small whales and dolphins from sea into the confines of a killing cove, where these sentient and social creatures are sometimes held for days before being selected alive for captivity or slaughtered. Whale and dolphin hunts continue in waters across the globe.

### Dolphin Drive Hunts

Beyond our support for monitoring activities in Taiji and annual Japan Dolphin Day demonstrations, OPS continues to support Japanese activists on the frontlines who are working to raise awareness about these hunts, including outreach to authorities and captive dolphin facilities. We continue to monitor hunts in other countries, including the Faroe Islands, where some of the largest dolphin hunts occurred in 2021, including a devastating hunt of over 1,400 Atlantic white-sided dolphins in September.

### IMPACT

OPS provided support to Japanese activists to support their investigative work and outreach. Animal Liberator (LIB) created a visitor's guide to Taiji for Japanese citizens concerned about the dolphin drive hunts. Life Investigation Agency (LIA) shared their thoughts about the future of these hunts in an OPS blog. And we worked with a small coalition of groups to engage with global seafood retailers and distributors of Faroese fish to raise awareness and open dialogue about the dolphin hunts.



### Vessel Strikes and Whale Strandings

Scientists have estimated that 80 whales die from ship strikes each year on the U.S. West Coast. With most carcasses never retrieved, this number is likely an underestimate of the actual numbers of whales that are fatally injured due to interactions with vessels. At least 122 gray whales stranded dead in 2019, followed by 79 gray whales in 2020—a significant increase from an annual average of 29 gray whales over the previous 18 years. In the San Francisco Bay area alone, at least 12 whales washed up dead along beaches this year.

### IMPACT

OPS joined dozens of collaborators for a 'Whale Wake' media event in San Francisco in June to raise public awareness about vessel strikes and to demand stronger protections for whales along California's coastline.

### Expedia Group (#NoTanksExpedia)

OPS partnered with World Animal Protection's campaign to target Expedia and their promotion of captive dolphin venues. We amplified the campaign over social media and asked Expedia Group to delist dolphin entertainment venues from their service.

### IMPACT

In November, Expedia announced that it would stop selling holiday experiences that include captive whales and dolphins.

### Marine Mammal Legislation

OPS continued its support and endorsement for a variety of bipartisan legislation to protect marine mammals nationwide, expanding federal protections for marine mammals to include vessel speed mitigation measures, monitoring of underwater soundscapes and grants to support research and development into marine mammal monitoring technologies, increased funding for right whale protection, and strandings response.

### IMPACT

New marine mammal legislation, the Protecting Our Marine Mammals (POMM) Act, was introduced in November.



Stephen D. McCulloch © 2006







## Bridging Troubled Waters

OPS provided fiscal and other support to a documentary film project profiling the community outreach by Israeli artist, Ran Levy-Yamamori. The film shares Ran's work with children on the Faroe Islands while contemplating possible ways forward in creating a dialogue around the dolphin hunts.

### IMPACT

*Bridging Troubled Waters* premiered at the Wildlife Conservation Film Festival in NYC in October and included a panel discussion with OPS and other experts. The film is currently seeking broader distribution, including airtime on Faroese television.

## Habitat Protection

**Deforestation and land-conversion for industrial agriculture exposes wildlife to poachers, collectors, and traders in animal parts and products, destroys biodiversity, increases the risk of zoonotic disease transfer, and reduces the climate resiliency of our planet.**

### Legislation to Prohibit Forest-Risk Commodities

OPS endorsed and rallied support for state and federal bills that would have prohibited the importation of certain commodities like soy, beef, palm oil, cocoa, timber, and other products linked to deforestation.

### IMPACT

Both California and New York advanced deforestation legislation in 2021, alongside proposed federal legislation (FOREST Act of 2021) introduced in October. While the California Deforestation-Free Procurement Act was vetoed by Governor Newsome, it did garner bipartisan support within California. The New York Deforestation-Free Procurement Act and federal FOREST Act are still in motion and may advance in 2022.

### OPS Film About Deforestation

OPS continues production and filming of its 5th film, *The Last Place on Earth*. A remote forest of northwestern Sumatra is the quintessential *Jungle Book*; the last place in the world where elephants, tigers, rhinos, and orangutans roam together in the wild – but their habitat is being decimated by illegal palm oil plantations.

### IMPACT

Our film crew was able to return to north Sumatra in November 2021 to continue filming for *The Last Place on Earth*, supporting frontline defenders and documenting wildlife trafficking and palm oil trade.

### Pesticide Use

In coalition with partners, OPS engaged with the USEPA to request they not weaken their biological evaluations of Glyphosate and Atrazine. Glyphosate is the world's most popular herbicide and a leading cause of monarch butterfly declines and has been widely implicated in causing cancer and other harms to farmworkers and applicators. We also asked Departments of Interior and Commerce to expeditiously release Endangered Species Act consultation documents for chlorpyrifos, malathion, and diazinon – 3 pesticides that the Fish and Wildlife Service has found in its near final biological opinion to be jeopardizing thousands of species.

### IMPACT

While the EPA did not ban glyphosate products, Bayer/Monsanto announced it would voluntarily cancel residential lawn and garden uses of glyphosate, primarily to manage litigation.





# Campaign Highlights

## Climate and Oceans

Scientists warn that we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. The world is still not on track to adequately address the climate crisis, and the coming months and years are crucial for greater global partnership, action, and accountability. We are working to keep the 1.5 degree Celsius target alive and keep fossil fuels in the ground.

### Build Back Fossil Free

As part of the #buildbackfossilfree coalition, OPS joined calls to protect communities who are fighting for climate, racial, and economic justice, and amplifying the frontline actions of local communities fighting oil and gas development projects. Coalition efforts focused on pressuring the Biden Administration to end fossil fuel financing and development and supporting public initiatives to oppose Line 3 and Keystone XL pipelines.

#### IMPACT

The Keystone XL pipeline was terminated in June.

### Break Free From Plastic

Nearly 40% of the plastic produced annually is for single-use plastics and packaging – materials that are made to last forever but designed to be used briefly and thrown away. As part of the Break Free From Plastics coalition, OPS worked to advance the elimination of single-use plastics in National Parks.

#### IMPACT

We garnered support for the introduction of the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act of 2021 that was introduced in March and petitioned the Secretary of Interior – after securing congressional support – to eliminate single-use plastics in national parks in August. OPS joined a meeting with the National Park Service in January 2022 to advance our request for plastic-free parks.

### Red Road to DC and People vs. Fossil Fuels

OPS endorsed these community-based initiatives and amplified these campaigns, recognizing that sacred sites and Indigenous communities across the world have been desecrated by resource extraction and industrial development projects. These projects often move forward without consultation or consent from Indigenous communities.

#### IMPACT

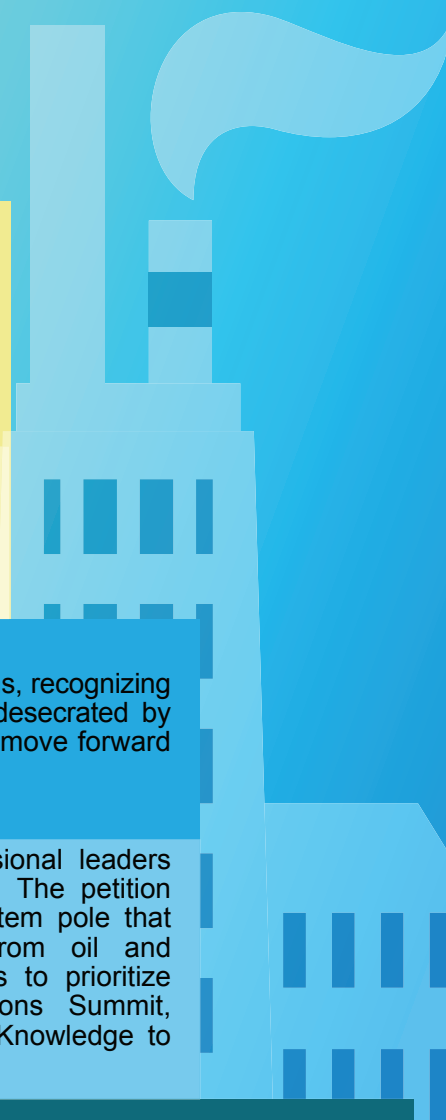
OPS endorsed and amplified a petition to President Biden and congressional leaders recognizing the traditional, legal, and moral rights of Indigenous Peoples. The petition was delivered during The Red Road to DC and presented alongside a totem pole that traveled from Washington state to highlight sacred lands at risk from oil and gas development. The Biden Administration announced new commitments to prioritize consultation with Tribal Nations in November during the Tribal Nations Summit, including an MOU on the importance of Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge to federal decision making.

### Ocean-based Climate Solutions Act

OPS endorsed and supported this legislation that seeks to leverage the ocean's potential in the fight against climate change by prohibiting offshore drilling activities in most areas of the Outer Continental Shelf, promoting offshore renewable energy, protecting blue carbon, supporting climate-ready fisheries, improving ocean health, supporting the Biden Administration's goal to protect 30% of the ocean by 2030, and holding plastic manufacturers accountable for single-use plastic production.

#### IMPACT

The Ocean-based Climate Solutions Act was introduced in July.



### **Citizens' Climate Lobby**

We joined the Citizens' Climate Lobby to garner support for the introduction of the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act that would impose a fee on carbon pollution and other greenhouse gases.

#### **IMPACT**

The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act was introduced in April.

### **OPS Film About Plastics**

Another OPS film project is under development that will expose the many alternatives to plastic and the heroes who will find the solutions to this daunting global challenge.

#### **IMPACT**

We raised funds to continue work on our documentary film project highlighting society's plastic problem.

## **Protecting California's Coastline**

This year, OPS contributed to policy development in California, including support for the prohibition on seabed mining, siting of aquaculture projects in sensitive habitats, and participation in state climate-resiliency workshops.

### **Seabed Mining**

As climate change threatens ocean ecosystems, the sea floor will likely face an emerging new threat in coming decades: seabed mining for valuable mineral resources that are increasingly hard to come by on land. Thanks to OPS and partners at Pew Charitable Trusts, the California State Lands Commission is considering a ban on seabed mining in California waters.

#### **IMPACT**

OPS testified at three separate California State Lands Commission meetings requesting that the Commission include proactive restrictions on seabed mining off the coast of California within its strategic plan for 2021-2025. The Commission proposed a collaborative effort to look broadly at extractive uses of state lands and to evaluate renewables under the public trust doctrine.

### **Aquaculture**

As part of a small coalition of California-based groups working to review state plans to fast track water bottom leases for the purpose of aquaculture, we voiced our opposition to more environmentally damaging and unsustainable forms of aquaculture, such as bivalve facilities that use pesticides, operations that damage eelgrass, and large finfish facilities, meeting virtually with state authorities reviewing proposed projects in several counties and participating in surveys to develop a state aquaculture plan.

#### **IMPACT**

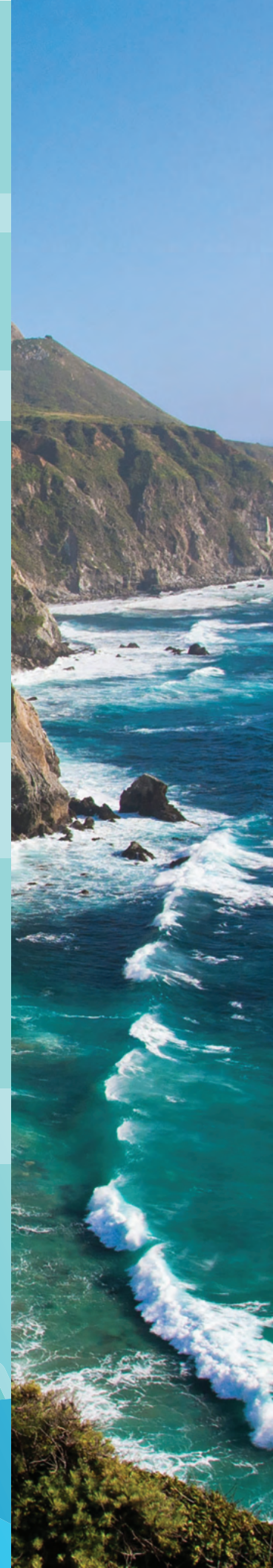
We worked with partners in California to oppose two proposed shellfish aquaculture projects that were to be sited in sensitive habitats with reduced oversight. These projects were temporarily halted and will endure further environmental review.

### **30 x 30**

Mirroring efforts at the federal and global level, California is working to enlist its network of natural and working lands to store and remove carbon from the atmosphere. In 2020, California became the first state in the nation to pledge to conserve 30 percent of land and coastal water by 2030, joining 38 countries in commitment to conservation.

#### **IMPACT**

OPS participated in two local stakeholder workshops to inform the state's Climate Smart Lands Strategy to implement Governor Newsom's Executive Order to conserve 30 percent of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030.







# Campaign Highlights

## Protecting Native Carnivores and Endangered Species

Federal ESA protections and the reintroduction of wolves to key parts of their former habitat have allowed wolf populations to begin to recover, but wolf and other predator eradication policies across the nation threaten the progress made over decades to restore the natural balance that apex carnivores bring to wild landscapes. Aggressive policies to dismantle the ESA were implemented during the last administration, and we are working to restore protections to imperiled wildlife populations.



### Wildlife Killing Contests

As part of the Coalition to End Wildlife Killing Contests and in support of Project Coyote, OPS worked to oppose wildlife contests and seek their abolition in several states in 2021. Wildlife killing contests are cruel, wasteful, and serve no legitimate wildlife management purpose. The sole purpose of killing as many animals as possible for cash and prizes violates humane values and the spirit of traditional hunting ethics. The animals are typically not used for their meat or fur, and their bodies are thrown away like garbage. These events leave countless animals injured and dependent young orphaned, left to die from starvation, predation, or exposure.

#### IMPACT

- OPS provided written testimony, issued action alerts in support of a proposed rule to ban wildlife killing contests in the state of Virginia and supported efforts to ban contests in Maryland and Nevada. Maryland became the 8th state to ban wildlife killing contests, joining Arizona, Colorado, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Vermont, and Washington. In Nevada, Reno City Council and Clark County Board of Commissioners each passed resolutions condemning wildlife killing contests this year. In Michigan, the Kalamazoo and Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners voted to oppose these contests, too.

### Defending the ESA

As part of the Endangered Species Coalition, OPS worked tirelessly to stop and rescind Trump-era rules that severely weakened the implementation of the Endangered Species Act.

#### IMPACT

- We co-sponsored a petition to Interior Secretary Deb Haaland encouraging her engagement with tribal communities regarding the relisting of the gray wolf under the ESA. The petition garnered over 70,000 signatures. The Biden Administration announced new commitments to prioritize consultation with Tribal Nations in November during the Tribal Nations Summit, including an MOU on the importance of Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge to federal decision making. OPS joined a letter urging the Biden Administration to reverse former President Trump's Endangered Species rollbacks and participated in two virtual calls with Martha Williams, Principal Deputy Director of FWS and several other staff to discuss species priorities. The USFWS announced their decision to rescind these destructive regulations this year.





## Rocky Mountain Wolf Project and #Relistwolves

OPS continues to support efforts to restore native wolf populations to Colorado and end the war on wolves by supporting their relisting on the U.S. Endangered Species Act. This includes our work to increase protections for, and oppose the public hunting of, this native species nationwide. Beyond the intrinsic value of these amazing apex carnivores, their return to Colorado will contribute to the ecological integrity of natural landscapes and increase the connectivity between wolf populations in the Southwestern United States with those in the Northern Rocky Mountain region.

### IMPACT

We raised funds to support the production of *Family*, a film by Rain Bear Stands Last, that highlights the deep cultural connection Indigenous nations share with wolves and what the wolf means as ancestors of our beloved canine companions, and supported its viral distribution over social media.

We served as an official advisor to the Rocky Mountain Wolf Project (RMWP) and are helping to establish a fundraising mechanism within Colorado to support non-lethal coexistence methods to reduce conflicts when wolves are introduced by December 2023.

OPS provided public testimony on two separate occasions to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission in January and during the Keystone Center's virtual town hall in August in support of coexistence measures to reduce conflict between wolves, livestock and humans.

Finally, we joined a formal petition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to re-list the gray wolf as an endangered species throughout the American West under the Endangered Species Act.





# OPS Featured Artists

OPS is approached by artists around the world seeking to contribute to both OPS' mission and public awareness about issues such as wildlife conservation, climate change, and protecting our oceans. As a result, OPS launched its 'Feature Artist' program in August 2019. While donations vary, artists commit to donating 20% of the proceeds of featured artwork to OPS. We work to profile at least two unique artists per year. In 2021, OPS featured two amazing artists who raised hundreds of dollars for OPS, stretched our imaginations, and inspired 'artists' around the world!

## Wendy Tillett



Wendy is a Montreal based artist creating vibrant, colorful, attention-grabbing nature and conservation inspired canvases. She was born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada and began to paint at the age of two, alongside her artist-mother, Maggie. She has exhibited in many group and solo shows throughout Canada, and her love for the ocean fuels all her creations. Wendy applies this passion not only to the way she moves through life but also to her colorful works – intended to open the eyes of her audience and to make them more sensitive and conscious towards endangered species, the climate crisis, and plastic pollution.

## Kelly Quinn

Kelly is a Florida based artist and illustrator who spent her childhood exploring the wildlands of the Sunshine State. Her mission is to experience and share the stories of nature to connect people more deeply with the environment so that they can become passionate advocates for the protection and restoration of our planetary home for the next generation.





# Social Media

OPS maintains eight social media channels, sharing dynamic content related to the most pressing issues facing our planet and daily actions that supporters can take to make a difference. Reaching over 1.6M followers, these channels serve as an important conduit for information exchange, relationship building, and engagement with our global network of activists and frontline defenders who are working to confront crimes against nature and illuminate solutions.

## By the Numbers: Social Stats for 2021

**TikTok Following 4,015**

**OPS IG Following 223,270**

**RE IG Following 219,456**

**OPS Twitter Following 52,751**

**RE Twitter Following 41,609**

**OPS Facebook Following 178,979**

**RE Facebook Following 215,397**

**The Cove  
Facebook Following 638,768**

**Total Following: 1,636,229**



## Best of the Best 2021

**Channel With The Most Engagement**  
OPS Instagram

**Total Number of Posts**  
5,000+

**Top Campaigns**  
#RelistWolves,  
#FishFreeFriday,  
ongoing captivity  
messaging  
#TheCove



# TOP CAMPAIGNS

## TOP CAMPAIGNS OF 2021

Industrial fishing is taking place in over 55% of the ocean ●



The ocean simply cannot keep up with our demand



### #FISHFREEFRIDAY

1.8MIL INSTAGRAM REACH  
68,730 INSTAGRAM LIKES  
178K+ FACEBOOK REACH  
175K+ TWITTER IMPRESSIONS

PUT ME BACK ON THE LIST



### #RELISTWOLVES

981,000+ INSTAGRAM REACH  
62,719 INSTAGRAM LIKES  
82K FACEBOOK REACH  
188K+ TWITTER IMPRESSIONS



### ONGOING ANTI-CAPTIVITY MESSAGING (#THECOVE)

870,000+ INSTAGRAM REACH  
58,845 INSTAGRAM LIKES  
968K+ FACEBOOK REACH  
170K+ TWITTER IMPRESSIONS

## MOST ENGAGING FACEBOOK POSTS OF 2021

OPS: Oceanic Preservation Society (OPS)  
July 14, 2021 · 🌐

More manatees have died in 2021 than in any other year in Florida's recorded history, primarily from starvation due to the loss of seagrass beds.



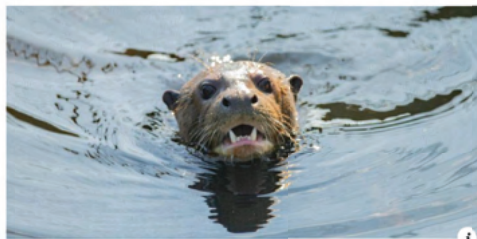
NPR.ORG  
**Florida Breaks Annual Manatee Death Record In First 6 Months Of 2021**  
More than 840 manatee deaths were recorded between Jan. 1 and July 2, according to the ...

### OPS FACEBOOK

1,600+ INTERACTIONS

Racing Extinction  
June 1, 2021 · 🌐

Once believed to be locally extinct, a wild giant otter was sighted in Argentina's Impenetrable National Park. The species hasn't been seen in the country for about 40 years.



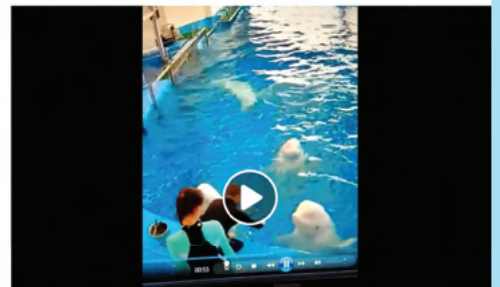
NEWS.MONGABAY.COM  
**Giant otter thought to be extinct in Argentina resurfaces. Literally**  
Ten days ago, Sebastian di Martino was kayaking along the Bermejo River in Argentina's Im...

### RACING EXTINCTION FACEBOOK

2,600+ INTERACTIONS

The Cove  
May 17, 2021 · 🌐

Free Russian Whales coalition received surveillance camera footage from Primorsky Oceanarium. According to those who sent in the video, trainer Dmitry Bachinsky can be seen beating up two adult male beluga whales.



### THE COVE FACEBOOK

4,500+ INTERACTIONS



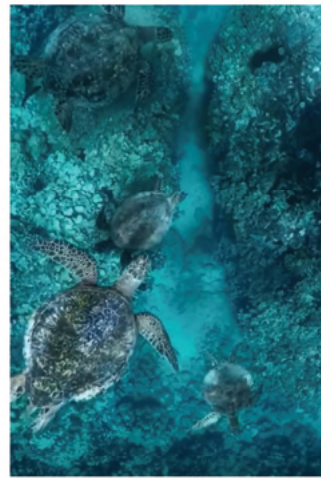
## TOP INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK POSTS OF 2021



### RACING EXTINCTION INSTAGRAM

1 MILLION VIEWS

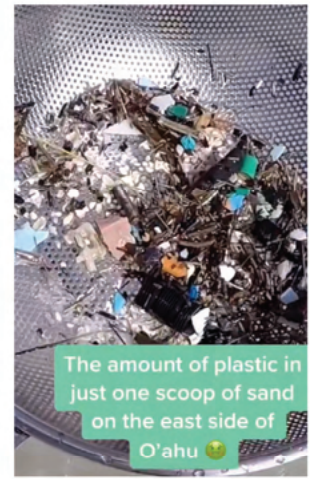
An Instagram Reel for our #FishFreeFriday campaign.



### OPS INSTAGRAM

211K VIEWS

An Instagram Reel of a sea turtle cleaning station.



### OPS TIKTOK

917.3K VIEWS

A video demonstrating sifting for plastic on east O'ahu.

TOP POST OF THE YEAR

## MOST ENGAGING TWEETS OF 2021



Oceanic Preservation Society / OPS  
@OP\_Society

The ivory-billed woodpecker, along with 22 other species of birds, fish, mussels and other wildlife, is set to be declared extinct and removed from the endangered species list.



cnn.com

Nearly two dozen species of birds, fish and other wildlife are set to be declared...  
The ivory-billed woodpecker, along with 22 other species of birds, fish, mussels and other wildlife, is set to be declared extinct and removed from the ...

### OPS TWITTER

1,529 ENGAGEMENTS  
132,512 IMPRESSIONS



Racing Extinction  
@RacingXtinction

The Okavango is a source of life, providing the main source of water for nearly 1 million Indigenous and local people and some of the planet's most majestic wildlife, including critically endangered species. And it's all at risk.



washingtonpost.com

Opinion | Protect the Okavango River Basin from corporate drilling  
This African region is far more valuable in its natural state than any oil and gas reserves buried beneath it.

### RACING EXTINCTION TWITTER

1,008 ENGAGEMENTS  
32,683 IMPRESSIONS





# Education & Outreach



## Podcasts and Webinars

The OPS team has been featured on podcasts and webinars, expanding our audience and diversifying the many ways that we can reach a global community and convert the interest in our films to action.

In 2021, the OPS team was featured on at least eight podcasts, webinars, or virtual panels, engaging with scientists, activists, artists, and innovators to share our story, how films can change the world, our thoughts on the most critical issues facing our planet, and solutions.

**Since 2016, over 50,000 teachers have downloaded the curriculum, reaching over 2.3 million students in the classroom.**

## Teaching Guides and Curricula

To accompany our film, *Racing Extinction*, Discovery Education and Vulcan Productions partnered to create four dynamic, interactive classroom lessons that engage high school students on the importance of biodiversity to our planet. Aligned to Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core State Standards, each lesson features video clips from the acclaimed documentary, bringing the excitement of the documentary directly into the classroom. Since 2016, over 50,000 teachers have downloaded the curriculum, reaching over 2.3 million students in the classroom.



## Classroom Q&As

Even as the world turns to more virtual engagement, OPS has always taken the time to engage with students inside and outside the classroom. To share our knowledge, experiences, and hope for the future is one of the greatest privileges that we do not take for granted. Louie and the members of the OPS team have conducted classroom Q&As to K-12 institutions and universities to support our commitment to the next generation.

As the pandemic took hold, OPS worked to increase access to our films and teaching materials to offer additional resources to teachers and students in the classroom, including the offering of free screening links for OPS films for K-12 schools. In 2021, the OPS team engaged in five student Q&A sessions, including with MUN IMPACT (Model UN), the National Biodiversity Teach-in, and Biola University, reaching students around the world.

### Q&A Event on *Racing Extinction* with the Oceanic Preservation Society December 5th, 2021 @15:00 UTC



**Louie Psihoyos**  
Oscar-winning director



**Leilani Münter**  
Award-winning Race Car Driver  
and Environmental Activist



**Courtney Vail**  
OPS Campaign Director





## Educational Murals

In addition to OPS Feature Artist Kelly Quinn's vibrant paintings, OPS was able to provide financial support for her educational mural and outreach project in Miami, Florida. Entitled *Sea of Connections*, this multi-phase mural project features coral and marine life on the walls of iPrep Academy in Miami.

The mural includes embedded NFC tags which connect to a backend knowledge base – a unique innovation that enables students and passersby alike to tap into information about the species and ocean ecosystems featured in the mural.

Stay tuned for more information about our collaborative campaign with Kelly and Canvas of the Wild – we are working to support more murals in more locations to reach more communities in 2022.

## Educational Screenings

OPS received 150 screening requests for *Racing Extinction*, and 18 for *The Cove*. With the arrival of the pandemic, OPS offered free screening links for K-12 educational institutions in 2021.

## Keynotes

OPS films inspired a Canadian high school teacher to create a network of over 100 Canadian educators who are now teaching about animal protection in their schools. He organized a virtual conference (Educators for Animals Canadian Conference) in August where OPS Executive Director was featured as the keynote speaker.

## Website

We streamlined our website and added exciting new content, including more information on our impact campaign work and a new action center where supporters can take key steps to address critical issues.



# Acknowledgements

Our mission is to inspire, empower and connect a global community using high impact films and visual storytelling to expose the most critical issues facing our planet. In 2021, our cause partnerships provided fuel for our operations and energized our campaigns by donating a percentage of their profits to OPS.

We take this opportunity to thank all our fiscal sponsors and passionate supporters for their belief in our mission, our films, and our campaigns. You made it possible to continue our work to bring the most powerful documentaries to the world in 2021 and beyond! Together, we can change the world. Won't you join us?

## Foundations, Charitable Organizations and Trusts

Bright Funds Foundation  
Holtzman Wildlife Foundation  
JP's Peace, Love & Happiness Foundation  
Legaseas  
Marshall Carroll Charitable Fund  
May's Family Charitable Fund  
Minderoo Foundation  
Morgan Family Foundation  
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Operation Diana  
Our Turn Productions  
Parley for the Oceans  
Perkins Coie Foundation  
Pledgeling Foundation  
Robbins Family Foundation  
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Sindisa Sanctuary  
The Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation  
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The Lindemann Foundation  
Vulcan Productions

## Individual High Donors\*

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Titan Mechanical  
Whole Foods Community Giving

\*Individuals who donated more than \$500 to OPS. If we missed your name, please contact us at [info@opsociety.org](mailto:info@opsociety.org) so that we can acknowledge you!





**“OPS inspires, empowers, and connects  
a global community using high impact  
films and visual storytelling to expose  
the most critical issues facing our planet.”**



[www.opsociety.org](http://www.opsociety.org)

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