



 **ops:** OCEANIC
PRESERVATION
SOCIETY

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT
2023



LETTER FROM THE TEAM

“NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD. IN FACT, IT’S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS.”

-MARGARET MEAD

If you’ve been following our work over the years, you’ve most likely heard us share this quote before. It speaks to the heart of Oceanic Preservation Society. It is what we strive to do and what we strive to inspire in others. We won’t sugarcoat it. The stakes are high. Species we have barely had the opportunity to know are slipping through our fingers. In an incredibly short period of time, human-caused issues have impacted everything from the increasingly contaminated air we breathe to the behaviors and mass migrations of megafauna. Our continued exploitation of natural resources threatens the only home we’ve ever known.

It will take all of us. Every single person reading this has a unique skill that can be used to fight the degradation we have caused. We also all have different groups of people in our lives who we can spread awareness to and empower to take action. As OPS Founder and Executive Director put it, **“when you’re talking about losing all of nature, it’s not a spectator sport anymore.”** Everyone has to be an activist.

We’re grateful for every action, contribution, and word of support you’ve given us this year. It drives our small team and gives us hope that we can conserve the incredible biodiversity this planet holds before it’s too late.



OUR FILMS

FILMS ARE A WEAPON OF MASS CONSTRUCTION

A film is a powerful weapon for change. Our films expose, educate, and empower a global community of activists fighting to protect our fragile planet. OPS lays the foundation for tipping points of social change.

Our first film, *The Cove* (2009), became the first documentary to sweep all the film guilds. It won over 70 awards from Sundance to an Academy Award. More importantly, it kickstarted a movement and countless activists' journeys towards ending the cruelty cetaceans face at the hands of the captive cetacean industry. Due to the activism around the film, the killing of small cetaceans has been reduced around the coastlines of Japan and the mission to keep cetaceans wild has gone international.

Our second film, *Racing Extinction* (2015), was a documentary about the Anthropocene and the urgency of the worldwide extinction crisis. Alongside the release of this film, we projected incredible images of endangered species and the natural world onto the Empire State Building, United Nations, and The Vatican, reaching billions of people worldwide as these events were livestreamed. It spread the message that we cannot be bystanders to mass extinction caused by human impact and that we all must rise up and become activists.

Our third film, *The Game Changers* (2019), is about the virtues of a plant-based diet for athletic performance. In the first 30-days the documentary was on Netflix, Google searches for "plant-based diet" went up 350% worldwide. A recent survey by Merrill Lynch found that over 75% of the recent interest in plant-based diets were attributed to our film.

Our fourth film, *Mission: Joy* (2021), which explored the friendship and wisdom of two of our generation's greatest spiritual leaders, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, has been seen by tens of millions of people and has been shown to over 40,000 prisoners. In 2022, OPS participated in the public release of *Mission: Joy* simulcast for free viewing across the globe. Over 2.2 Million people viewed the film in less than 24 hours.

At the beginning of 2024, OPS will release its next series *You Are What You Eat: A Twin Experiment*. The Netflix series focuses on eight identical twins undergoing a Stanford nutrition study comparing omnivore and plant-based diets. Visionary scientists, elite doctors, and expert fitness coaches analyze the twins' physical changes throughout the study using advanced medical technology — to ultimately discover how different diets impact individuals with the same DNA. It is our goal to show how what we eat impacts our health and the health of the planet.

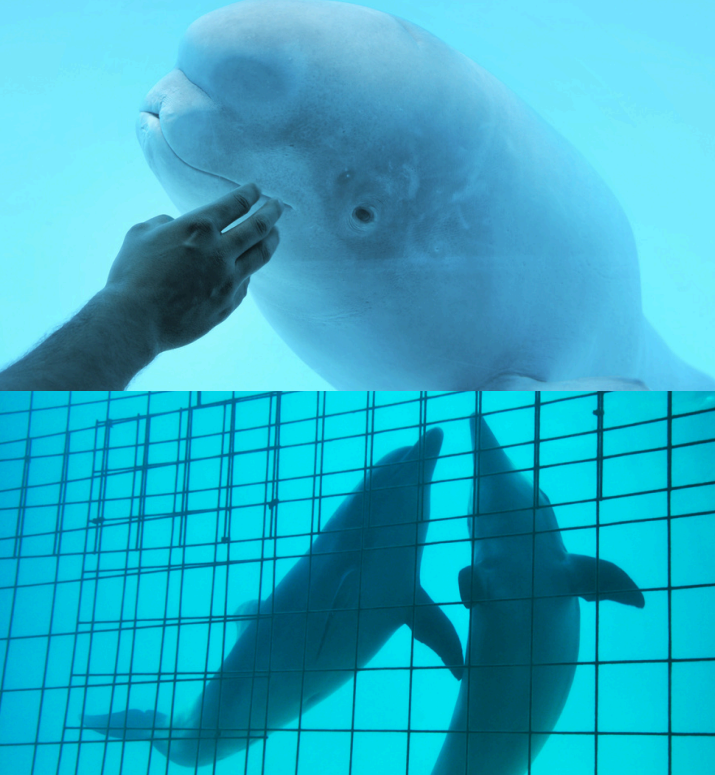
At the end of 2024, OPS will release its next film, *The Last Place on Earth*. The film crew spent much of the last five years working tirelessly in the field in Indonesia to collect footage that we hope will help save an area of rich biodiversity and the last place on earth where orangutans, rhinos, tigers, and elephants still roam freely in the wild.





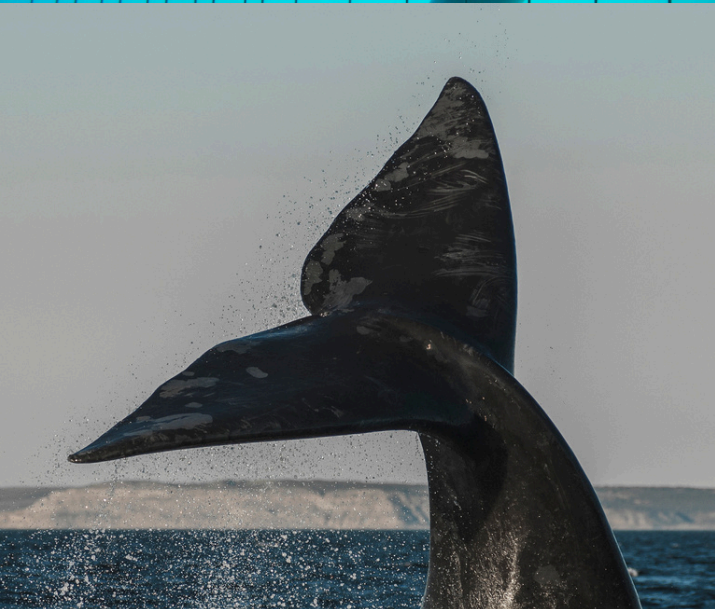
CAMPAIGNS & COLLABORATIONS

After our films are released to the world, our campaign work begins. OPS takes pride in bringing together a diverse group of individuals, organizations, and activists to collaborate and amplify the work being done to combat the issues featured in our films. We believe it is vital that we get the public actively involved in changing the planet for the better and we strive to give them the best tools to do just that.



SAY NO TO THE DOLPHIN SHOW

In addition to our ongoing efforts to shed light on the reality behind this captive dolphin industry, this year OPS endorsed the SWIMS Act which aims to end the future capture and breeding of multiple cetacean species in the USA by amending both the US Marine Mammal Protection Act and Animal Welfare Act. We also joined our partners to urge the UK to consider introducing legislation to prohibit cetacean captivity. The UK has not held dolphins in captivity for a few decades, but has never formally banned the practice. An official ban would solidify their stance and send a message to other countries to follow suit.



CRUCIAL MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTION

As part of the MMPA Coalition, OPS stood with our partners to oppose numerous and frequent pieces of legislation that aimed to further threaten some of the country's most endangered marine mammals, particularly the critically endangered Rice's whale and critically endangered North Atlantic right whale. OPS also supported a proposed rule to list the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin as an Endangered Species under the Endangered Species Act.



COMMERCIAL WHALING IN ICELAND

The year 2023 was a rollercoaster for Iceland's commercial whaling industry and a big focus for our team. OPS encouraged the Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries to not renew whaling permits and investigate the industry's serious animal welfare concerns during the 2022 whaling season. Our team also urged hundreds of thousands of international supporters to submit testimony to the Icelandic Parliament in favor of legislation that could finally ban commercial whaling in the country. We also made new allies on the frontlines to coordinate future campaign strategies to end Iceland's commercial whaling for good.



ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

As part of our ongoing efforts to combat wildlife trafficking, OPS continued to educate the public on how to avoid wildlife products, particularly those being sold under deceptive names in food, cosmetics, and souvenirs. Wildlife products are often purposefully mislabeled or intentionally vague, leading consumers to unknowingly purchase and participate in the consumption of endangered species. Education and awareness are key to ending the unintentional demand for these items.



RELIST WOLVES

In support of the #RelistWolves movement, OPS campaigned for Interior Secretary Haaland to take swift action to restore federal protections to all wolves by issuing an emergency relisting for Northern Rocky wolf populations under the Endangered Species Act.

Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana still allow the inhumane slaughter of wolves despite the critical ecological role this important species plays.



ENDANGERED SPECIES COALITION

As an active member of the Endangered Species Coalition, our team helped combat a constant stream of legislative efforts to undermine the Endangered Species Act and further imperil numerous species already in need of the most protection like the lesser prairie-chicken and the northern long-eared bat.



WILDLIFE KILLING CONTESTS

As part of the National Coalition to End Wildlife Killing Contests, OPS continued to oppose wildlife killing contests that target native wildlife. This year we were thrilled with the passing of two pieces of legislation that prohibited these unnecessary and harmful events in both Oregon and New York.



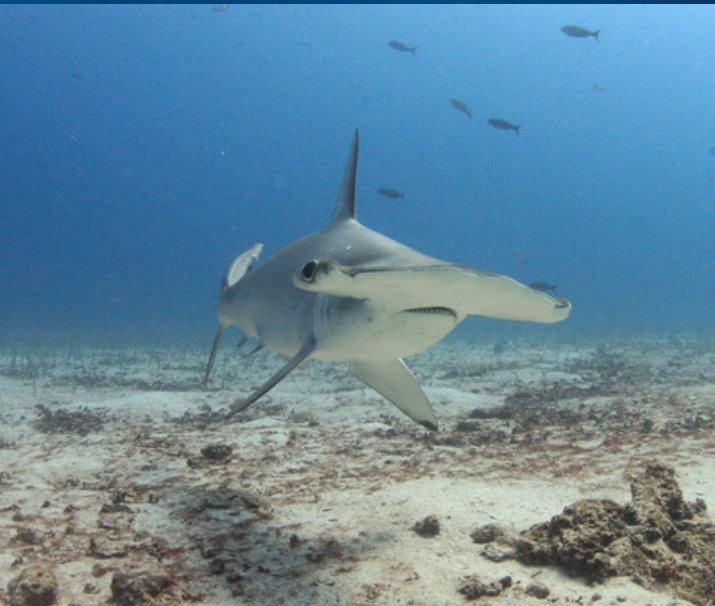
FLY WITHOUT FINS

Through collaboration with Shark Guardian on the Fly Without Fins campaign, OPS continued to pressure numerous airlines to commit to not allowing shark fins to be transported in their planes' cargo. Over 50 airlines from all over the world have banned shark fins from their cargo so far and we won't stop until all airlines agree to fly without fins.



STOP FINNING EU

OPS continued its support of the movement to ban the trade of shark fins in the European Union as it moved through the legislative process. We also amplified action alerts for public hearings and testimony. There is still work to do but we remain hopeful that it will pass, greatly hindering the shark fin trade and protecting countless sharks from a cruel death.



SHARK CONSERVATION IN THE UK

The OPS-endorsed Shark Fins Act was finally enacted in the United Kingdom. The law successfully prohibited the import and export of detached shark fins, including all products containing shark fins such as tinned shark fin soup. Our team also helped obtain signatures for a petition to UK Parliament to prevent shark meat from being sold under misleading names, a practice that has allowed for seafood consumers to unknowingly eat shark meat.



NETS OUT NOW

OPS joined the Nets Out Now Coalition to stand against the use of shark nets and lethal drumlines in Australia. The use of both have proven to be cruel, outdated, and ineffective at preventing shark bites. They also injure and kill whales, dolphins, turtles, dugongs, and many other wildlife species. Recently, our team helped gather signatures for two petitions attempting to remove these destructive shark nets from Australian waters.



GILLNET FISHING IN CALIFORNIA

Following up on our successful efforts to help end drift gillnet fishing in California, OPS testified at a California Marine Resource Committee hearing in support of establishing offshore management measures to prevent bycatch in the California Set Gillnet fishery. The fishery has one of the highest discard rates on the West Coast, including multiple shark species, sea birds, marine mammals, and sea turtles.



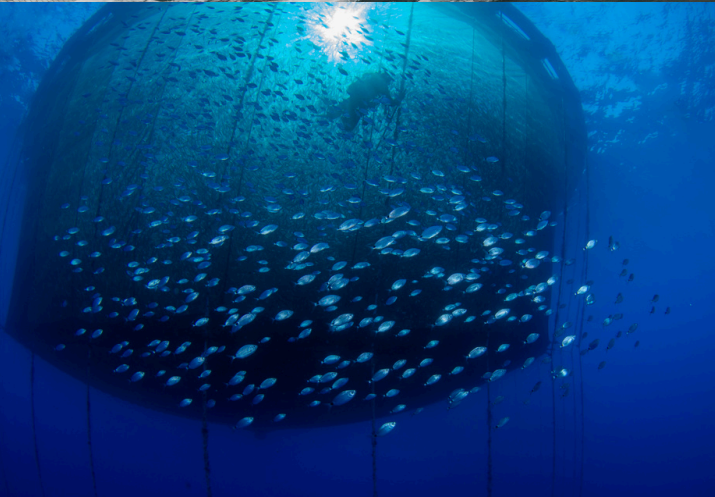
OCTOPUS FARMING

With Spain attempting to open the world's first commercial octopus farm, OPS helped gather signatures for a petition to prohibit the cruel practice. We also endorsed a letter asking supporters of the proposed Nueva Pescanova octopus farm to cease their involvement. Octopus have proven to be incredibly intelligent and unsuitable for captivity and farming. OPS believes the allowance of one octopus farm will lead to others and must be stopped.



FISH FREE

OPS took part in the annual Fish Free February campaign, urging our supporters whose food security allows to forgo seafood for the entire month of February. Our joint follow-up campaign Fish Free Fridays continued throughout the year to further encourage the switch to plant-based seafood options.



FISH FARMS

Our team worked hard to educate the public on the fact that not all aquaculture is created equal. Through our work with Don't Cage Our Oceans, OPS continued to combat the expansion of industrial offshore finfish farms which threaten endangered species and alter marine mammal behavior. By utilizing social media, we spread awareness about salmon fish farms' unsustainable use of fish meal.

THE FIGHT AGAINST FOSSIL FUELS

The use of fossil fuels remains one of our team's biggest environmental concerns and constant battles. Among our efforts in 2023, we pushed for Congress to zero out funding for Federal Oil and Gas Programs. We joined our strategic partners in imploring the Biden Administration to direct the Department of the Interior to enact a declining rate of federal oil and gas production under the Mineral Leasing Act to near-zero by 2030. We joined Indigenous peoples, frontline communities, environmental justice groups, and multiple organizations in a letter to President Biden to unequivocally reject all legislative efforts to promote fossil fuels and reject all calls to weaken the country's core environmental laws.

We endorsed the March To End Fossil Fuels and joined hundreds of organizations in a letter to the Biden Administration on the urgent need to phase out fossil fuels to tackle the climate emergency. Over 75,000 people joined the March making it the largest demonstration pressuring Biden since he took office and the largest climate mobilization since the start of the pandemic.

DOLPHIN DRIVE HUNTS

In 2023, OPS continued its work to bring the Faroe Islands' hunts of long-finned pilot whales and small cetaceans, known as the grindadrap, to an end. We provided our supporters with updates on the hunts and supplied them with constructive ways to take action including sending over 5,000 individual e-mails to the Faroese government. To debunk some of the main justifications that the Faroese use to continue the hunts, OPS joined forces with some of our strategic partners to publish the report [Unraveling the truth: Whale killing in the Faroe Islands](#).

OPS also continued its work in support of ending Taiji's infamous drive fishery which is featured in our Academy Award-winning documentary *The Cove*. The fishery targets nine cetacean species in Japan which are then selected for sale into the captive dolphin industry or slaughtered. Our team supported the growing movement of Japanese activists who are taking action against the fishery and the work of Project Anima, an organization which seeks to [form new traditions between cetaceans and the Japanese people](#).

Unravelling the truth: *Whale killing in the Faroe Islands*



THROUGH OUR ACTION CENTER, OUR SUPPORTERS WERE ABLE TO

SEND 5,000+ LETTERS TO THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT TO URGE THEM TO END COMMERCIAL WHALING FOR GOOD

SEND 9,000+ MESSAGES TO UNITED AIRLINES, ASKING THEM TO PROHIBIT THE TRANSPORT OF SHARK FINS IN THEIR CARGO

SEND 7,000+ LETTERS TO THE FAROESE GOVERNMENT TO STOP WHALE AND DOLPHIN HUNTS



THROUGH OUR SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS, WE SUPPLIED OPS SUPPORTERS WITH THE TOOLS TO:



TELL MISLEADING "SUSTAINABLE" SEAFOOD LABELS TO REFORM THEIR STANDARDS



CALL FOR THE HALT OF A PLANNED LUXURY HOME DEVELOPMENT IN ONE OF LOS ANGELES' LAST WILD SPACES WHICH CURRENTLY HOUSES MULTIPLE ENDANGERED AND NATIVE SPECIES



TESTIFY IN SUPPORT OF ENDING THE HARMFUL COLLECTION OF AQUARIUM FISH IN HAWAII



GIVE UP SEAFOOD ON FRIDAYS AS PART OF OUR FISH FREE FRIDAY CAMPAIGN



ENCOURAGE CRUISE LINES TO END THEIR PARTNERSHIPS WITH SWIM-WITH-DOLPHIN PROGRAMS AND DOLPHINARIUMS



JOIN A VARIETY OF PROTESTS AROUND THE WORLD INCLUDING A MARCH TO END FOSSIL FUELS AND AN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT TO EMPTY THE TANKS OF CAPTIVE CETACEANS



EDUCATION & OUTREACH

For years, OPS has worked with artists, teachers, and coalitions to make sure preserving wildlife and a healthy environment are considered crucial elements of educating the next stewards of the planet.



1,000 DRONES WITH A MESSAGE



As part of our production company Projecting Change, we launched the first drone show of its kind to kick-off Climate Week and send a strong message to world leaders. We lit up the sky above the UN Building in NYC with a series of shows designed to inspire, educate, unify, and activate our local and global collective around the climate crisis, protecting the Amazon and other important environmental campaigns.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



- In the hopes of inspiring the next generation of activists, OPS continued to offer screenings of our documentary films *Racing Extinction* and *The Cove* to K-12 educators for free. Our accompanying free educational curricula helped students dive even deeper into the issues.
- OPS published multiple informative blogs throughout the year to provide the public with access to important information on issues like industrial fish farms and misleading names for shark meat.
- OPS team members took part in numerous educational presentations and webinars, and assisted in school projects to inspire the next generation of activists!

Hello Natalie,
Thank you so much for our meeting, you gave us a bunch of information about illegal dolphins and shark trade. You were very helpful and it was very fun to talk to you. We feel very proud putting you in our presentation as a person we interviewed.

Once again thank you for your support, we are very grateful to meet you. We hope you continue protecting the marine life.

ISLA students.

From: 6th grade ISLA

To: NATALIE

Ocean Preservation Society



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



- OPS supported a movement created by the young activist Olivia Mandle who is petitioning the Spanish President Pedro Sánchez and General Director of Animal Rights Sergio García Torres to ban dolphinariums in all of Spain.
- We provided the opportunity for members of the public to host a screening of our films in their community for their friends, family, and neighbors.
- Back by popular demand! With our partners Canvas Of The Wild, we made more of the Sea Of Connections Coloring Book "Color Your Way Through Florida's Coastal Waters." It has 62 hand-illustrated pages filled with fun facts on each of the 6 habitats it explores with all proceeds going towards the creation of interactive and educational murals focused on nature and biodiversity.

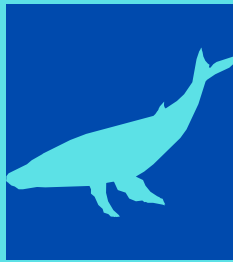
EDUCATION & OUTREACH



As part of our Sea Of Connections campaign, we participated in the Endangered Species Coalition's movement to create a series of murals that feature endangered species across the USA in recognition of the importance of the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act.

Artist Kelly Quinn painted a mangrove ecosystem highlighting the critically endangered smalltooth sawfish in St. Petersburg, Florida. For International Sawfish Day, we were joined by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries members to talk to the public about this irreplaceable species and ecosystem.





FRONTLINE ACTIVIST SUPPORT

As fellow frontline activists, we know that it can be some of the most difficult and rewarding work. We do our best to support other frontline efforts to help scale up their actions for an even greater impact.





WOLF CONFLICT REDUCTION FUND IN COLORADO

Following the reintroduction of wolves in Colorado, we followed up our support of the movement by contributing to the Wolf Conflict Reduction Fund (WCRF). The WCRF supports Colorado State University's Center for Human Carnivore Coexistence and Rocky Mountain Wolf Project (headed by our very own Courtney Vail) to implement on-the-ground, non-lethal tools to assist livestock producers and local communities in regions with wolves. Mitigating these conflicts is vital to the ultimate success of Colorado's rewilding effort.



LAST WHALING STATION IN ICELAND

We extended support to one of our campaign partners in Iceland. The Last Whaling Station team is on the frontlines of the effort to end Iceland's commercial whaling. With our contribution, they were able to hold a whale gala with 20+ Icelandic musicians and artists and 800+ attendees, conduct public awareness campaigns to pressure the Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries not to allow whaling, and create 15 short films that appeared in a leading news outlet with leading Icelandic artists, writers, musicians, influencers, thought leaders and scientists talking about the need to end whaling.



PROJECT ANIMA

In 2023, we continued our support of Project Anima, a movement started by Leina Sato with the goal of creating the first rehabilitation/release/retirement center in Japan for cetaceans previously held in captivity. The project utilizes music, art, and ritual to engage and build connections with Japanese citizens, authorities, and policymakers. Project Anima holds an annual ceremony in Taiji to honor the cetaceans who lost their lives in the town's infamous drive fishery featured in our film *The Cove*. This year's ceremony was attended by Leina's own children and it's beautifully described on our blog.

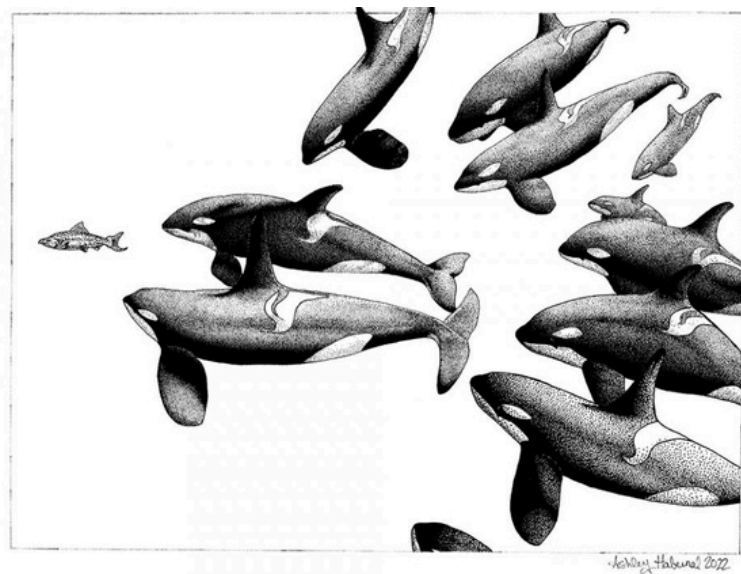


OPS FEATURE ARTISTS

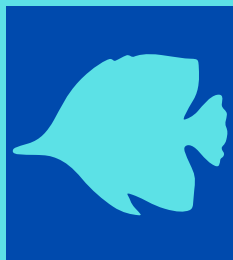
Our OPS Feature Artist program highlights artists who use their talents to motivate and ignite the activist in each of us. This year, we featured two incredible “artists” from different corners of the world.



Stefán Yngvi is an ethical illustrator and activist. Rooted deeply in conservation ethos, his artwork combines conservation messages with powerful visuals, compelling the viewer to not just see, but to feel and act. Growing up in Iceland, by the Atlantic Ocean, profoundly shaped him. “The ocean shaped who I am as a person, and the ocean’s health will shape our planet’s future.” In 2017 he started combining his art with activism and since 2019 he has been working as a full-time artist and supporting organizations and nonprofits, driving a purposeful mission that resonates with many.



Ashley Habernal is a self-taught wildlife artist residing in Ontario, Canada. She works in several mediums, but her favorite and signature method of creation is stippling with fine liner pens. She has a special interest in depicting marine megafauna such as whales and sharks. Ashley loves to use her work to connect the viewer to the wildlife with whom we share our planet and to promote conservation causes. She is always learning and loves to experiment with new mediums and methods.



SOCIAL MEDIA

With over 1.6 million supporters over our various social media pages, we have the opportunity to empower individuals to take tangible action on issues that are a vital component to the success of our campaigns.



LET'S MAKE VIRAL WAVES OF CHANGE



20,702

TIKTOK
FOLLOWERS

245,260

OPS
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS

216,681

RACING EXTINCTION
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS

50,578

OPS TWITTER
FOLLOWERS

38,360

RACING EXTINCTION
TWITTER FOLLOWERS

175,934

OPS FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS

210,394

RACING EXTINCTION
FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS

625,599

THE COVE
FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS



The OPS Team continued to use our social media channels as a way to educate and encourage action. Our informative posts on cetacean captivity, whale activism, and endangered species were seen and interacted with by tens of hundreds of people in 2023.

NOTABLE NUMBERS

26,000

NEW FOLLOWERS ON RE & OPS
INSTAGRAM

75%+

RE & OPS FACEBOOK REACH
COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

620%+

INCREASE IN OUR OPS INSTAGRAM
REACH COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

111%+

RE & OPS CONTENT INTERACTIONS
COMPARED TO LAST YEAR ON FB &
IG

OUR NEWEST CHANNEL: TIKTOK

1,302K NEW FOLLOWERS

458K VIDEO LIKES

Our top video was viewed over **345k times** and brought in new individuals who were previously unexposed to the issues we're working on.

TOP POSTS OF 2023



Highlighting the plastic found in a sperm whale's stomach

5 MILLION VIEWS
OPS INSTAGRAM



Sharing new findings that scientists have discovered about trees

442,000 VIEWS
RACING EXTINCTION INSTAGRAM



Highlighting the negative impacts sport fishing can have on sharks

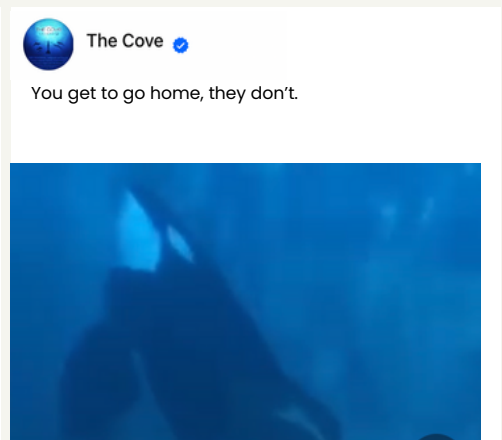
1.3 MILLION VIEWS
OPS INSTAGRAM



REACHED 33K+ PEOPLE
RACING EXTINCTION
FACEBOOK



REACHED 38K+ PEOPLE
OPS FACEBOOK



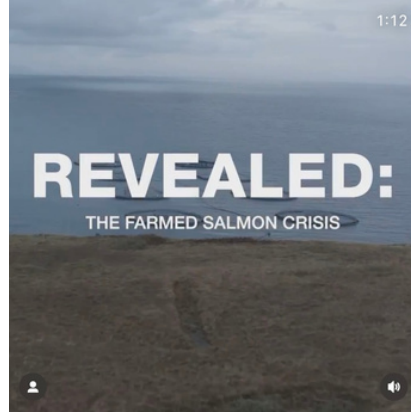
REACHED 243K+ PEOPLE
THE COVE FACEBOOK



133K+ IMPRESSIONS
RACING EXTINCTION TWITTER

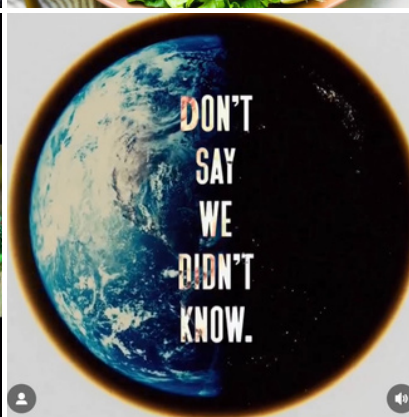


12K+ IMPRESSIONS
OPS TWITTER



THEMES OF 2023

Core messaging from our channels in 2023:
Animal rights, animal agriculture, adopting plant based diets, plastic pollution, ending cetacean captivity, ending whaling, protecting wolves, consumerism, overfishing, and bycatch.



For the planet,

