

impact report: protecting marine life around the world



Photo: Andrea Spence / © IFAW

A recently stranded common dolphin receiving treatment from the Marine Mammal Rescue and Research (MMRR) team.

“Our team encounters marine mammals affected by fishing gear entanglements, ocean noise, vessel collisions, and climate change. If we don’t act now, these threats facing marine life will lead to species extinction and will have devastating effects on our planet.”

— Brian Sharp, Director – Marine Mammal Rescue and Research

conservation and clean harbours in Canada

Earlier this year, we reached out to you about the countless problems marine animals face daily: entanglement in fishing gear, collisions with ships, ocean noise pollution, marine plastics, and climate change, just to name a few. We told you how human actions are constantly responsible for needlessly threatening and putting at risk some of our planet’s most endangered species.

Since that time, your support for this cause has allowed us to make headway on every single one of these issues. Tremendous success has been achieved in tackling the above-mentioned concerns through political actions, technological advances, innovative solutions, and the hard work of many dedicated people. Most notably, you. None of this would have been possible without your continued efforts over the past year. Thank YOU.

One exciting project that you supported is Clean Harbours Initiative

(CHI) in Canada. With support from Environment and Climate Change Canada, we partnered with CHI to clean up the harbours around Newfoundland of the marine plastic debris that plagues some of the greatest mammals in our planet’s largest ecosystem. From April to July 2021, the eight cleanups conducted by CHI yielded an estimated 15,127 lbs. of marine debris from harbours in Newfoundland.

The marine debris consisted of discarded fishing nets, abandoned crab pots and lobster traps, broken and abandoned plastic buoys, plastic fish pans, rope, plastic bags, PVC pipe, vinyl siding, shingles, plastic containers, food wrappers, bleach bottles and so much more.

This incredible, ongoing clean-up is only possible thanks to every single generous and devoted person who supports us. We couldn’t have done this without you.



© Clean Harbours Initiative

Shawn Booth of the Clean Harbours Initiative standing next to a day’s haul from one of our cleanups.

now down to the details

300+

Number of rescue calls our team responded to between January and June of this year.

8

Number of cleanups Clean Harbours Initiative has conducted since April.

113

Tires pulled from the harbours of Newfoundland, Canada alone.

15,127

Pounds of marine debris removed from the water by CHI.

10

Percent reduction of pollutant gases emitted when ships slow to 75% of their design speed.

9

Number of species the IFAW’s MMRR team responded to in 2021, including minke whales, common dolphins, white-sided dolphins, harbour porpoises, bottlenose dolphins, a long-finned pilot whale, gray seals, harp seals, and harbour seals.



Brian Sharp (left), Director of the MMRR team releasing a dolphin back into the ocean.

remarkable rescues

Our MMRR team has had a busy year, even by their incredibly high standards. Only halfway through the year, they had already responded to over 300 rescue calls, averaging close to two a day. No matter the day of the week or what the time is, they are always ready to jump into action at a moment's notice to help any

dolphin, porpoise, seal, or whale in need.

Not everyone can do what they do – it takes many hours of training and a dedication to the mission at a capacity that is hard to fathom.

There is a reason that they are the busiest and most experienced team in the world doing this work.



The IFAW MMRR team relocating a recently stranded dolphin.



Map showing the movement and tracking data of a rescued and released harbour porpoise from April to June.

However, while everybody may not have the opportunity to make a direct impact like our rescue team, that doesn't mean that someone cannot provide just as much value to the overall goal. You are the reason our team was able to purchase a UAV (drone) system in June that will be used to get specific measurements

during whale responses. This is so that an injured animal's weight can be estimated for administering the correct amounts of pharmaceuticals, making this very difficult task significantly easier. Thank you.



© New England Aquarium/Taken under permit authorized by NOAA

A right whale with a suction cup satellite tag at the surface of the water as a tanker ship sails by in the background.

under the sea (noise)

Ocean noise pollution is one of the biggest issues affecting marine life around the globe, yet it's still a problem most people know little about. Underwater noise-generating activities (like maritime transport: cruises, cargo ships, etc.) have a very negative impact on biodiversity. Depending on the ship, the sound made can be as deafening as a twin-engine fighter jet at takeoff. To combat this, we are advocating to implement slower ship speeds. This will not only reduce ocean noise, but also minimize greenhouse gas emission and prevent ship strikes.

For several months, IFAW has been working with government officials all over the world to implement stronger legislation that minimizes ocean noise pollution. We've worked in partnership with the French government (French Ecological Transition Ministry and Ministry of the Sea) to produce a collection of infographics explaining the harmful effects of noise pollution and

illustrating the efforts carried out by stakeholders from the relevant sectors to mitigate this threat.

In addition to causing ocean noise pollution, these ships are producing astounding amounts of gas pollutants. IFAW participated on an expert panel with the Belgian Government to discuss two reports we co-published on the benefits of slow steaming for the shipping industry. These studies found that limiting ships to 75% of design speed results in a 10% reduction of the main pollutant gases emitted and a meaningful reduction in underwater noise. In short, slower ships produce less ocean noise, less pollution, and were less likely to be involved in a whale collision. After working for months to gain interest and traction on the topic, we had a huge win when underwater noise was added to the agenda and work program of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) 76 to be discussed internationally.

there's an app for that

Every day, we see instances where human development has a detrimental impact on the animals of that region. These instances are not reserved for land alone. In our rivers, oceans, and waterways, the expansion of development has led to the decline in marine animal populations. This is most dangerous for whale populations, whose feeding areas, breeding regions, and migratory routes coincide with busy shipping routes and can lead to deadly ship strikes. This kind of collision can result in severe injury and painful death. That's why we've launched the **Whale Alert mobile app**.

This is a free, IFAW-owned app that brings citizen science to the everyday boater, family and larger vessel crews. The app enables users to safely track sightings of whales and report them to authorities and other vessels, helping nearby ships make better decisions for both their vessel

speed and vertical line-fishing placement. This, in turn, will reduce the risk of collisions and entanglements.

Your support is responsible for getting this incredible app designed, and it also gives you the chance to directly provide lifesaving information.

**So remember:
see.
report.
save.**



Whale Alert mobile app.



The MMRR team releasing dolphins back into the ocean.

IFAW acknowledges the Traditional owners of country throughout Australia and the Oceania region and their connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.