

# LAND WATER OCEAN US



CANADIAN  
OCEAN  
LITERACY  
COALITION

## A CANADIAN OCEAN LITERACY STRATEGY

2021-2024



# About COLC

The Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition (COLC) is an alliance of organizations, networks, institutions, communities, and individuals working together to better understand and advance ocean literacy in Canada. COLC launched in September 2018 at the Oceans Inspiration Expo, as part of the G7 Ministerial Meetings in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Since inception, COLC has functioned as an independent national project office with an administrative home at the [Canadian Museum of Nature](#). Serving as a neutral convening entity across regions and sectors in Canada, COLC's initial project was to lead a Canada-wide research initiative to better understand Canadians' varying relationships with the ocean and to understand how ocean literacy is understood and practiced across the country.

In June 2020, COLC published the final regional and national reports of the *Understanding Ocean Literacy in Canada* study, establishing the first research baseline of ocean literacy in Canada. *Land, Water, Ocean, Us: A Canadian Ocean Literacy Strategy* and the accompanying *Implementation Plan: Pathways for Collaboration* are directly built on the findings of this study, and have been co-developed in the original spirit of COLC's community-driven, regionally-focused mandate. As of April 2021, COLC will continue to operate as an independent national project office with a new administrative home at [Ocean Networks Canada](#). To learn more about COLC's work, visit [www.colcoalition.ca](http://www.colcoalition.ca)

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## COLC's New Logo

At the time of COLC's launch, the original logo was developed with four blue arcs encircling a red maple leaf. These blue arcs represent Canada's three ocean coastlines - Atlantic, Arctic, Pacific - as well as the extensive 'inland' coastline stretching along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The largest arc at the top of the logo represents the Arctic coastline, which accounts for 50% of Canada's coastline overall.

Moving forward, COLC's logo appears with a braided stream of blue running through the centre of the maple leaf. This addition is in recognition of the complex, interconnected freshwater systems that form the heart of inland Canada, and through which every Canadian, regardless of where they live, is connected to the ocean.

# FOREWORD (AND FORWARD)

## DEAR READER,

Whatever the circumstances that have led you here, there is a good chance you are looking to answer at least one of three questions: What really is ocean literacy? Is this Strategy relevant for me? How can I help? If any of these questions resonate, keep reading. You've come to the right place.

*Land, Water, Ocean, Us: A Canadian Ocean Literacy Strategy* and the accompanying *Implementation Plan: Pathways for Collaboration* were built by Canadians, for Canadians. Over the past two and a half years, I have seen this project grow from a handful of individuals coming together informally to share ocean literacy initiatives and best practices, to an established community of well over 400 organizations. Thousands of Canadians have supported this work along the way, and it is their voices that are the driving forces in the Strategy before you. This truly co-developed document is a testament to our shared commitment to collaboration, transparency, knowledge sharing, relationship building, and listening. Perhaps most importantly, it is a testament to hope – which, as environmental scholar David Orr reminds us, “is a verb with its sleeves rolled up.”

Suffice it to say, we've seen a lot of rolled-up sleeves over the past couple years.

The collective wave of momentum behind this project has been a constant source of inspiration for our small-but-mighty national project office of two core staff and an all-women research team of postdocs and graduate students. The Coalition has been guided by a National Advisory Council and well supported by an extensive list of partnering professors, universities, consultants, funders, and numerous other contributing institutions, networks, communities, and individuals. The cornerstone of this work, however, is in the extraordinary engagement of Canadians in every step of this process, from breathing life into the Coalition in its early days to sharing precious time, energy, and expertise, to launching the Strategy and Implementation Plan out into the world. This truly community-oriented co-development process remains the most gratifying and profound legacy of COLC's work to date.

At the crux of this project is, of course, that fundamental question. The question that, cumulatively, collectively, collaboratively, we have spent hundreds, if not thousands of hours trying to piece together. So, what really is ocean literacy? Is it a term? A practice? A way of knowing, being, or relating to the ocean?

The answer, resoundingly, is “all of the above.” Ocean literacy, inclusive of water and climate literacy, is a space of stories and relationships, a body of research, an angle for science,

cultural communication, and art. Ocean literacy is threaded through an active science and, increasingly, marine social sciences community, which can inform policy and resource management plans, as well as school curricula and workforce development. Ocean literacy is a potential tool for creating a touchpoint across all blue spaces and ocean sectors in Canada.

Ocean literacy, in short, can be a powerful means of providing a common yet dynamic framework for action that is focused on strengthening our relationship with the ocean and local waterways, with our communities, and with each other. By connecting these dots, we make possible community driven solutions that promote equitable opportunities—compelling us all to act with future ocean health and broader planetary well-being in mind.

As the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development kicks off (2021-2030), there is unprecedented attention on the global ocean, with strong intertwined currents pulling in multiple ways: ocean sustainability, conservation, and climate adaptation; ocean uses and growth of sustainable blue economies; ocean equity and ‘blue justice’; human and community health and well-being, and more. The Decade, perhaps most of all, provides a focused timeline and tangible opportunity to work and act together.

It is in this light that we offer the Canadian Ocean Literacy Strategy and Implementation Plan as a blueprint for advancing ocean literacy in Canada. However, as with any strategy, its value to society rests in the extent to which it is taken up and affects meaningful change. With this publication, we at the Coalition, along with our partners, mark the beginning of the shared work before us, of putting this Strategy into action. Moving into this next phase, we will only succeed if we continue to adapt to and include the voices, ideas, and pathways for collaboration that have yet to be heard.

Without a doubt, there will be challenges ahead. But the horizon is also full of fun and creative opportunities. With your help, we will roll up our sleeves, embrace hope, and mobilize to put this framework for action *into* action to improve ocean literacy for all present and future Canadians.

Forward we go, together.



LISA (DIZ) GLITHERO, PHD  
NATIONAL COORDINATOR

“Knowledge is power. As more Canadians learn about our changing oceans, we strengthen our collective ability to ensure they remain healthy. Healthy oceans have more to give – they feed more mouths, employ more people, and clean the air we breathe. I applaud the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition for their work on this important initiative. It is through projects like this that we get more people involved in our growing, sustainable Blue Economy, and deepen our understanding and our relationship to our oceans. That is what will empower Canadians to make choices that will keep our oceans thriving for generations to come.”

**HON. BERNADETTE JORDAN**  
MINISTER OF FISHERIES, OCEANS,  
AND THE CANADIAN COAST GUARD

“Over millennia, Inuit lived, breathed, and ate near or from the ocean and lived in relative harmony with animals and seasons. Inuit language interweaves values and numerous words for elements of the ocean that are based on thousands of years of experience, knowledge, and observations. As Canada moves forward on increasing ocean literacy for all, integrating Inuit and Indigenous knowledge can not only improve literacy, it can be a path towards shared values in ocean and coastal management and protection. The experience of climate change in the Arctic makes this integration all the more urgent.”

**MARY SIMON OC, OQ**  
INUIT RIGHTS ADVOCATE  
AND FORMER DIPLOMAT

“As a collaborating member since it began Ocean Networks Canada is delighted to become the administrative home of the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition. An initiative of the University of Victoria, Ocean Networks Canada supports Canadians from coast to coast to coast to #knowtheocean across science, society, and industry through ocean observing technology and data, for which ocean literacy is fundamental.”

**KATE MORAN**  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
OCEAN NETWORKS CANADA

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Land, Water, Ocean, Us: A Canadian Ocean Literacy Strategy* was co-developed through a bottom-up, regionally-focused, and community-driven study and engagement process across Canada led by the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition (COLC). This evidence-based National Strategy is informed by 10 common national priorities identified through the *Understanding Ocean Literacy in Canada Study (2019-2020)*. The Strategy outlines a vision for collaborative action to ensure a healthy, sustainable, and equitable relationship with the global ocean and Canada’s waterways for future generations. The three goals of the Strategy are: 1) advance ocean knowledge by increasing understanding of how the ocean influences us and how our behaviours, decisions, and actions impact the ocean; 2) foster ocean values by strengthening positive public and organizational perceptions of the ocean and promoting a greater ethic of care; and 3) empower ocean actions by reducing barriers and increasing engagement to contribute to behavioural and societal changes that support ocean health, community livelihoods, and human well-being.

To achieve these goals and contribute to advancing ocean literacy in Canada over the course of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), the Strategy offers 9 Action Streams that address key identified priorities, gaps, and barriers. Pathways for engagement and collaboration to achieve each Action Stream appear in the accompanying Implementation Plan (2021-2024). This Strategy and Implementation Plan are designed to be adaptive, mindful of these intensely uncertain and changing times. The Action Streams and implementation progress will be assessed in late 2024 based on evaluation and monitoring of existing priorities and in response to new opportunities and challenges. An updated Strategy and Implementation Plan will be launched and implemented from 2025-2030.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**Over 3,000 Canadians and 400 organizations participated in the *Understanding Ocean Literacy in Canada Study (2019-2020)*, the results of which directly informed the co-building of this Strategy. For a list of participating individuals and organizations, please consult the regional and national reports available on COLC's website at [www.colcoalition.ca](http://www.colcoalition.ca)**

## FUNDING PARTNERS



# CONTEXT IN 2020

**In these times of uncertainty and rapid change, the need for a just transition to a healthy, sustainable, and equitable relationship with the global ocean and Canada's waterways has never been more important.**

Wherever in the world we call home, 2020 has marked a time of intense change and uncertainty. The ongoing impacts of **climate change** – increasing extreme weather events, rising temperatures, melting sea ice cover – continue to impact global society, with particularly devastating effects on coastal and vulnerable communities. The sweeping effects of the **coronavirus pandemic** across the globe have ground entire nations to a halt, imposing physical isolation, social restriction measures, and economic challenges that continue to have disproportionate repercussions across existing gender, race, and socio-economic divisions. **Reconciliation** with Indigenous Peoples is at the ideological forefront of Canadian policy and initiatives, yet unhonoured treaty rights and broken nation-to-nation commitments stall real progress.

Woven through this context are the growing social movements (e.g., #FridaysforFuture, #BlackLivesMatter, #LandBack, etc.) as a response to climate injustice, racism, violence, and systemic inequities. These movements and the people behind them continue to hold society accountable, demanding a just transition through this global, social upheaval; a transition that must be shaped by **equity** and systemic transformations.

Above all else, the current crises underscore the urgent need for action, exposing the interconnections between planetary health, human health, justice, and economics. The responses to these crises also reveal **hope** and the capacity of governments, civil society, and caring communities to collaborate to take rapid, informed action locally, nationally, and internationally. It is by adopting an integrated, intersectional approach to tackling the most pressing problems in our global society, coupled with nature's impressive demonstration of resilience when given the chance, that we can achieve a healthier, more sustainable, and just global society and future for all.

Turning the page to 2021 marks the beginning of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (UN Ocean Decade), a dedicated framework in support of collaborative natural and social science work to ensure the future of a healthy global ocean. A framework that lives in policy, however, is nothing without the on-the-ground community support and mobilization to meaningfully enact it. The UN Ocean Decade presents an inspiring opportunity to work together, as Canadians and as an international community, towards a just transition to a healthy, sustainable, and equitable relationship with the global ocean and all waterways leading to it.



**2021** United Nations Decade  
**2030** of Ocean Science  
for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, framed by 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and 169 targets, provides an integrated global plan of action to address economic, social, and environmental issues that are indivisible and of critical importance for humanity and the planet. This Strategy, in particular, aligns with **SDG#14: Life Below Water**.

# CANADA AND THE OCEAN

In Canada, the ocean can be best understood as an **OCEAN CONTINUUM**, a holistic term that encompasses land, freshwater, coastal areas, sea ice, and the open ocean, all of which are changing rapidly and dramatically due to climate change.

The Earth has one interconnected ocean with many features. It regulates weather and climate; it is home to countless species; it provides clean air, food, and medicines to those living on land. Human interactions with the ocean can take many shapes, and as the country with the longest coastline in the world, Canada has ties that run deep through history, cultures, transportation, economies, livelihoods, recreation, and more.

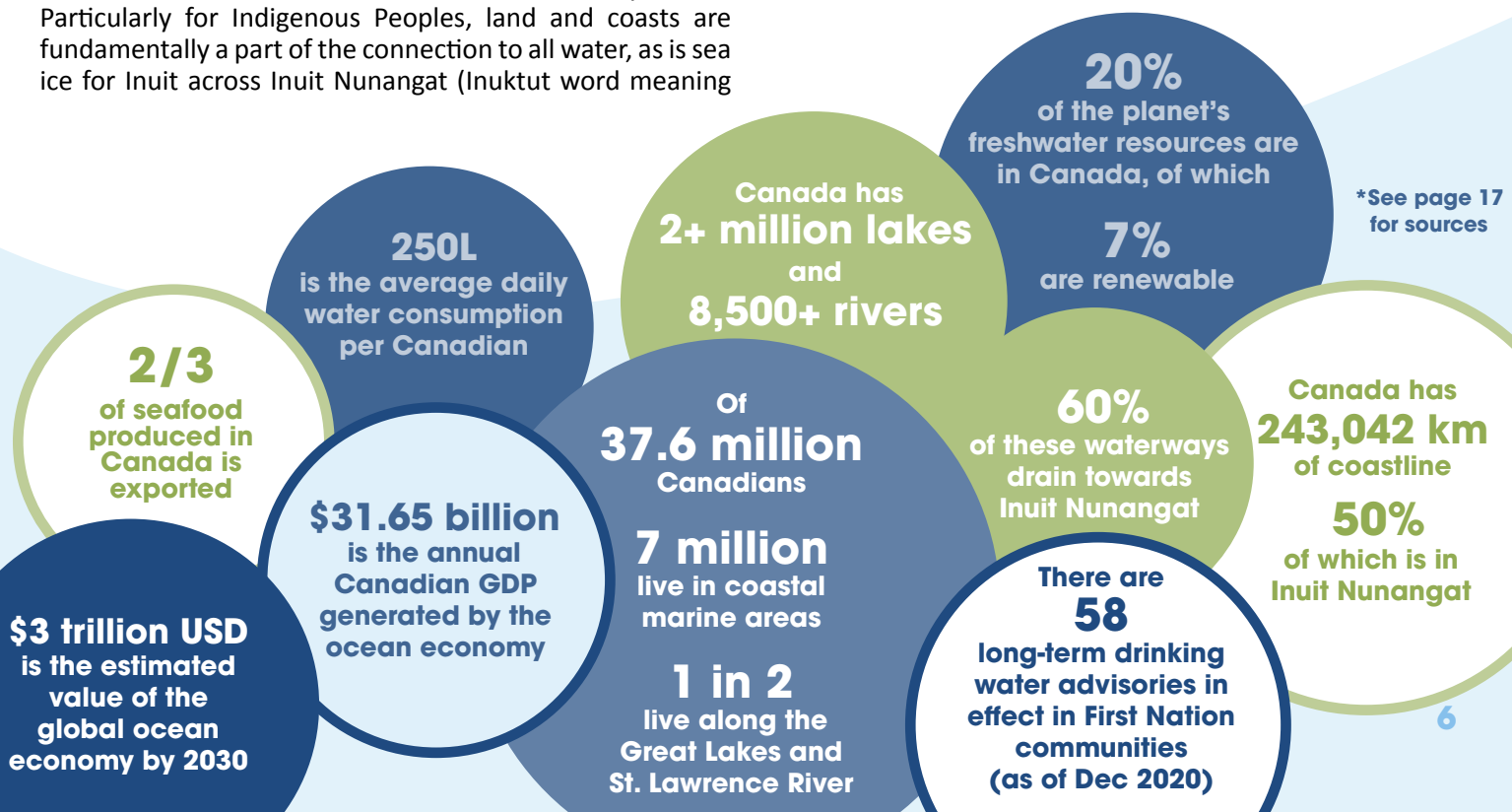
Canada's Oceans Strategy articulates that "Canada is an ocean nation." And yet, for many Canadians, it is not the ocean and coastline that frame their identity. Rather, it is the vast interconnected landscape of wetlands, lakes, rivers, and waterways that speak to them. For others, connections to water are formed through everyday life considerations – whether or not we can pour a glass of clean water from the tap, find a good fishing hole nearby, or access a community swimming pool. There is a correlation to be made between each of these experiences, yet the management and decision-making related to water and the ocean in Canada (e.g., institutional mandates, government policy, etc.) are often conducted in silos.

Interconnections between our inland waterways and the ocean exist everywhere we look; we have only to follow the flow from our local watershed to one of five ocean basins where all freshwater in Canada eventually drains. Particularly for Indigenous Peoples, land and coasts are fundamentally a part of the connection to all water, as is sea ice for Inuit across Inuit Nunangat (Inuktitut word meaning

homeland, used by Inuit in Canada). The interconnections among all of these elements – land, freshwater, coastal areas, sea ice, and open ocean – are also visible through the rapid and dramatic changes brought on by climate change.

Understanding these changes through increased ocean knowledge and adapting to them is crucial, as is learning to value and care for all features and species of the ocean continuum. Access to freshwater, coastal areas, and the ocean, as well as addressing other socio-economic barriers that prevent Canadians from connecting with, participating in, or benefitting from ocean-related opportunities, are essential to fostering a personal and societal ethic of care.

Human connections with land, freshwater, coastal areas, sea ice, and the open ocean are deeply shaped by diverse experiences. Ocean literacy is about listening to these different experiences, learning from them, and acting together. Ocean literacy, done well, can contribute to improving reconciliation efforts between Indigenous and settler societies, help support ocean-climate policy, and strengthen sustainable and equitable relationships within Canadian institutions and society. Together, we can foster a culture of reciprocity with the ocean and our waterways in all Canadians, ensuring ocean health for future generations.



# WHAT IS OCEAN LITERACY IN CANADA?

Fundamentally, ocean literacy is about our relationship with the ocean.

Ocean literacy is often defined as **an understanding of how the ocean influences us and how we influence the ocean.** The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO) has also described ocean literacy as the development of a **“civic relationship with the ocean.”**

Fundamentally, ocean literacy is about our **relationship with the ocean.** In Canada, there are various considerations and lived experiences that shape this relationship, including regional (e.g., coastal and inland), cultural (e.g., Inuit, First Nation, Métis, settler, newcomer), linguistic (e.g., English, French, Indigenous languages), and other important perspectives related to education, food security, governance, politics, economics, energy, national security, and more.

Although ocean literacy as a term has a broad international reach and is squarely situated within an established community of practice and growing body of research, it remains imperfect in a Canadian context. For many Indigenous Peoples, it is a problematic term, as it is a new framing for a relational understanding that has been lived and practiced for thousands of years. For inland Canadians, the term is often not as relevant or inclusive of existing water literacy efforts. Outside of academia, education, and government, the term is often seen as abstract or limiting.

Can we work together, with full awareness of the term’s broader implications and tensions, to move into a cultural and geographic concept of the term that can be shared across languages and communities? Addressing this question has been woven into the 9 Action Streams (page 11) that will guide the implementation of the Strategy.

For the purposes of this Strategy, the term ocean literacy is understood and used with the following nuances that reflect a Canadian context:

Canada recognizes the ocean as part of the **GLOBAL COMMONS**, belonging to everyone and to everything, including future generations, and it affects everyone and everything.

The ocean is more holistically understood as an **OCEAN CONTINUUM**, including land, freshwater, coasts, sea ice, and open ocean.

There is no one way of connecting to the ocean; the value(s) many individuals and communities hold for the ocean is shaped by our diverse **OCEAN RELATIONS**, which can be cultural, spiritual, linguistic, aesthetic, recreational, economic, and more.

## OCEAN LITERACY HAS MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS THAT ARE INTERCONNECTED:

### OCEAN KNOWLEDGE\*

The multiple understandings of how the ocean influences us and how our past, present, and future relationships impact the ocean.

### OCEAN VALUES

A moral responsibility to the ocean (e.g., ethic of care) that grows out of our diverse yet interconnected ocean relations.

### OCEAN ACTIONS

The ability to change behaviours, eliminate barriers, and increase participation and engagement in ocean-related decisions, policies, opportunities, and activities.

\*E.g., natural science and social science, Indigenous knowledge systems, local expertise.



# CANADIAN OCEAN LITERACY TIMELINE

Ocean literacy has been shaped by geography and culture for thousands of years in what is now called Canada, beginning with the origin stories of Indigenous Peoples and relationships to place. Canada's engagement, commitments, and leadership related to global ocean sustainability have been shaped by landmark institutions, pivotal co-management agreements, foundational research and reports, as well as national and international targets and pledges.

The timeline illustrated here, although far from complete, helps to situate ocean literacy in Canada with a specific focus on the last three decades. It helps to showcase Canada's evolving leadership role and to highlight the rapidly growing international momentum and relevance of ocean literacy (abbreviated to OL in timeline).

\*ALL FEATURED EVENTS AND INSTITUTIONS ARE HYPERLINKED

SEVERAL INSTITUTIONS WERE NOTED BY COLC'S STUDY PARTICIPANTS AS "EARLY TRAILBLAZERS" OF OCEAN (SCIENCE) LITERACY WORK, INCLUDING, FOR EXAMPLE:

Vancouver Aquarium (1956); Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland (1964); Huntsman Marine Laboratory (1969); Western Canadian Universities Marine Sciences Society (1970); Bamfield Marine Science Centre (1972); International Ocean Institute - Canada (1972); and International Centre for Ocean Development (1985).

## INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

1ST WORLD OCEANS DAY, JUNE 8 1992

OCEAN LITERACY: THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF OCEAN SCIENCES IS PUBLISHED IN THE U.S. 2005

CANADA SIGNS THE GALWAY STATEMENT ON ATLANTIC OCEAN COOPERATION; ATLANTIC OCEAN RESEARCH ALLIANCE OL WORKING GROUP IS LAUNCHED 2013

THE MULTI-YEAR, MULTI-COUNTRY SEACHANGE PROJECT IS LAUNCHED IN THE EUROPEAN UNION 2015

1ST UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE (NEW YORK) COMMITMENT TO OL IN SDG #14: LIFE BELOW WATER

OCEAN LITERACY FOR ALL: A TOOLKIT IS PUBLISHED BY IOC-UNESCO

THE ALL-ATLANTIC OCEAN RESEARCH COMMUNITY IS LAUNCHED

CANADA ADOPTS THE COMMONWEALTH BLUE CHARTER

CANADA CO-HOSTS THE SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY CONFERENCE

1ST VIRTUAL OL SUMMIT

THE EU4OCEAN COALITION IS LAUNCHED

OL BECOMES ONE OF THE 7 SOCIETAL OUTCOMES FOR THE UN OCEAN DECADE

CANADA JOINS THE GLOBAL OCEAN ALLIANCE, ADVOCATING FOR PROTECTION OF 30% OF THE GLOBAL OCEAN BY 2030

## NATIONAL EVENTS

1993 QATUWAS: RESURGENCE OF THE TRIBAL CANOE JOURNEYS ON THE PACIFIC COAST

THE GWAI HAANAS AGREEMENT, A GROUND-BREAKING COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN, IS SIGNED BY THE HAIDA NATION AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

1ST EVENT OF THE GREAT CANADIAN SHORELINE CLEANUP

1996 CANADA'S OCEANS ACT IS PUBLISHED

2002 CANADA'S OCEANS STRATEGY IS PUBLISHED

2005 CANADA'S OCEANS ACTION PLAN IS LAUNCHED

2010 CANADA COMMITS TO MEETING THE AICHI TARGETS, INCLUDING 10% MARINE AND COASTAL AREA CONSERVATION

2014 THE CANADIAN NETWORK FOR OCEAN EDUCATION (CaNOE) IS ESTABLISHED

2016 CANADA'S OCEANS PROTECTION PLAN IS LAUNCHED  
THE OCEANS RESEARCH IN CANADA ALLIANCE (ORCA) IS LAUNCHED

2017

2018

CANADA'S CONSERVATION VISION AND INDIGENOUS CIRCLE OF EXPERTS REPORTS ARE PUBLISHED

COLC OFFICIALLY LAUNCHES DURING THE G7 MINISTERIAL MEETINGS IN HALIFAX, N.S.

2019

CREATION OF TALLURUTIUP IMANGA, INUIT-CROWN CO-MANAGED MARINE PROTECTED AREA, ACHIEVING 10% AICHI CONSERVATION TARGET

2020

CANADA HOSTS THE UN OCEAN DECADE NORTH ATLANTIC WORKSHOP IN HALIFAX, N.S.

COLC PUBLISHES THE UNDERSTANDING OCEAN LITERACY IN CANADA RESEARCH REPORTS

CANADA COMMITS TO BUILDING A BLUE ECONOMY STRATEGY

2021

LAUNCH OF THE UN DECADE OF OCEAN SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

LAUNCH OF THE CANADIAN OCEAN LITERACY STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

# RESEARCH

## BUILDING A BOTTOM-UP, REGIONALLY-FOCUSED, COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NATIONAL STRATEGY

This evidence-based Strategy has been directly shaped by the results and recommendations of the Canada-wide study, *Understanding Ocean Literacy in Canada (2019-2020)*, as well as the post-study engagement process. This collaborative project examined how ocean literacy is understood and practiced across five regions (Pacific, Inuit Nunangat, Atlantic, St. Lawrence, and Inland Canada) and nationally, as well as within ten identified sectors: Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) & Foundations, Research, Industry, Education, Youth, Community, Media, Arts & Culture, and Health.



COMMIT TO ACCESS, EQUITY & JUSTICE

STRENGTHEN OCEAN EDUCATION & OCEAN LITERACY RESEARCH

INVEST IN COMMUNITIES, PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

AMPLIFY & ADVANCE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

EXPAND SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE OCEAN ECONOMY OPPORTUNITIES & CAREERS

INCREASE DIVERSE LANGUAGE USE IN OCEAN LITERACY INITIATIVES & RESOURCES

ELEVATE CANADA AS A GLOBAL OCEAN LITERACY LEADER

ENHANCE OCEAN KNOWLEDGE SHARING THROUGH MEDIA, STORYTELLING, & THE ARTS

INCREASE SUPPORT OF INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP IN LAND-WATER-OCEAN CONSERVATION

CONNECT OCEAN & HUMAN HEALTH

# CO-DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

JULY 2020

Virtual Workshop Series Follow-Up Survey

SEPT 2020

5 Regional Working Meetings

OCT 2020

3 Targeted Review Sharing Circles

NOV 2020

2 National Workshops

DEC 2020

Final Strategy & Implementation Plan Review

NOTE: Some of the broader barriers and priorities identified in the study require large-scale societal actions (e.g., potable water, high-speed internet connectivity, wide-spread infrastructure needs, and recognition and respect for Indigenous treaty rights to fishing and harvesting). These actions are beyond the scope of an ocean literacy strategy but are essential to achieving true equity and justice in the ocean continuum space.

## VISION

We take action together to ensure a healthy, sustainable, and equitable relationship with the global ocean and Canada's waterways for present and future generations.

## 2021 STRATEGY LAUNCH

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE BEGINS (2021-2024)

## GOALS

### 1 OCEAN KNOWLEDGE

Increase understanding of how the ocean influences us and how our behaviours, decisions, and actions impact the ocean.

### 2 OCEAN VALUES

Strengthen positive public and organizational perceptions of the ocean and promote a greater ethic of care.

### 3 OCEAN ACTIONS

Reduce barriers and increase engagement to contribute to behaviour and societal changes that support ocean health, community livelihoods, and human well-being.

# ACTION STREAMS

## A COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Nine Action Streams have been identified to address the national priorities emergent from the Canada-wide study. The success and impact of each Action Stream will be measured against the corresponding objectives detailed below. The collective progress and impact achieved under these objectives will contribute to the advancement of the three overarching Strategy goals, which directly correspond to the three dimensions of ocean literacy. These goals will serve as a holistic guide and barometer in achieving the Strategy vision.

1

### DEVELOP THE DIGITAL CANADIAN OCEAN LITERACY MAP & COMMUNITY PLATFORM

Increase support, collaboration, and coordination across the growing community of practice; develop tools to measure trends, changes, and progress in ocean literacy over the UN Ocean Decade

2

### ESTABLISH THE CANADIAN OCEAN LITERACY COMMUNITY MICROGRANT PROGRAM

Provide more accessible, streamlined, and sustained funding opportunities for community-driven ocean literacy initiatives that are regionally, culturally, and linguistically relevant

3

### STRENGTHEN OCEAN EDUCATION

Provide research-based understandings of effective teaching practices to inform integration of ocean and water education within Ministries of Education, school districts, and classrooms (both formal and non-formal), aligning with climate and environmental sustainability education and empowering action

4

### GROW OCEAN WEEK CANADA

Support and grow World Oceans Day events into a week-long celebration, connecting Canadians to the ocean continuum and contributing to ocean solutions

5

### ENHANCE OCEAN KNOWLEDGE SHARING THROUGH MEDIA COMMUNICATION, STORYTELLING & THE ARTS

Increase communication of diverse ocean stories; support community science journalism and artists building land-water-ocean-human connections

6

### AMPLIFY AND ADVANCE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN OCEAN CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY OPPORTUNITIES

Engage and support diverse youth in ocean conservation, policy, and decision-making processes; increase awareness of and opportunities in the sustainable blue economy

7

### EVALUATE AND IMPROVE THE CURRENT STATE OF ACCESS AND DIVERSITY WITHIN CANADA'S BLUE SPACES & OCEAN-RELATED SECTORS

Eliminate barriers for all Canadians to accessing and benefitting from blue spaces; respond to community-based priorities and vulnerabilities related to a changing ocean

8

### IMPROVE GOVERNMENT INTEGRATION OF WATER-OCEAN-CLIMATE LITERACY IN POLICY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Improve coordination and collaboration across levels of government to better bridge land and freshwater, ocean, and climate initiatives aimed at communication with and engagement of the Canadian public

9

### BUILD OCEAN & HUMAN HEALTH CONNECTIONS

Respond to the identified gap in ocean health and human well-being connections; strengthen ocean and human health research, education, and communication in Canadian society

# IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

READ THE  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN  
AND LEARN HOW TO GET  
INVOLVED AT  
[WWW.COLCOALITION.CA](http://WWW.COLCOALITION.CA)

The Strategy is accompanied by an Implementation Plan that serves as a dynamic document outlining how progress on the **9 Action Streams** will be achieved. In the Implementation Plan, each Action Stream follows a logic framework that includes the Objectives, Specific Actions & Considerations, and Key Performance Indicators.

## LOGIC FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY ACTIONS



## PATHWAYS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Implementation of the Action Streams is not possible by any one organization, level of government, or region. Collaboration is essential and requires both a national coordinating and community-led approach. As such, two implementation pathways have emerged.

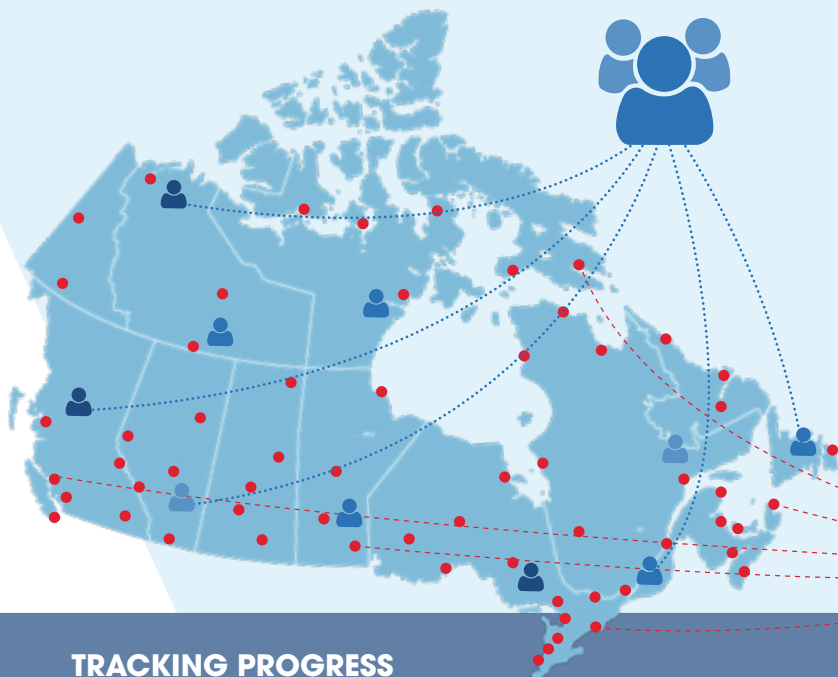
### 1 JOIN AN ACTION TEAM

Action Teams will be established for each of the 9 Action Streams to work closely with COLC's national project office staff in spring 2021. Action Teams will serve as a coordinated national voice, ensuring leadership, momentum, Canada-wide collaboration, and measured progress.

### 2 REGISTER YOUR OCEAN LITERACY PROJECT ON THE CANADIAN OCEAN ACTION STREAMS TRACKER (C.O.A.S.T.)

Important ocean literacy work is already taking place across Canada through varied initiatives launched across regions, sectors, scales, and using diverse approaches. To honour these existing efforts, and to ensure ocean literacy is advanced in meaningful, place-based ways, it is necessary to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach in the implementation of the Action Streams.

The **Canadian Ocean Action Streams Tracker (C.O.A.S.T.)** is a tool to track community-led projects and on-the-ground advancement of each of the Action Streams from coast to coast. Initiatives registered on the C.O.A.S.T. will be organized by Action Stream and integrated into evaluating our collective progress during the initial Strategy Implementation Phase (2021-2024) and throughout the rest of the UN Ocean Decade (2025-2030).



### TRACKING PROGRESS

Along with the C.O.A.S.T., other evaluative tools will be used to track progress and impact, including, for example, targeted surveys and a national poll building off the 2020 baseline results that examines changes in ocean perceptions and values within the Canadian public.

# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

## OCEAN LITERACY IS UP TO ALL OF US

Contributing to ocean sustainability, healthy waterways, and community well-being takes many forms and can be led by anyone. This Strategy recognizes that we each have a role to play in ocean literacy and that we can all have an impact, especially through collaboration. Specialists, leaders, and other actors in the identified sectors below are responsible for advancing ocean literacy in ways as outlined here, and beyond.



### YOUTH

Drive innovation in all ocean-related sectors • Lead active, creative, and inclusive social movements



### EDUCATION

Facilitate learning experiences to engage all ages in better understanding the connections between local waterways and the ocean that can help to shape values and empower action



### HEALTH

Strengthen understanding of ocean and human health connections through: Food • Medicines • Biotechnology • Physical, mental, and spiritual health • Risks and water safety



### ART & CULTURE

Inspire and engage diverse audiences through various means • Form creative and emotional foundations for Canadians to connect with the ocean continuum



### MEDIA

Share diverse ocean stories and balanced storytelling, tailored to inform and engage different audiences across Canada • Contribute to normalizing ocean behaviours • Hold organizations accountable



### INDUSTRY

Innovate water and ocean sustainability practices • Create training and career opportunities • Generate products and services that enable a sustainable and equitable blue economy • Connect people with blue spaces and experiences



### COMMUNITY

Lead community initiatives that support the health of local waterways, the ocean, and livelihoods • Respond to local priorities through nature-based solutions



### GOVERNMENT (Indigenous, Federal, Provincial/Territorial, Municipal)

Legislate, monitor, develop, and ensure regulations related to water-ocean health, sustainable use, and access • Support research, education, and communication activities • Engage Canadians in conservation processes and sustainable use opportunities



### NGOs & FOUNDATIONS

Raise public awareness about water-ocean issues • Advocate for equitable and accountable policy • Support opportunities for capacity sharing and community-led solutions



### RESEARCH

Lead collaboration between knowledge experts and educators, data visualists, communication and media specialists, and others to share research findings • Support more social science and ocean literacy research • Link relevance of research to citizens' lives • Inform evidence-based decision-making



### SPIRITUALITY & FAITH GROUPS\*

Help Canadians develop connections with waterways and the ocean through core teachings, beliefs, and practices

\*This is a new sector, identified in post-study engagement, to consider as we move forward.

# STRATEGY ACROSS THE DECADE

This Strategy (2021-2024) is intentionally designed to be adaptive. These 9 Action Streams are reflective of current ocean literacy understandings and have been co-developed mindfully in these intensely uncertain and changing times. Implementation progress will be assessed in 2024, and new or adapted actions and implementation pathways will be established to better respond to new and existing priorities and challenges. An updated Strategy will, in turn, support the continued advancement of ocean literacy efforts from 2025-2030.

The 9 Action Streams will help to advance ocean literacy in Canada, and in so doing, will help further objectives and/or recommendations within other larger, pertinent national frameworks. These include, but are not limited to:

These include, but are not limited to:

- 🔹 CANADA'S OCEANS PROTECTION PLAN
- 🔹 PATHWAY TO CANADA TARGET 1
- 🔹 THE OCEAN PLASTICS CHARTER
- 🔹 THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION'S CALLS TO ACTION
- 🔹 CANADA'S BLUE ECONOMY STRATEGY
- 🔹 THE CANADA WATER AGENCY

## CANADA AS AN INTERNATIONAL LEADER IN OCEAN LITERACY

One of the priorities identified through COLC's research was the clear desire to elevate Canada as a global ocean literacy leader. While there is no Action Stream with a dedicated international focus, this priority will be addressed through the successful implementation of all Action Streams. Through our efforts regionally and nationally, Canada will be better positioned to collaboratively support and contribute to advancing global ocean literacy efforts.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CANADIAN OCEAN LITERACY STRATEGY

# BEYOND THE TERM: WHAT WE HEARD

All words and phrases appearing on this page were directly referenced by participants in the *Understanding Ocean Literacy in Canada* study to express the essence of ocean literacy. The examples shown here, although just a sample of what was heard through hundreds of conversations and exchanges, showcase the breadth and depth of understandings of ocean literacy across regions, cultures, languages, and worldviews. In looking ahead, this collection of words helps us all to reimagine what ocean literacy could look like throughout and beyond the UN Ocean Decade, allowing us to collectively move beyond the term and into the concept behind it.

**\* Ĥaíkilaxsi čislá wáwáxtusa gáyáqla qnts dmxsaǵv**

An expression meaning “to respect and take care of our ocean relatives,” according to Hailhzaqv (Heiltsuk) of the central Pacific coast.

**\*Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ)**

A term to describe Inuit epistemology, which translates as “that which Inuit have always known.” IQ encompasses “the entire realm of Inuit experience in the world and the values, principles, beliefs, and skills, which have evolved as a result of that experience.” IQ directly relates to Inuit’s understanding of, and relationship to, the ocean, which includes ice, land, and coasts.

**\*Netukulimk**

A Mi’kmaq term for the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community; it is achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity, or productivity of our environment.







## **LOOKING AHEAD: IMAGINING 2030**

### **What is the vision for ocean literacy in Canada at the end of the UN Ocean Decade?**

Canadians will have a better understanding of the connections that water makes possible in our lives, jobs, culture, and economy.

There will exist a deeper understanding of and respect for different ways of knowing and relating to land, freshwater, coastal areas, sea ice, and the open ocean.

Canadians' connections to local waterways and the ocean will be strengthened by increased access to water, coasts, and the ocean through reimagined public spaces, mainstreamed water-ocean storytelling, educational experiences, community science, and more.

Diverse communities from coast to coast to coast will benefit from reduced barriers to enable stronger participation in more inclusive ocean continuum-related governance, as well as sustainable and equitable blue economy opportunities that safeguard culture, health, and social stability.

We have learned to listen better, do better, be better... with future ocean health in mind.

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