



Atlantic Regional Virtual Workshop Summary Report

Lead: Julia Ostertag, Atlantic Regional Coordinator

On June 22, 2020, the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition (COLC) held the Atlantic Virtual Workshop to review and discuss the [Atlantic Regional Report](#) and explore steps for moving forward. This workshop was part of the five regional sessions of the virtual workshops (Atlantic, St. Lawrence, Pacific, Inuit Nunangat, Inland Canada) and one national session. Participants were invited to comment on the research results (strengths, barriers, and preliminary recommendations) and discuss the following question: *How can a national strategy help advance ocean literacy (OL) in the Atlantic region?* The highlights from these discussions are captured below.

Workshop Facilitation Team

Diz Glithero (COLC), Sarah MacNeil (COLC), Julia Ostertag (COLC), Noémie Roy (COLC), Justine Ammendolia (COLC), Barb Sweazey (Stratos), Michael van Aanhout (Stratos), Dan Adams (Stratos), Nathalie Wilson (Interpreter).

Participants

Thank you to the 47* participants who attended the workshop and contributed their insights for developing a national OL strategy.

Adrian Rogers (Ocean Wise); Alexa Goodman (Coastal Action); Andrea van Nostrand (Johnson Geo Centre); Anna Naylor (Centre for Ocean Ventures & Entrepreneurship); Anton Holland (NIVA inc.); Ashley Morton (Halifax Regional Centre for Education); Brendal Townsend (Ocean Tracking Network); Bryan Martin (Maritime Aboriginal Peoples Council); CarolAnne Black (CarolAnne Black, Consulting Science Writer); Chelsey Campbell (The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq); Daniel Kyte (Pisces RPM); David Pearson (Laurentian University); David Zandvliet (Simon Fraser University); Geneviève Dupéré (écH2osystème); Hali Moreland (Parks Canada); Heather Mulock (Coldwater Lobster Association); Jackie Kidd (Arctic Eider Society); Jane Affleck (Artist/Researcher); Janet Stalker (Ocean School/Ocean Frontier Institute); Joe MacIsaac (Back to the Sea Society); Kayla Hamelin (Dalhousie University); Kiley Best (CaNOE); Laura Avery (MEOPAR); Laura Estrada (Oceans Learning Partnership); Lucija Prelovec (Ocean School); Magali Grégoire (Back to the Sea); Maia Hoeberechts (Ocean Networks Canada); Melissa O'Rourke (Canada's Ocean Supercluster); Nicola Bridge (Ocean Conservation Trust); Nikki Kroetsch (Fisheries and Oceans Canada); Patrick Wells (Memorial University of Newfoundland); Remi Donelle (Shediac Bay Watershed); Saiqa Azam (Memorial University of Newfoundland); Sarah Saunders (WWF – Canada); Sarah Pedro (Laval University); Shannon Harding (Clean Foundation); Shirley Vigneault (Équipe d'alphabétisation de la Nouvelle-Écosse); Susan Gesner (Gesner & Associates Environmental Learning); Sylvia Calatayud (Community member); Tara Donaghy (Fisheries and Oceans Canada); Wendy Watson-Wright (7 Mile Bay). *Please note that due to technical limitations, this list does not include the names of participants who joined over the phone.



Part 1: Review of the Atlantic Regional Report

Regional Strengths

The following strengths were identified in the report: Relationships and collaboration; Place-based knowledge and experiential learning; Ocean engagement through raising awareness about plastic pollution; Womxn leaders; Two-Eyed Seeing; and Workforce development.

In support of these strengths, participants noted that:

- Womxn leaders and Two-Eyed Seeing resonated particularly strongly; and
- Place-based/experiential learning is important; there are so many people living, working, and playing on the ocean, gaining OL from personal experience (hugely valuable local knowledge).

Additional strengths highlighted by participants:

- The long-standing socio-economic and cultural links to the ocean (both Indigenous and settler), such as the relatively large portion of people in the Atlantic region that work in/on the ocean
 - Participants further wondered whether this strength makes the ocean more salient among the general Atlantic population than those living in inland provinces

Regional Barriers

Four barriers were identified in the report: Lack of funding and the competitive nature of funding; Conflict and a lack of trust due to siloed relationships; Difficulties overcoming human separation from coasts and the ocean; and a Gap in human/ocean health connections.

In support of these barriers, participants noted that:

- Inclusion and diversity are challenges that need additional work and are key to building trust with the communities, though this process takes time. This work must encompass all minority voices, including Indigenous voices; and
- Barriers around funding/siloed relationships resonated, and this results in barriers of “misinformation.”

Additional barriers highlighted by participants:

- The term ‘ocean literacy’ has its own barriers, which must be recognized and addressed

Regional Recommendations

Three clear recommendations from the report were presented to participants: Invest in OL; Include OL in the curriculum; and Make the ocean visible and accessible through a watershed approach.

In addition, ten proposed key messages were put forward to workshop participants, who were asked to select which of these resonated with them as preliminary recommendations. The results of the informal poll are indicated in Table 1.

Ensure Indigenous voices, knowledge, languages, and rights integrated from beginning	65%
Build trust/break down silos through collaboration	53%
OL that is inclusive and accessible	45%
Recognize urgency of ecological crises	45%
OL that is culturally and regionally relevant	35%
Share research data transparently, through accessible platforms (OCAP for Indigenous knowledge governance)	33%
Encourage knowledge co-creation projects	30%
OL is required beyond formal education	30%
Communicate OL through media, storytelling, arts, etc.	30%
Develop OL networks regionally/Coordinate regional networks nationally	23%

Table 1: Atlantic preliminary recommendations polling results

Additional recommendations and comments shared by participants included:

- Importance of industry and business community in OL
- Importance of investing in community groups (e.g., volunteer environmental stewardship groups) since these groups are able to effectively engage with, involve, and educate their communities
- Emphasize that oceans are ecosystems
- Connect OL with political decision-makers
- Challenge to change mistrust of government in communities
- Recognize the role of municipalities in enabling ocean-positive actions (e.g., changes to infrastructure)

Part 2: Building a National Strategy: Atlantic Insights

Throughout the workshop, participants identified the need to maintain the diversity of regional voices, perspectives, and practices within the national strategy. Below is a summary of the breakout group discussions, which were centered on ensuring a successful national strategy in the Atlantic region and an effective national strategy overall.

1. Towards a Successful National Strategy in the Atlantic Region

- Recognize the diversity of OL and OL-related initiatives in the region

- In particular, it is important to note that the Atlantic region can include up to five provinces and Nunatsiavut. Regional/national OL strategies must both reflect this diversity and strengthen relationships within this region
- Support grassroots community efforts and take advantage of local strengths and communities
- Coordinate efforts within the region by connecting people, communities, and organizations
- Increase accessibility to the ocean for people in Atlantic Canada
- Centre Indigenous knowledge, rights, decision-making, and perspectives both within the region and nationally
- Engage industry; recognize economic importance of the ocean and the need for OL in ocean sectors, particularly in the Atlantic (the economic importance of the ocean is apparent in terms of GDP: 1.9% of Canada's GDP comes from ocean activities - for Atlantic Canada the number is 14.2%)

2. Towards an Effective National Strategy Overall

- Recognize the importance of guiding principles or *calls to action* to bring together and support diverse regional, grassroots, community-based, and sectoral initiatives
 - Build an inclusive movement that is relevant to marginalized communities, responsive to diverse perspectives, and supports access to the ocean/coast for all
 - Connect individual actions and grassroots initiatives through the national strategy to broader vision (e.g., Stream Keepers or Watershed groups)
 - Coordinate collaborations and knowledge sharing between regions (e.g., case studies) and across sectors
- Support access to funding opportunities
- Provide equitable measures to take stock of changes, measure impact, change course, and avoid repetition/redundancy
- Adopt a watershed framework that connects inland with ocean and coastal regions
 - Agriculture, plastics, climate change are all lenses that can be useful to connect inland with the ocean
- Engage youth voices, research mobilization, creativity
- Communicate the national strategy appropriately through diverse media to diverse groups and audiences to remain relevant and engaging
 - Focus on communicating the strategy and facts to decision makers/politicians/government
- Openly share and communicate diverse forms of OL knowledge and resources
 - Support creation/dissemination of language-based OL resources (French, Indigenous languages, etc.)
 - Support learning and protecting Indigenous languages since much ocean knowledge is contained within the very vocabulary and structure of these

languages and it is in the interest of all for these languages to be strong and vibrant

- Share knowledge and resources at local, provincial, and national levels
- Potentially utilize the Canadian Association of Science Centres to reach general public (e.g., having public engaged with science centres through, for instance, exhibits/programs that are shared across the country)
- Catch “place-based education” wave
- Frame OL through multiple lenses, not just ocean science (highlighting the socio-economic and cultural connections and relationships with the ocean is a strong pathway for transforming how people view and value the ocean)
- Supplement and change existing educational materials, textbooks, etc.
- Support knowledge sharing through media, science communication, partnerships between scientists, educators, Indigenous Peoples, policy-makers, industry, politicians, etc.
- Support research that is open and accessible
- Respond to the need for compelling “OL” terminology that works in multiple languages, cultural contexts, and sectors

