



**ECOP
CANADA**

ECOP CANADA REPORT

April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023



ECOP
Early Career
Ocean Professionals



2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development



WHAT IS ECOP CANADA?

Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP) is an international program endorsed by the UN Ocean Decade to elevate and strengthen the diverse perspectives of new generations of ocean professionals.

The Canada Node was started in 2021 by three ECOPs, Neha Acharya-Patel, Samantha McBeth, and Ronnie Noonan-Birch who currently form ECOP Canada's steering committee. Ashley Bowes is the National Coordinator for ECOP Canada. The Node has an advisory board of 7 ECOPs from various geographical locations, cultures, and professional roles in the ocean space.

The ECOP Canada community primarily exists on Slack, a monthly newsletter, and social media. Each platform aims to connect members with jobs, training, funding, leadership, and collaboration opportunities.

ECOP Canada has a network of partner institutions to ensure that the voices and perspectives of a new generation of Canadian ocean professionals are heard and that the vast potential of early-career professions is fully maximized and supported.

We aim to become more than an empowering network for ECOPs by developing and implementing innovative programs that allow us to establish:

- Strong connections with industry leaders who will empower ECOPs through jobs, funding, development, and leadership opportunities.
- Long-term and sustainable funding that can be used to provide meaningful opportunities to ECOPs.
- A source of hope and inspiration as ECOPs face challenges such as climate change, social injustice, and inequality.
- The importance of amplifying and empowering the voices and actions for ECOPs now.



VISION

We aim to achieve intergenerational equity by strengthening the diverse voices of early career ocean professionals in all ocean fields across Canada.

MISSION

Through our network of ocean partners and ECOPs, we aim to address the following needs outlined in Canada's Blue Economy Strategy:

- 1 Adapt to generational values, innovation, and interests**
- 2 [Re]build early career professionals' connections to the ocean**
- 3 Develop and communicate clear career pathways**
- 4 Support experiential learning opportunities**
- 5 Support and create sector strategies to introduce ECOPs to career opportunities**

MEET THE TEAM

STEERING COMMITTEE



Ronnie Noonan-Birch
Co-founder



Neha Acharya-Patel
Co-founder



Samantha McBeth
Co-founder

STAFF



Ashley Bowes
National Coordinator

ADVISORY BOARD



Cassandra Konecny



Sonya Lee



Matt Miller



Angeleen Olson



Tiare Boyes



Alex Anaviapik



Aneri Garg

WHO IS AN ECOP?

An Early Career Ocean Professional aka ECOP is anyone who makes a living from a healthy ocean.

An ECOP is a person that self-identifies as **being early in their career with 10 years or less of professional experience in any field related to the ocean** (not only employed/paid positions).

ECOPs will be the ones who will face the challenges of climate change and a changing ocean.

ECOPs will be the ones to **inherit the decisions made about the ocean today as well as leadership roles in the blue economy.**

WHY EMPOWER ECOPs NOW?

We are at a pivotal time in which leadership, innovation, and emerging technologies could help us deal with and solve environmental challenges, while introducing new ocean sectors.



Now is the time to take action by supporting the next generation of ocean leaders to meet the goals of the UN Ocean Decade and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.





Insights from ECOPs on the Ocean Decade

The Global ECOP Programme's participation at the Fourth ICES PICES Early Career Scientists Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland launched the first of ECOP Canada's interactive and networking workshops to engage early-career ocean professionals on their role in the UN Ocean Decade. We asked ECOPs: How do you view the 7 Ocean Decade Outcomes? What do you think needs to happen under each of the 7 outcomes to achieve the ocean we want this decade?

Participants were empowered with meaningful networking and career development opportunities in a fun and casual atmosphere. The ocean researchers present demonstrated a high level of political awareness that stimulated initiatives for ocean literacy, more indigenous and youth representation, and education. They work in all different parts of the world, from the North Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean to the Arctic, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea.

The goal of this project is to encourage ECOPs to continue sharing their voice and increase participation during the Ocean Decade to achieve ocean health. We hope to encourage ocean organizations to include ECOPs in high-level conversations and decisions regarding the ocean's future and intergenerational equity.

The graphics below in English and French were created to share how ECOPs view the Ocean Decade's 7 Decade Outcomes.

Insights from ECOPs on the Ocean Decade

HOW ECOPs VIEW THE 7 OCEAN DECADE OUTCOMES

Answers from ECOPs at the 4th ICES PISCES Early Career Science Conference Decade Workshop hosted by the Global ECOP Programme

WHAT'S AN ECOP?

An early career ocean professional (ECOP) is anyone who makes their living from a healthy ocean with 10 years or less of professional experience.

1 A Clean Ocean

NO MORE

- medical contaminants
- plastic debris
- runoff
- noise & light pollution
- toxic algal blooms

Clean drinking water for all
Better sewage infrastructure
Improved operational models
Success = global action

2 A Healthy & Resilient Ocean

Representation of diverse stakeholders
Involve landlocked communities
Restore & protect biodiversity
Support sustainable ocean careers
Create job opportunities for future ECOPs
Engage in assessment / advisory / management groups

Listening is key

3 A Productive Ocean

Diversify food supply (wild-catch/aquaculture/by-catch)
Learn where your food comes from
Cross-border management of fisheries & other ocean resources
Increased enforcement
Reconcile practices that may be unsustainable

Involve local communities from the beginning

4 A Predicted Ocean

Dynamic management solutions
Virtual modelling of the ocean
Long term monitoring stations
Make unpopular topics more sexy
Adaptive governance for when predictions fail

Gap assessments
What are we missing?

5 A Safe Ocean

Increasing equitable training for ocean hazards
Fight discrimination and forced labour in ocean workforce
Freedom of navigation
Balance between livelihoods and conservation

Teach people how to swim!

6 An Accessible Ocean

Intergenerational communication (mentorship)
Info in plain language & other languages
Open access to data portals
Well documented standards for data sharing/usage
Publicly accessible coastlines to all & physical access

7 An Inspiring & Engaging Ocean

Interdisciplinary research for behavioural/value change
Linking everyone to the ocean
Storytelling & digital skills

You protect what you care about

HOW WE WANT TO ENGAGE

- > Educate & inform about responsible consumption
- > Provide diverse types of knowledge
- > Fight discrimination in ocean access & opportunities
- > Push for Open Access research data
- > Help people to realize the value of the ocean
- > Be the face of our research/specialties
- > Share our **PASSION** for the ocean

COMMENT LES ECOP PERÇOIVENT LES 7 RÉSULTATS DE LA DÉCENNIE DES OCÉANS

Réponses des ECOP lors de la 4e conférence pour les scientifiques en début de carrière - organisée par le CIEM/PICES et MPO à St. John's, Terre-Neuve.

QUEST-CE QU'UN(E) ECOP?

Un(e) professionnel(le) de l'océan en début de carrière (ECOP) est une personne qui gagne sa vie grâce à un océan sain avec 10 ans ou moins d'expérience professionnelle.

1 Un océan propre

PLUS DE

- contaminants médicaux
- débris de plastique
- eaux de ruissellement
- pollution sonore et lumineuse
- prolifération d'algues toxiques

De l'eau potable pour tous
Une meilleure infrastructure d'égouts
Une amélioration des modèles opérationnels
Le succès = action globale

2 Un océan sain et résilient

Une représentation diversifiée des parties prenantes
Impliquer les communautés enclavées
Restaurer et protéger la biodiversité
Soutenir les carrières océaniques durables
Créer des opportunités d'emploi pour les futurs ECOP
Faire partie des groupes d'évaluation, de conseil et de gestion

L'écoute est essentielle!

3 Un océan productif

Diversifier l'approvisionnement alimentaire (captures sauvages/aquaculture/captures accessoires)
Apprendre d'où vient votre nourriture
La gestion transfrontalière de la pêche et d'autres ressources océanographiques
Renforcer l'application de la loi
Réconcilier des pratiques qui peuvent être non durables

Impliquer les communautés locales dès le début

4 Un océan prédit

Des solutions de gestion dynamique
Une modélisation virtuelle de l'océan
Des stations de surveillance à long terme
Rendre les sujets impopulaires plus sexy
Une gouvernance adaptative quand les prédictions échouent

Évaluations des écarts
Qu'est-ce qui nous manque ?

5 Un océan sûr

Augmenter la formation équitable pour les risques océaniques
Lutter contre la discrimination et le travail forcé dans la main-d'œuvre océanique
La liberté de navigation
Un équilibre entre moyens de subsistance et conservation

Apprendre aux gens à nager!

6 Un océan accessible

Une communication intergénérationnelle (mentorat)
De l'info en langage clair et dans d'autres langues
Un accès libre aux portails de données
Des normes bien documentées pour le partage/utilisation des données
Un littoral publiquement accessible à tous et accès physique

7 Un océan inspirant et engageant

De la recherche interdisciplinaire pour le changement de comportement/de valeur
Relier tout le monde à l'océan
La narration et les compétences numériques

Vous protégez ce qui vous tient à cœur

COMMENT NOUS VOULONS NOUS ENGAGER

- > Éduquer et informer sur la consommation responsable
- > Fournir divers types de connaissances
- > Lutter contre la discrimination à l'accès et aux opportunités océaniques
- > Promouvoir le libre accès aux données de recherche
- > Aider les gens à prendre conscience de la valeur de l'océan
- > Être le visage de nos recherches / spécialités
- > Partager notre **PASSION** pour l'océan

ECOP Canada's Accomplishments

After a year of becoming endorsed an official node to the Global ECOP Program, ECOP Canada has achieved the following milestones:

1 EXPANDED THE ECOP CANADA TEAM

Ashley Bowes was hired as a National Coordinator, thanks to funding provided by the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Having a full-time staff member dedicated to the program made the following accomplishments possible.

ECOP Canada also established an advisory board of 7 ECOPs from various geographical locations, cultures, and professional roles in the ocean space.



2 PRODUCED AN EARLY CAREER TOOLKIT IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH FOR OCEAN WEEK CANADA

In partnership with the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition and Ocean Networks Canada, we created a toolkit to inspire students and early career professionals to consider how their knowledge, skills, and creativity can help contribute to and shape Canada's blue economy.

Postsecondary and early career professionals are using the toolkit to learn about opportunities and potential career pathways in Canada's ocean sector.

Over 3,000 postsecondary students and early career professionals have dove into learning from personal narratives and insights from ocean innovators and entrepreneurs working in diverse fields, as well as timely information about emerging trends, career programs, and resources.

In total we've engaged:
 English: 2562 views, 2320 people
 French: 805 views, 694 people

TOOLKITS
Postsecondary & Early Career

BLUE ECONOMY | ISSUES & CHALLENGES | OCEAN INNOVATORS | TRAINING & OPPORTUNITIES | SEAFOOD | PLASTICS | CONNECT & SHARE | OTHER TOOLKITS

Meet Some Ocean Innovators
 Inspiring stories and advice from ocean role models and innovators who are overcoming challenges and leading making a living.

Early Career Ocean Innovators
 Dive into this collection of stories and advice from young ocean innovators in Canada whose work spans diverse disciplines. Learn how they have used their talent and skills to support a healthy ocean and create exciting career pathways in the ocean sector.
 Photo credit: Tara Buys

Role Models Making Waves
 Ocean Allies strives to give access, engage, and continuously support a diverse workforce in Canada's ocean sector. Their gallery of industry role models will surely inspire underrepresented folks looking to get into a career in the ocean tech sector.
 Photo credit: Ocean Allies Kenneth Oguzi

Transforming the Ocean Sector
 Discover sustainable practices and opportunities that support the well-being of people and the ocean.

What is the Sustainable Blue Economy?
 What is the sustainable blue economy, and why is it important for Canada's economic growth and ocean health? In this short video, learn: why and how the ocean supports a healthy economy in the sustainable blue economy, and how Canada can be a leader in shaping a healthy future ocean and livelihoods.

Why do we need to develop a sustainable and equitable ocean economy?
 Effective ocean governance is essential to support for individuals and their communities to generate knowledge, support innovation, and develop solutions for equitable and sustainable.

Training, Opportunities & Networks
 Not sure how to break into the ocean sector? Explore these professional networks, job, and development opportunities in Canada's blue economy.

Blue Futures Pathways - Career Resources
 Blue Futures Pathways (BFP) offers six free, interactive, online, and on-demand learning resources exploring different aspects of the Sustainable Blue Economy. Each module will prompt you to think about the issues related to the ocean and freshwater systems, and allow you to explore the career pathways of diverse professionals. These modules are part of a larger PCPT - a digital one-stop spot for youth and early career professionals exploring opportunities, resources, and career pathways in the sustainable blue economy. Registration is required.
 Photo credit: Sustainable Industry

LEARN MORE

Meet Some Ocean Innovators

Inspiring stories and advice from ocean role models and innovators who are overcoming challenges and leading the way when it comes to caring for the ocean and making a living.



Early Career Ocean Innovators

Dive into this collection of stories and advice from young ocean innovators in Canada whose work spans diverse disciplines. Learn how they have used their talent and skills to support a healthy ocean and create exciting career pathways in the ocean sector.

Photo credit: Tiare Buays



Role Models Make Waves

Ocean Allies strives to give access, engage and continuously support a diverse workforce in Canada's ocean sector. Their gallery of role models will surely inspire underrepresented people looking to get into a career in the ocean sector.

Photo credit: Ocean Allies Kenneth Oguzie

LEARN MORE

LEARN MORE

3 COLLECTED VIDEO STORIES FROM 21 OCEAN INNOVATORS IN CANADA TO INSPIRE ECOPS

Ocean Innovators are people from various disciplines who have used their skills and interests to create a business, product, or program to generate ocean awareness and solutions.

Video submissions were collected and featured an [Early Career toolkit](#) created for Ocean Week Canada.

4

INCREASED ECOP PARTICIPATION IN CANADA'S OCEAN DECADE COMMUNITY OF CHAMPIONS

A FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA LED PLATFORM

ECOP Canada is supporting each of the champions by helping them to find Early Career Ocean Professionals to participate in their voluntary, thematic networks/working groups and to ensure that the voices of ECOPs are empowered and heard as each group fosters innovative and transformative science-based actions.



ECOP CANADA MEMBERS PARTICIPATED IN 10 MAJOR CONFERENCES THAT STRENGTHEN THE NETWORK AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Ocean Frontier Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia
- Explorer's Club Oceans Week in New York City
- UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal
- Fourth ICES PICES Early Career Scientists Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland
- The Canadian Hydrographic Conference in Gatineau, Quebec
- 7th International Marine Debris Conference (7IMDC) in Busan, Republic of Korea
- COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt
- 13th International Forum of NGOs in Ottawa, Ontario
- ArcticNet's Annual Science Meeting in Toronto, Ontario
- The 5th International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC5) in Vancouver, BC





Results of highlighted events:

Engaged key players and ECOPs in Atlantic Canada at the Ocean Frontier Conference 2022

ECOP Canada's participation in the Ocean Frontiers 2022 conference hosted by the Ocean Frontier Institute in Halifax, Nova Scotia, was instrumental in introducing the ECOP Programme as the heart of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development to industry, academic, and non-profit ocean partners in Atlantic Canada. There was a strong presence of ECOPs from universities from Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island who were invited to join the network. Connections and opportunities to collaborate were developed with the Ocean Supercluster, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and Indigenous Youth opportunity development organizations such as WorkForce Warriors, and many more, with the hope of creating opportunities for our members.



UN Ocean Conference

ECOP Canada's participation in the UN Ocean Conference 2022 hosted by the United Nations, and the governments of Kenya and Portugal, was instrumental in connecting with and understanding the needs of ECOPs in Canada and globally as well as strengthening the support of international leaders and organizations to empower ECOPs during the Ocean Decade. Our Education Coordinator, Ashley Bowes, collaborated with the Global ECOP team to host interactive events and excursions for ECOPs to network in Lisbon as well as represented ECOP Canada and the Global ECOP program at side events aimed at empowering ECOPs.

Connections and future collaborations were developed with Ocean Wise's Ocean Bridge program, The Youth Climate Lab, Indigenous youth program - Ikaarvik: Barriers to Bridges, the Global ECOP DEI Task team, Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries at the University of British Columbia, the Sustainable Ocean Alliance, and many more.



Funded opportunity for an ECOP member to participate in the Canadian Hydrographic Conference 2022

As part of our goal to provide ECOPs with meaningful networking and development opportunities, we provided one of our members, Una E. Isherwood, who is a science communicator and recent graduate based in Ontario, with funding to attend the Canadian Hydrographic Conference in Gatineau, Quebec. Una was instrumental in representing ECOP Canada at the conference and connecting with ocean partners such as CIDCO. This also provided Una with an opportunity to strengthen her network.



13th International Forum of NGOs in Ottawa, Ontario

ECOP Canada, Co-founder, Samantha McBeth Presented on ECOP Canada during the International Forum of NGOs in Ottawa to an international audience present in the room and virtually. Samantha McBeth has also presented on ECOP Canada at high level meeting such and the Decade Framework to the ORCA Council, and Canada's Ocean Decade Community of Champions.



Results of highlighted events:

Engaged ECOPs with the Ocean Decade framework and networking opportunities at the Fourth ICES PICES Early Career Scientists Conference

The ECOP Canada team was instrumental in engaging early career scientists in the Ocean Decade framework and empowering ECOPs with networking opportunities at the Fourth ICES PICES Early Career Scientists Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland in July 2022. Our participation included engaging and networking with ECOPs at networking events, presentations, excursions, meals, as well as with an informational table on ECOP Canada.

We also instrumental in organizing and hosting two events to engage ECOPs at the conference:



1. Early Career Ocean Professionals Workshop

This was an evening networking workshop hosted by ECOP Canada's National Coordinator, Ashley Bowes. The workshop included a presentation on how the Global ECOP programme is pivotal to the success of the UN Ocean Decade and talks by each of the regional coordinators that aimed to inspire ECOPs to join a node in their region or start their own. ECOPs voices filled the room as they brainstormed and discussed the roles of ECOPs for the 7 Ocean Decade outcomes while networking in a musical chairs format that was fun and casual. The feedback that ECOPs voiced about their role in the Decade was turned into an infographic and shared on our regional and global platforms as well as with the DFO, the UN Ocean Decade, and ICES PICES with the goal of encouraging ECOPs to continue sharing their voice and increase participation during the Decade.



2. Shoreline Cleanup at Topsail Beach

70 ECOPs rolled up their sleeves after an excursion at Cape Spear and helped pick up and sort litter on the rocky shores of Topsail Beach, Conception Bay South, Newfoundland. We left this loved beach where locals and tourists go to swim, picnic, hike, and relax in better shape thanks to ECOPs helping hands. It was also a great opportunity for ECOPs to team up in pairs or larger groups as they walked the beach collecting litter and networking. Two of ECOP Canada's advisory board members were instrumental in organizing and hosting the event. Matt Miller provided resources from Surfrider Canada and an educational talk on the litter that was collected. Cassandra Konecny managed the local operations, including partnering with the City of St. John's to ensure the litter was properly recycled and disposed of after the cleanup.

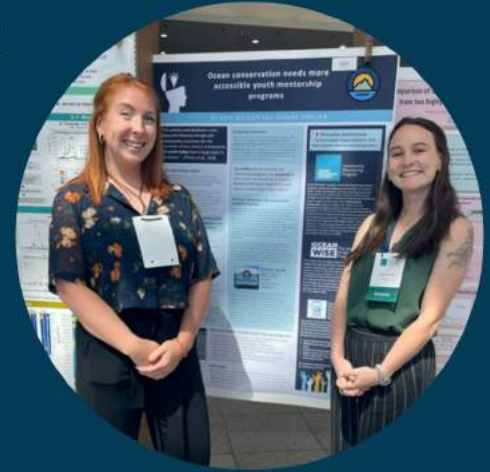




Results of highlighted events:

ECOP Canada members presented on about how ocean conservation needs more accessible youth mentorship programs at 7th International Marine Debris Conference (7IMDC) in Busan, Republic of Korea

ECOP Canada had the pleasure of supporting two ECOP Canada members with travel funding to attend the 7th International Marine Debris Conference (7IMDC) in Busan, Republic of Korea. Plastic Free BC Co-founders, Jeanine Sinclair and Kara Guloien presented a poster about how ocean conservation needs more accessible youth mentorship programs and how it mutually benefits youth and the organization. This poster session sparked many discussions on the importance of youth voices and connected them to fellow Early Career Ocean Professionals.



By attending the conference, Jeanine and Kara were also able to strengthen their knowledge and networking by meeting other leaders at non-profit organizations and researchers in the global ocean space.

Testimonials



As Early Career Ocean Professionals, there are many opportunities, such as conferences, that seem out of reach or not possible. Whether the reason is due to financial barriers, time restrictions or lack of awareness of events/opportunities, young people are not well represented at ocean conservation events. This is devastating to the marine protection community, as it's missing out on youth perspectives, passion and insights into many of the issues that our oceans are facing. Consequently, networks such as ECOP Canada are incredibly important, as it allows young professionals the support, guidance and connections that are needed to encourage youth to be a part of the discussion.

Because of the support of ECOP Canada, Kara and I were able to attend the 7th International Marine Debris Conference (7IMDC) in Busan, South Korea. Attending 7IMDC was an incredible experience that I would not have been able to do without the support of ECOP Canada and Ocean Network Canada. A few of my biggest takeaways of this week were:

- 1) I made new connections and broadened my network which I am confident will help me further my career in marine biology.
- 2) I met other non-profit founders who gave me ideas and inspiration on where to take our non-profit, Plastic Free BC.
- 3) It was a great opportunity to learn about new research and projects happening to aid the plastic pollution crisis, and further my knowledge in this field.
- 4) We had a very successful poster session where we shared our poster on youth mentorship programs and the mutual benefits to youth and ocean conservation organizations. This poster session sparked many discussions on the importance of youth voices and we even met a fellow Early Career Ocean Professionals that night, Astrid Delorme, and got to learn about her UN Decade endorsed project, Storage.

All in all, this was invaluable experience that Kara and I would not have been able to finance on our own. I left 7IMDC with a new spark, newfound motivation and many new supporters and connections to reach out to and work with. I am sincerely grateful for all the support that ECOP Canada has given us and know this experience has been significant for our careers.

— Jeanine Sinclair



As a recently graduated marine biologist with an accumulated 10 years of numerous volunteer placements, internships, study time, and enthusiasm for all things ocean, I consider myself to be a competent advocate and leader in climate action and the mitigation of other ocean conservation issues. However, there exist many barriers in securing employment or project funding. In part, this is a result of intergenerational inequity found in the ocean sector.

The sponsorships graciously donated by Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP) Canada was instrumental to my attendance and successes at the 7th International Marine Debris Conference (7IMDC) hosted in Busan, South Korea. In turn, this relationship fostered my connection to the ocean, strengthened my career pathway, provided experiential learning opportunities, and introduced me to new career opportunities. This testimonial will serve as a recognition of what was accomplished at 7IMDC because of the contributions made by ECOP Canada.

In addition to the numerous learning opportunities, both within sessions and on field days, I accomplished two central goals during the conference (1) I delivered a presentation on the need to advance monitoring standards for marine debris and the current gaps in progress (2) Jeanine and I delivered a poster presentation on youth engagement and the value of mentorship programs.

My presentation on monitoring standards was my first presentation at an international conference. This presentation resulted in many discussions which will advance the development of a paper on this subject. The discussions held will also inform the development of an Essential Ocean Variable (EOV) for marine debris with CIOOS. I hope to maintain the many connections formed with organizations from around the world to support the advancement of these projects.

Our poster on youth engagement was our first poster delivered at an international conference. I had many meaningful conversations on my poster topic and these served as inspiration for a panel I organized upon return to Vancouver featuring indigenous youth and a local Member of Parliament on the topic of youth engagement. These connections and the knowledge learned will continue to fuel my future career path and currently are operable within my role as IMPAC5 coordinator alongside its young professionals committee. I wholeheartedly appreciate the contributions of Ocean Networks Canada and ECOP Canada, and know the impacts of attending 7IMDC will develop for long into the future.

— Kara Guloien



Results of highlighted events:

ArcticNet's Annual Science Meeting in Toronto, Ontario

Hosted in Toronto, December 4 - 8, 2022, the [ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting 2022 \(ASM2022\)](#) is a hub for Arctic and northern research in Canada. ECOP Canada attended to engage with early career researchers at ArcticNet to ensure the voices of ECOPs from coast to coast to coast are strengthened and heard. By hosting engaging activities and we increased the opportunities and membership of ECOPs who are in the Arctic or working on Arctic/Northern research from natural, health, and social sciences.

We were instrumental in organizing and hosting the following activities to engage ECOPs:



- We were able to support the attendance of 5 ECOP Canada members to ASM 2022, where they were able to deliver panels and presentations and share knowledge on their research.
- We engaged with a lot of folks that had no information on the decade and informed them opportunities to participate and strengthen their voice.
- Developed and hosted workshop and collected perspectives on the Ocean Decade from around 50 early career northern researchers.
- 38 early career researchers signed up as ECOP Canada members and gave out 1136 of our specially designed stickers of Narwhal, Humpback Whale, and Great Pacific Octopus.
- ArcticNet's ASM 2022 marked the first conference that our ECOP Canada t-shirts made an appearance.
- We supported a Red River Metis-settler interdisciplinary researcher and beadwork artist, Danielle Nowosad by purchasing a handmade beaded pin of a water drop. This was our first prize giveaway to early career researchers who signed up for free ECOP Canada membership at our table.
- We engaged many early career researchers who floated into the Ocean, Freshwater, and Us room to check out the giant floor map and augmented reality (AR) experience to explore marine environments and watersheds in Canada. Thanks to our partners at Ocean Week Canada, the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition, and SOI Foundation for this successful collaboration.
- We joined many incredible researchers and designs at the two poster sessions to present our poster on Early Career Ocean Professional Landscape in Canada: Needs, Beliefs and Ideas.
- We were featured as special guests at Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the ORCA booth to engage participants on Canada's Ocean Decade and ECOPs' role in the Decade.



With financial support from ECOP Canada, I attended the ArcticNet ASM in Toronto this past December. These five days were a great experience to meet and learn from fellow ECOPs after several years of online conferences. I was able to reconnect with colleagues and friends from past research cruises and meet other early-career marine researchers and Arctic research professionals from a wide range of disciplines. Throughout the week I attended talks including those in the "Arctic-sea ice-ocean interactions in a changing Arctic" and "Ocean dynamics in the Arctic: from coast to open ocean" sessions, and plenaries on topics including the sensitivity of Arctic regions to contaminants, and Canada's response to the Ocean Decade in relation to the Canadian North. I was also able to present my own research with a talk on Trace Metal Distributions in the Western Canadian Arctic, and co-chair a panel on How to Conduct Respectful and Reciprocal Northern Research as part of ArcticNet's ECR Days. Overall, this conference was an invaluable opportunity to communicate with researchers across Canada and beyond, and I left feeling inspired as I enter the last leg of my PhD. — Tia Anderlini





Results of highlighted events:

The 5th International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC5) in Vancouver, BC

Photo Credits: Mary Paquet / The Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition

From February 3rd to 9th, ECOP Canada and the Global ECOP Programme's inspiring community of national and international early career ocean professionals (ECOPs) and allies came together at the The 5th International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC5) in Vancouver, BC. As a UN Ocean Decade endorsed project, our goal is to achieve intergenerational equity and include the voices of ECOPs in high-level dialogues and decisions made about the ocean's future.



Early Career Ocean Professionals who participated in IMPAC5 both virtually and in person demonstrated to the global stage that ECOPs are already the ocean leaders we need to bring forth and take action on transformative solutions to care for and protect the ocean for every generation.

Our ECOP community, partners, high-level decision makers, and future collaborators were engaged while hearing the diverse perspectives, insights, experiences, and solutions that ECOPs bring to achieving ocean health.



Overall, many ECOPs and allies came out of their experiences at IMPAC5 feeling empowered to come together as a community to uplift each other's work and collectively reach ambitious targets like 30x30 and solutions to meet the Ocean Decade Outcomes.

We were instrumental in organizing and hosting the following activities to engage ECOPs:

- We supported the participation of 15 ECOP Canada members at IMPAC5 by providing stipends for congress registration, accommodation, and travel.
- Many thanks to the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition for supporting ECOP Canada members with funding to show up and make waves at IMPAC5. Your ongoing dedication to empower future and current ocean leaders with impactful opportunities in Canada's ocean literacy space and blue economy is inspiring!
- We rocked our workshop and networking session at the #NatureforAll Youth Archipelago and collected perspectives on the Ocean Decade from around 70 early career ocean professionals, which will be shared and amplified beyond IMPAC5.
- We engaged with a lot of folks nationally and internationally that had no information on the Ocean Decade and informed them opportunities to participate and strengthen their voice.
- We teamed up with Sustainable Ocean Alliance, Parley Ocean Uprise, and Ocean Wise to host the first-ever, "Building Bridges" networking event at the Ocean Wise office in Vancouver, BC. This social event facilitated networking for 100+ young professionals from IMPAC5 and the early career ocean professional community in Vancouver. The event connected ocean leaders with each other to build community and capacity. Additionally, high level decision-makers attended and met with the next bench of environmental leaders.





Results of highlighted events:

The 5th International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC5) in Vancouver, BC

- We engaged many ECOPs and collaborators who floated into #NatureforAll Youth Archipelago to visit our booth and learn more about the Ocean Decade, ECOP Canada, and the Global ECOP Programme. All while giving out handfuls of specially designed stickers featuring marine life from across Canada
- 7 ECOP delegates took over our Instagram Stories (@ecopcanada) throughout IMPAC5 to share their experiences, insights, and knowledge with our national audience of ECOPs and ocean partners.
- Special mention to Talaysay Tours, one of the First Nations vendors at IMPAC5 selling unique merch! We picked up a sweet tee with a beautiful graphic of a pod of orcas to our random prize giveaway to members who signed up for our free network during the congress.
- We're so excited to keep sharing the perspectives, insights, and experiences of ECOPs with our network of partners and collaborators in Canada and around the world beyond IMPAC5 and the Ocean Decade.
- The presence and participation of ECOPs at major conferences is key for our goal to ensure the diverse voices ECOPs are included in high-level conversations and decisions made about the future of Canada's ocean.
- We teamed up with SOA, ECOP Canada, Parley Ocean Uprise, University of British Columbia, First Nations Fisheries Council, and Ocean Wise Ocean Bridge to host a panel and presentations featuring, "The Voice of Young Professionals: Advancing 30x30 and Protecting Boundaries Beyond National Jurisdiction," at the IUCN Pavilion. Speakers were talented young people and early career professionals who have contributed to movements and initiatives that advance 30x30 and deep-sea protection.
- By partnering with SOA, ECOP Canada, Parley Ocean Uprise, University of British Columbia, First Nations Fisheries Council, and Ocean Wise Ocean Bridge we collectively elevated the voices of ECOPs and young people as stakeholders in the state of the ocean. We created dynamic spaces for these young ocean leaders and ECOPs to share their perspectives and engage with high-level decision makers. By generating these meaningful networking and development opportunities for ECOPs and youth, we are increasing intergenerational collaboration as we collectively strive to bring forth and implement transformative solutions for the ocean's future.





Results of highlighted events:

The 5th International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC5) in Vancouver, BC

Testimonials



Attending the Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) with financial support from ECOP Canada was truly a privilege, as I know the amount of barriers that people can face entering these spaces. It was my first in-person conference experience, and I cannot truly convey how grateful I was for this to be my first - from the integration of Indigenous voices from around the globe into every area of the conference, to the amplification of youth and young professional voices, to the focus being specifically on ocean conservation, and finally to the fact that it was being held in the place I was born and raised, where my love for the ocean was first sparked, in Vancouver, BC.

I could write forever about the impact of listening to and learning from ocean legends and leaders from around the globe like the world-renowned Dr. Sylvia Earle, pioneering marine biologist Asha de Vos, the incredible Sea Legacy co-founder and photographer Cristina Mitter-Meier, the passionate 'Aulani Wilhelm, burgeoning legend Titouan Bernicott of Coral Gardeners, and so many others. While listening to these people share their stories and work is an experience I will cherish for a lifetime, the part of the conference that I believe influenced me the most was getting to interact with my fellow Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs), from across Canada and around the globe. Working in this field can be demoralizing, and being able to discuss with my peers the revolutionary work happening in ocean conservation by youth and for youth was remarkable. With so much passion and drive to save our planet in one space, and having the opportunity to help facilitate a workshop and learn about youth priorities within ocean conservation, I left the conference feeling truly inspired.

In addition to this, I was able to learn about some exceptional conservation work and to network with conservation researchers around the world. Some of these research topics included the use of the Ocean Wise Whale Report Alert System in mitigating cetacean ship strikes, the work by Ducks Unlimited in coastal flood protection in the Fraser Delta, the role of sharks in MPAs internationally, importance of kelp reforestation along the BC coast, tackling eco-anxiety, recovery strategies of hammerhead sharks in Costa Rica, the discovery of a new kelp species in the Galapagos Marine Reserve, and so many more. Having the chance to learn from the sessions, Indigenous leaders, and conservation researchers from around the world will directly affect my own professional work and beyond. Within my own work within the Ocean Bridge Program at Ocean Wise, it was so motivating to see the amount of Ocean Wise Youth ambassadors and alumni from all of the Ocean Wise Youth programs attending the conference in a myriad of disciplines. This really demonstrated to me the value of youth investment and education across conservation spaces, and I can't wait to see what my fellow ECOPs will get up to next! I truly cannot thank ECOP Canada and their partners enough, as without their support I would not have been able to participate in this life-changing experience.

— Hailey K Boehner



I am so grateful for the opportunity to attend the 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) in Vancouver thanks to the support of ECOP Canada. After working in the marine conservation field for a few years, I had heard a lot about IMPAC5 and was eager to attend. I knew it would be an invaluable opportunity to learn more about MPA creation and management and expand my network. However, like many early-career professionals, I am often bouncing between different short-term contracts. This makes it more challenging to convince my frequently-changing-employers to send me to conferences like IMPAC5, and the high registration fee made it inaccessible for me to attend on my own.

IMPAC5 absolutely exceeded my expectations in almost every metric. I spent the week completely immersed in all things ocean. The morning keynote speakers included many ocean-heroes I have looked up to for a long time (Sylvia Earle! Cristina Mittermeier! Asha de Vos!) - I can still hardly believe I was able to learn from such iconic researchers and advocates. Then there were the countless seminars and presentations throughout the day. I particularly appreciated the many opportunities to learn from different First Nations and Indigenous groups about the ways they are working to steward the marine ecosystems within their territories - and I was not the only one - I attended many sessions that were standing room only.

ECOP Canada also connected me with a speaking opportunity at the IUCN Pavilion at IMPAC5. Being able to share my experiences on an international stage was nerve-wracking, but I felt supported throughout the experience and I feel very fortunate to be given the opportunity!

Even outside of the formal agenda, the learning never stopped. Throughout the week, the most impactful moments were formed while connecting with friends, old and new. ECOP Canada introduced me to an amazing network from across Canada and around the world. My conversations over the week opened my mind, challenged me, and inspired me to continue working towards a vibrant and sustainable ocean.

— Kirsten Mathison



I was fortunate to be able to attend IMPAC5 as an Early Career Ocean Professional (ECOP) attendee. Due to joining ECOP, I was able to travel from Nova Scotia to be there in Vancouver. ECOP gave me an opportunity that I never would have had due to financial restrictions.



I wanted to attend IMPAC5 as I've worked in ocean science over the last 5 years, plus I am currently taking my Masters of Marine Studies. My life living by the ocean has led me into the direction of working with the ocean. I was able to connect with inspiring youth, powerful speakers, and passionate scientists. This networking opportunity allowed me to meet a lot of interesting people and attend many sessions throughout the week. I've gained connections that I will be contacting to help me in my field from ocean technology, DFO employees, and all the youth that surrounded me. I am excited to be able to take things learned and implement them back in my everyday life! ECOP is an amazing program that was able to give me and so many other youth a voice at IMPAC5. I've learned that although there is currently fear for our oceans, there is also so much hope.

— Amanda Gove





Results of highlighted events:

The 5th International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC5) in Vancouver, BC

Testimonials



As an early career ocean science professional, it can be extremely intimidating to go to major conferences such as IMPAC5 - not only do we want to satisfy our own desire to learn from other professionals, but we also want to expand our network. ECOP Canada provided the much-needed financial support to attend IMPAC5 and a social safety net for us when we are feeling overwhelmed by the congress. Surrounded by my ECOP Canada peers, I am encouraged to approach my ocean heroes, such as Sylvia Earle, Cristina Mittenmier, Asha de Vos, Titouan Bernicot, and many others, to seek advice and collaboration opportunities. The ECOP Canada peer network also empowered me to speak up during important ocean dialogues to make sure diverse voices from young professionals are heard at the decision-making table.

Coming home from IMPAC5 I feel invigorated by the amazing work that my peers are doing around the world. I also came home with an expanded network of passionate professionals that I can lean on for further collaborations. For example, Amanda Gove, fellow ECOP Canada, and I have connected virtually on multiple occasions to discuss our respective work on ghost fishing gear, but it was not until IMPAC5 that we were able to connect in person in a more casual setting and learn about each others' work in more details to discuss future collaborations. Many of these potential collaboration opportunities emerged thanks to ECOP Canada's sponsorship of my IMPAC5 participation, and I look forward to continuing to actively engage with the ECOP community for Oceanic Impact's future projects.

— Lisa Chen



I am very grateful for the financial support I received from ECOP Canada and the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition, which enabled me to attend the IMPAC 5 Ocean Congress in February 2023. The week-long conference was a one-of-a-kind experience to engage with other ocean industry professionals across private, research, and non-profit sectors, which I have never had the privilege of engaging with before, in such a unique conference setting. The diverse views and perspectives were very insightful, and I found the various panels and presentations demonstrating the application of novel innovative ocean technologies particularly interesting. The pavilion section created opportunities for me to engage with ECOPs and working professionals representing a wide variety of organizations ranging from patent-pending oceanography development companies, to the World Wildlife Fund, to other smaller-scale Canadian non-profits such as Students on Ice. Because of the diversity of organizations present at this prestigious event, there were also a large number of unique opportunities to engage informally with key funders and partners, such as at the OceanWise mixer. This conference was the most valuable of learning opportunities especially for an ECOP like myself with an unconventional background in policy rather than marine research, and I am left feeling more hopeful towards our oceans. I am very grateful that ECOP Canada has created such an opportunity for youth from all walks of life, and look forward to continue engaging with the extensive community that I am now a part of.

— Sharon Low



As an international PhD student in Environmental Sciences working in groundwater-ocean interaction research, I wanted to connect with other Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) and established professionals in Canada and globally to build my professional network in the field of marine conservation. ECOP Canada supported me in reaching these goals by providing financial support for my travel, accommodation and conference registration fee for IMPAC5, that took place in Vancouver from 3-9 February, 2023. My participation in IMPAC5 allowed me to gain valuable insights into the latest research and best practices in the field of MPAs. I am inspired by many innovative approaches and successful case studies presented at the conference and felt motivated to contribute to the global MPA movement. I learned many valuable lessons at the conference, including the importance of community engagement and indigenous knowledge in the success of MPAs, the need for cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships, and the importance of climate change models to support MPA implementation and management. I had several meaningful interactions with other ECOPs and established professionals at the conference, which I believe will be helpful for my future career and professional development. I also participated in the third edition of the Ocean Literacy Dialogue series organized by Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition. All of this would have been more challenging to make if I had not attended the conference.

Early career professionals face many challenges and barriers in attending conferences and participating in high-level discussions, including lack of financial resources, limited access to professional networks, and limited opportunities for professional development. However, I believe these networking and training opportunities are critical for professional growth and development, and I am grateful for the support of organizations like ECOP Canada that recognize the importance of supporting ECOPs. I would like to see more opportunities for ECOPs to connect with established professionals in the field and to receive mentoring and professional development support. I believe that these opportunities are critical for the professional growth and development of ECOPs and that they can help build a more sustainable and equitable ocean future.

— Muhammad Qasim Mahmood





ECOP CANADA'S METRICS

OVER 190 MEMBERS

From March 2022 to March 2023, ECOP Canada has increased membership of the network to represent ECOPs from all of Canada's coasts from 33 to 190 members.

Through conference attendance, increased partnerships, and social media programming our membership is consistently growing. Our rate of growth accelerates as the number of tangible opportunities we provide our membership also increases.

21 ECOP MEMBERS RECEIVED CONFERENCE STIPENDS

We supported ECOPs with registration and/or travel stipends, and/or in-kind support (such as network connections or logistical advice) to attend 7 major national and international conferences.

OVER 20 OCEAN ORGANIZATION PARTNERS

As ECOP Canada and the Global ECOP Programme continues to grow, we are forging new relationships that will support the long term objectives of both parties.

We are currently partnered with national and international organizations such as the Sustainable Ocean Alliance, Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition, and the Tula Foundation's Ocean Decade Collaborative Centre for the Northeast Pacific. These partnerships have helped strengthen our reputation and further develop opportunities for ECOPs.

6 ECOP MEMBERS JOINED CANADA'S COMMUNITY OF CHAMPIONS

We have matched 6 ECOPs to 4 out of 7 of Canada's Ocean Decade Outcome working groups. We are continuing to match ECOPs with the remaining groups.

110 ECOPS VOICED THEIR NEEDS

110 ECOPs shared their voice in a survey we created to help us better understand and meet the international and national needs of early career ocean professionals (ECOPs) during the UN Ocean Decade. We are sharing the insights we learned with our partner organizations nationally and internationally to help them to better engage and include ECOPs in high-level conversations and transformative solutions.

The results were turned into a poster that has been shared with ECOPs and industry leaders at events and conferences. View the poster here.

950+ SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

On social we engage ECOPs and share networking and development opportunities from our partner organizations, we are spreading the word about ECOP Canada and amplifying the voices of our members and partner organizations.

226 ECOPS SUBSCRIBED TO MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

We created and are actively sending out a monthly newsletter that highlights networking and development opportunities from our partner organizations.

210 ECOPS ENGAGED WITH OCEAN DECADE FRAMEWORK

We hosted an engaging workshop at 3 major conferences to engage early-career ocean professionals on their role in the UN Ocean Decade.



ECOP CANADA MEDIA

Webinar: The Blue Economy

ECOP Canada co-founder, Ronnie Noonan-Birch was a guest panelist on an ECOP Global webinar.

Watch it [here](#).

Blog: Why Empowering Youth & Early-Career Professionals with Opportunities Will Inspire a Healthy Ocean This Decade

In September, Ashley Bowes, took part in SOI Foundation’s inaugural Ocean Conservation Expedition as the national coordinator for ECOP Canada.

Read it [here](#).

Blog: Outcomes from COP27 and Intergenerational collaboration

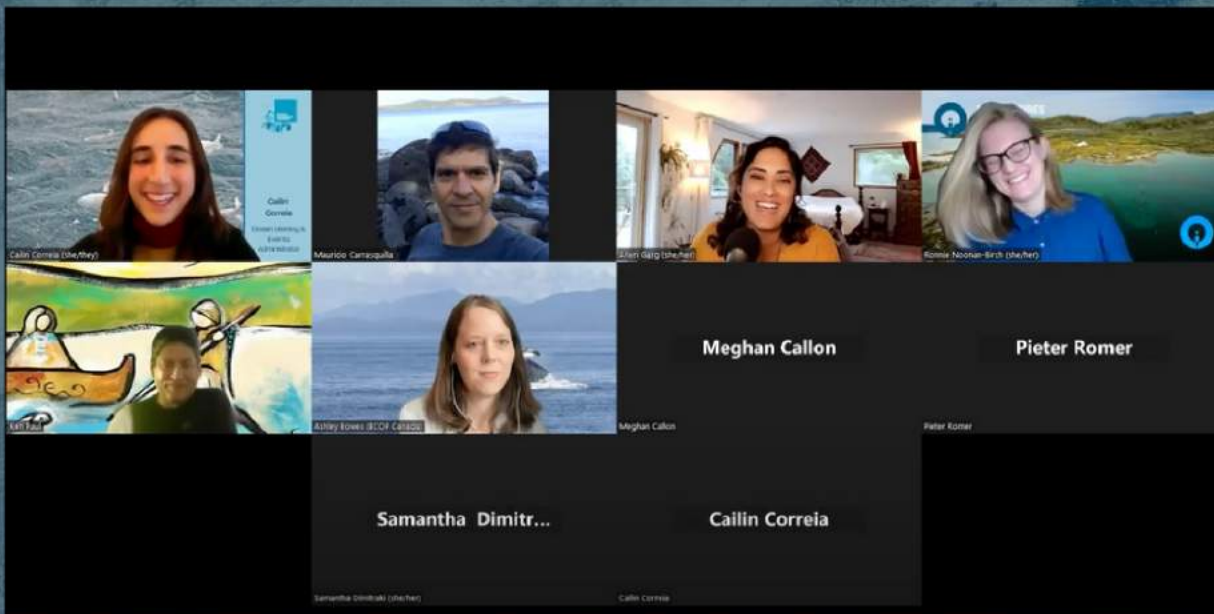
ECOP Canada member, Bodhi Patel writes about his experiences and insights at COP27 and how Intergenerational collaboration with joint decision-making may can become the tool we need for ocean-climate transformation.

Read Part 1 [here](#).

Webinar: Dive into opps & career pathways in the ocean sector

A panel on career pathways in the ocean sector with speakers: Aneri Garg, Ken Paul, and Ronnie Noonan-Birch.

Watch it [here](#).





ECOP CANADA'S PROGRAM OBJECTIVES FOR 2023

1. Continue to grow ECOP membership from all of Canada's oceans

ECOP Canada expects to increase membership of the network to represent ECOPs from all of Canada's coasts. Through conference attendance, increased partnerships, and social media programming our membership is consistently growing. We expect this rate of growth to accelerate as the number of tangible opportunities we can provide our membership also increases.

2. Contribute to the DFO Ocean Decade Strategy

As part of our commitment to the national strategy for the UN Ocean Decade, the ECOP Canada program is working with the Community of Champions to ensure that ECOPs are included within each decade outcome working group. Since the Community of Champions platform is also in early stages, the inclusion of ECOPs in the development of the working groups themselves will ensure that ECOP voices are heard as the Ocean Decade progresses in Canada. We aim to establish at least 2 ECOPs within each working group.

3. Develop a Career Connector program

One of the mandates of the Global ECOP program is to ensure that ECOP voices are included in decision making conversations. To achieve this we are working on the development of a formal application process whereby we can match ECOPs with appropriate ocean organizations/institutions who are looking for ECOP engagement.

4. Continue to grow partnerships to support ECOP Canada members

As ECOP Canada and the Global ECOP program continue to grow we are forging new relationships that will support the long term objectives of both parties. We are currently partnered with multiple national and international organizations such as the Sustainable Ocean Alliance, Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition, and the Tula Foundation. These partnerships help strengthen our reputation and further develop opportunities for ECOPs.

5. Launch programs aimed at ECOP inclusion

With the increased capacity enabled by this support we will also be able to launch other programs aimed at ECOPs within a diversity of ocean sectors. We aim to participate in various ocean conferences by helping to recruit ECOPs for conference attendance, and through hosting events aimed at ECOP engagement. In particular we are hosting events and sending members to ArcticNet's ASM 2022 and IMPAC5.

We are also working on a program to give ECOPs a platform to start initiatives or projects they are interested in.





CONNECT WITH ECOP CANADA

Website / Membership Sign up

CANADA@ECOPDECADE.ORG

Connect with members across Canada and access job, training, funding, and networking opportunities on Slack

@ECOPCANADA



Contact

CANADA@ECOPDECADE.ORG

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