



**ECOP**  
CANADA

# IMPACT REPORT

April 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023



Photo Credit: Mary Paquet / the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition



**ECOP**  
Early Career  
Ocean Professionals



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



# IMPACT AT A GLANCE

## OVER 340 MEMBERS

Membership increased by 81% during the reporting period.



## OVER 30 OCEAN ORGANIZATION PARTNERS

We continue to forge new relationships that support the long term objectives of ECOPs and ocean organizations.



## 19 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 11 major national and international conferences.



## 1650+ SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

We engage and celebrate ECOPs and share opportunities from our partner organizations.



## 305 PHOTOS CREATED BY ECOPS

Submitted to the ECOP Canada Ocean Decade Photo Competition hosted by Canadian Geographic with sponsorship support from COLC and SOI Foundation

## 500+ ECOPS ENGAGED WITH OCEAN DECADE FRAMEWORK

We engaged ECOPs on their role in the UN Ocean Decade through presentations and workshops at conferences, and webinars.

## 26 EVENTS

Hosted or co-hosted with partners to engage ECOPs with meaningful networking and development opportunities



## 50+ PRESENTATIONS

Delivered by ECOP representatives at webinars, events and conferences



## 12 ECOPS PRESENTED TO STUDENTS

for the Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants series sponsored by COLC.



## 441 ECOPS SUBSCRIBED TO NEWSLETTER

We highlight networking and development opportunities from our partner organizations





# 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. Laura Hernandez Merlano, Frankie Marquez, and Jovana Kornicer form the current Steering Committee. On the administrative/implementation team, Ashley Bowes is the National Coordinator and Aneri Garg is the National Program Assistant for ECOP Canada. The Node has an advisory board of 14 ECOPs from various geographical locations, cultures, and professional roles in the ocean space.

The ECOP Canada community primarily exists on Slack, social media, and a newsletter 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.

## 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



**Frankie Marquez**



**Jovana Kornicer**



**Laura Hernandez Merlano**

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM



**Ashley Bowes**  
National Coordinator



**Aneri Garg**  
National Program Assistant



**Iman Berry**  
Ocean Pathways Participant

## ADVISORY BOARD



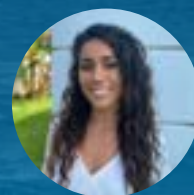
**Ronnie Noonan-Birch**



**Neha Acharya-Patel**



**Samantha McBeth**



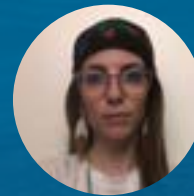
**Rosie Poirier**



**Simone Le Gendre**



**Moronke Harris**



**Leah Creaser**



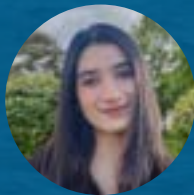
**Alexa Goodman**



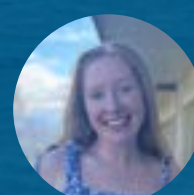
**Cailin Burmaster**



**Amanda Horn**



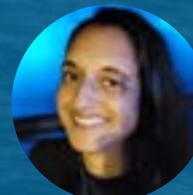
**Rajaa Berry**



**Naomi Boon**



**Sophie Treptau**



**Tara Mascarenhas**

## 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.

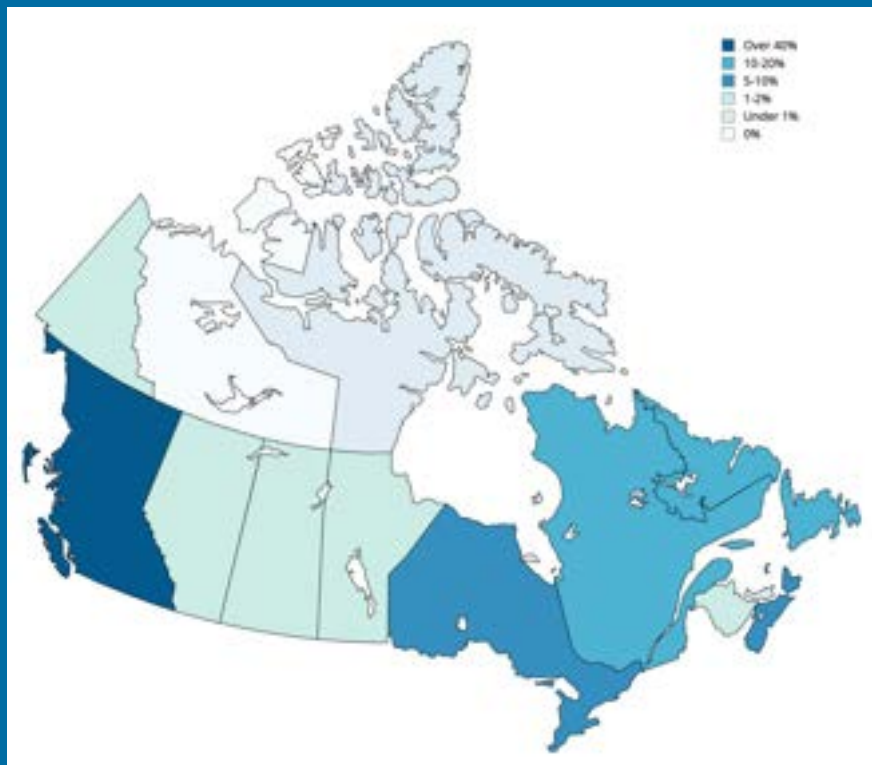


Now is the time to take action by supporting the next generation of ocean leaders to meet the goals of the UN Ocean Decade and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

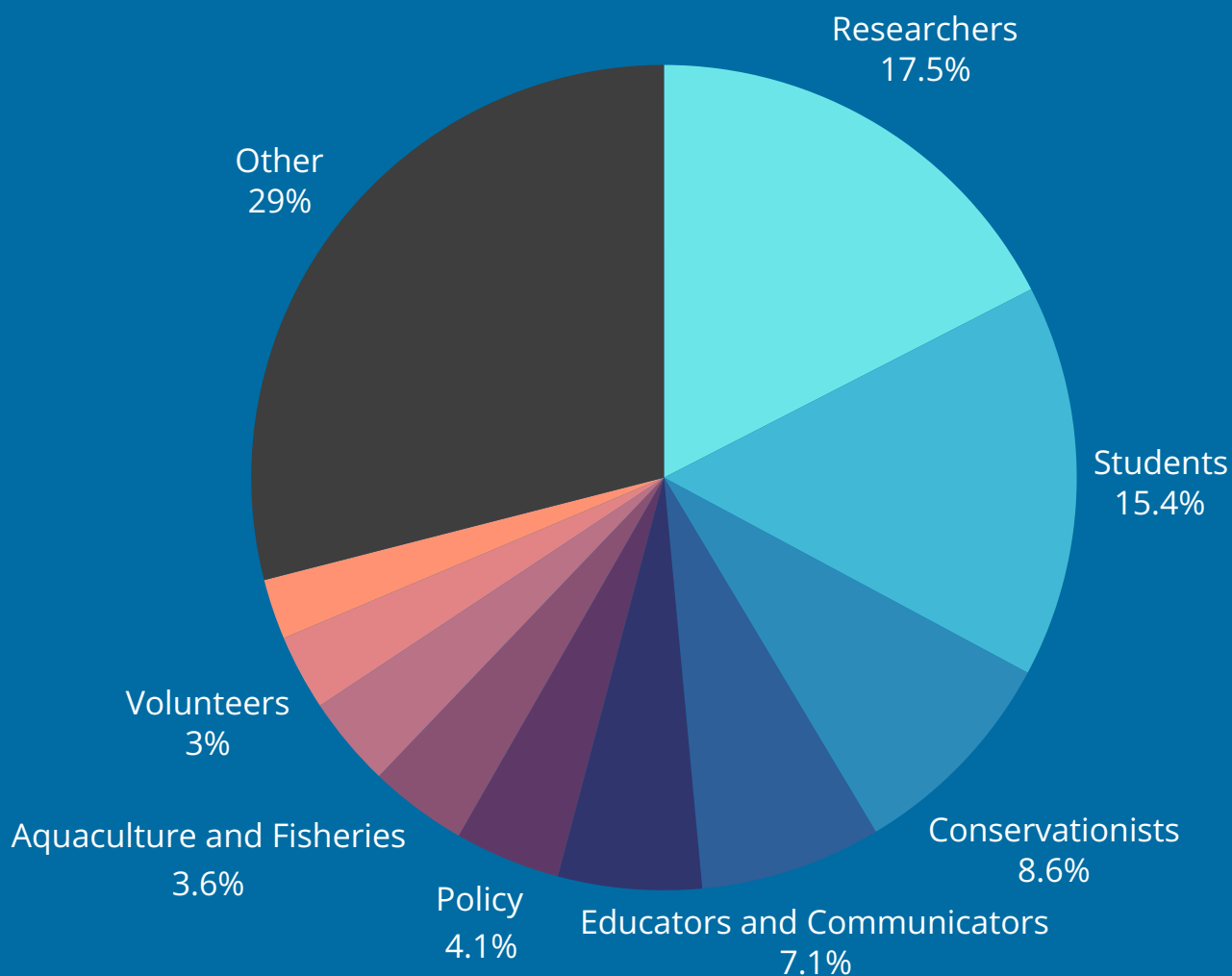


# DEMOGRAPHICS OF ECOP CANADA MEMBERS

## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRUBTION



## ROLES OF MEMBERS





# ECOP CANADA'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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

## 1 Growth of ECOP Canada Members from all of Canada's coast



ECOP Canada has increased membership of the network to represent early career ocean professionals (ECOPs) from all of Canada's coasts from 190 to 344 members. Through conference attendance, webinars, 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. This activity was successful since we experienced a 81% increase in growth of ECOP Canada members during the 2023 fiscal year.

### 2 Led activities that supported the Canadian contribution to the Ocean Decade:

#### Collaborated with Canada's Ocean Decade Office and the Community of Champions at in-person conferences

This year, as part of our commitment to the UN Ocean Decade, ECOP Canada collaborated with the Canadian Ocean Decade Office led by DFO and the Community of Champions at in-person conferences across Canada to ensure the voices of early career ocean professionals are heard and empowered to support the Canadian contribution to the UN Ocean Decade.



At the ORCA 2023 National Meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland in June 2023, two of ECOP Canada's former steering committee members were both key contributors to the plenary session of the meeting.

On behalf of ECOP Canada, Samantha McBeth presented on the importance of meaningful early career engagement at the plenary session of the conference. She presented tangible steps on how Canadian Ocean organizations can ensure that early career perspectives are valued.

Neha Acharya-Patel was an invited member of the panel that addressed the importance of interdisciplinary and intergenerational collaboration in the context of the UN Ocean Decade. ECOP Canada also co-facilitated participatory sessions with each Canadian Decade Champion on each of the UN Ocean Decade outcomes.

These workshops were well received, and the ECOPs supporting each of the Community of Champions and leading the ECOP dialogue at the sessions distilled key takeaways that were then presented at the closing session of the meeting.





**Accomplishments** | Led activities that supported the Canadian contribution to the Ocean Decade

**Collaborated with Canada's Ocean Decade Office and the Community of Champions at in-person conferences**



At the Coastal Zone Conference in Victoria, BC in June 2023, ECOP Canada collaborated with the Ocean Startup Project, Centre for Ocean Applied Sustainable Technologies (COAST), the Ocean Decade Collaborative Centre for the Northeast Pacific, and Canadian Decade Champion for a Predicted Ocean, Jonathan Kellogg, to deliver a workshop to engage early career ocean professionals on their role in the UN Ocean Decade.

The workshop engaged ECOPs on the [10 Ocean Decade Challenges](#) and involved an interactive session for ECOPs and leaders involved in the Ocean Decade to collaboratively brainstorm transformative ocean tech and social solutions that will address the Ocean Decade challenges.

Read the report on ECOP perspectives on the Ocean Decade Challenges [here](#).

## **ECOP inclusion in the Community of Champions Working Groups**

During the 2023 FY, ECOP Canada continued to support ECOP inclusion in the 7 Ocean Decade Outcome working groups by checking in with the Community of Champions and the ECOPs participating in the working groups to ensure ECOP voices were being heard and empowered to support the Canadian contribution to the Ocean Decade.

Since the Community of Champions platform is also in early stages, the inclusion of ECOPs in the development of the working groups themselves ensures that ECOP voices are heard as the Ocean Decade progresses in Canada.



## **Accomplishments | Led activities that supported the Canadian contribution to the Ocean Decade**

### **c) Co-hosted and facilitated webinars that engaged ECOPs on the Ocean Decade Framework**



#### **Ocean Science Together Webinar | Watch [here](#)**

In July, ECOP Canada hosted an important conversation on Ocean Science Together with Alexandra Anaviapik to early career ocean professionals across Canada and the world. The webinar highlighted the intersection of The UN Ocean Decade and Reconciliation and engaged ECOPs on why it is time to transform the way countries such as Canada approach our relationship with the Ocean, bringing together all perspectives, especially those of Indigenous Peoples who have drawn sustenance from the ocean for thousands of years without compromising the integrity of its ecosystems.

Alex shared her insights and recommendations with the larger ECOP community regarding effective communication skills and making space for the purposeful inclusion of Indigenous people as we work together for the Ocean We Want.

#### **How to be a Community Resilience Warrior in the Face of Ocean Hazards Webinar | Watch [here](#)**

In October, ECOP Canada teamed up with ECOP U.S. and the Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA) to deliver a regional webinar series focused on Ocean Decade Challenge #6: Increase community resilience to ocean hazards. This panel brought together experts from three North American organizations and regions to discuss their experience in addressing community resilience in response to climate-related ocean hazards. One of the panel members included an ECOP based in Canada, Amanda Lim, the Program Manager of Environmental Initiatives.

This webinar series is part of SOA's contribution to the UN Decade of Ocean Science ECOP Programme, which aims to harness and connect regional networks, share information about the UN Ocean Decade, and discuss how we can contribute to specific Ocean Decade Goals.



#### **ECOP-focused conversations in the Decade Dialogue Series | Watch [here](#).**

ECOP Canada supported the Ocean Decade Collaborative Center for the Northeast Pacific with facilitating a series of webinars that aimed to convene conversations among knowledge holders, scientists, practitioners, and community members in the Northeast Pacific region. The series highlights timely topics and advances in ocean science through the lens of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, grounded in the interests and priorities of coastal communities.

Each Decade Dialogue featured a 30-minute discussion that invited early career ocean professionals participating in the webinar to engage with the panel of speakers and ask career-focused questions. ECOP Canada supported recruiting voluntary members to lead the conversations and facilitate the intergenerational knowledge exchange.



### 3 Developed the programs to increase ECOP inclusion in Canada's ocean sector The Career Connector Program



Through the Career Connector Program, ECOP Canada aims to create a platform that will connect organizations and leaders with the skills and knowledge that early career ocean professionals (ECOPs) bring to the ocean space.

During the development of the program, ECOP Canada reached out to our network of early career ocean professionals and identified a need among interested members to develop a work placement package that offers short-term opportunities (6 to 8 weeks) for ECOPs to gain impactful career experiences with various ocean organizations in a variety of ocean fields.

The goal is that through a variety of experiences in the ocean sector, ECOPs can identify the career pathways available to them through immersive experiences and organizations will recognize the talent ECOPs bring to the sector and create long-term career opportunities for ECOPs. Another goal that was identified was the value of a cohort-based program to enable peer-to-peer mentorship and capacity building.

The work placement packages also aim to provide ECOPs with an equitable hourly wage and benefits, to address barriers that ECOPs face when entering the workforce such as:

- A lack of equitable wages and benefits;
- A lack of connections and a support network;
- A lack of understanding about career pathways and professional development opportunities in Canada's ocean sector.

This program supported the inclusion of ECOPs in the ocean sector by identifying barriers for the recruitment of ECOPs, identifying the needs of ECOPs for their success in the sector, liaising with and consulting partners on their needs for including ECOPs and incorporated inclusive practices within the design and development of the program (i.e. advocating for equitable pay and benefits during the program).

The next step for this program is actively applying for multi-year funding as well as building connections with partners/institutions who are interested in offering ECOPs workplace packages and training programs to further develop ECOPs soft and hard skill sets.



## Accomplishments | Developed the programs to increase ECOP inclusion in Canada's ocean sector



### Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants | Watch [here](#)

In partnership with Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants and the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition (COLC), ECOP Canada brought together a dynamic team of early career ocean professionals (ECOPs) from across Canada and around the world to share with students (mainly grades 3 to 8) their personal stories of what ignited their passion for the ocean and how they embarked on their career paths. Students gained insights into the nature of their work, the challenges they face, and the burning questions that drive their curiosity.



### ECOP Canada Ocean Decade Photo Competition | View results [here](#)

ECOP Canada partnered with Canadian Geographic and SOI's Blue Future Pathways to host an online photo competition that aimed to show how ECOPs in Canada today are the force working towards and promoting ocean sustainability during the UN Ocean Decade.

The photo competition collected and shared visual stories from ECOPs on the diversity of ocean careers that exist in Canada and the people engaged in this meaningful work.

Prizes for the photo competition's winners included sponsorships from SOI's Blue Future Pathways, Canadian Geographic, Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition, and Hydro Flask.



### Ocean People Canada (OPC) Meetings

ECOP Canada partnered with the Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA), Ocean Wise, and Ocean Uprise to create "Ocean People Canada" (OPC) which aims to unite Canada's ocean professionals and enthusiasts through a common, quarterly meeting to improve communication, access to information, and identify synergies for collaboration along themes. ECOP Canada worked closely with the core organizers to deliver two meetings in 2023 that engaged early career ocean professionals and organizations across Canada.

The first meeting focused on strategies to apply for Satellite Events at the UN Ocean Conference.

The second meeting hosted in November engaged OPC participants on innovative approaches to pitching and funding projects. The meeting included insights from ECOP Canada members, Frankie Marquez and Bodhi Patil on effective methods for grant applications.



## Accomplishments

# 4 Secured 12 new partners and collaborators to cooperate with ECOP Canada to achieve the objectives of the program



Photo Credit: Mary Paquet / the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition

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. Additional partnerships and collaborations secured to cooperate with ECOP Canada to achieve program objectives include:

- Canadian Geographic
- Canada's Ocean Supercluster (OSC)
- Centre for Ocean Applied Sustainable Technologies (COAST)
- Ocean Startup Project
- Ocean Wise's Ocean Pathways
- Open Ocean Robotics
- Earth Echo International
- Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants
- ECOP Caribbean
- ECOP Central America
- Institut de Ciencias del Mar
- Youth Climate Corps

### 5 Participation of the ECOP Canada's leadership team in conferences and events

ECOP Canada's leadership participated in 4 ocean conferences nationally and internationally to host events and outreach activities aimed at ECOP engagement. In particular, our leadership team hosted outreach activities and led workshops at the following conferences:



#### ORCA 2023 National Meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland

- In May, Samantha McBeth presented tangible steps on how Canadian Ocean organizations can ensure that early career perspectives are valued at the plenary session of the conference.
- Neha Acharya-Patel was an invited member of the panel that addressed the importance of interdisciplinary and intergenerational collaboration in the context of the UN Ocean Decade.
- ECOP Canada co-facilitated participatory sessions with each Canadian Decade champion on each of the UN Ocean Decade outcomes and guided ECOPs presenting key takeaways at the closing session.

#### Coastal Zone Conference (CZC) in Victoria, British Columbia

- National Coordinator Ashley Bowes played a key role on the CZC's ECOP Committee to plan engaging activities, speaking and funding opportunities for ECOPs attending the conference.
- In June, Ashley Bowes and former ECOP Canada Steering Committee member, Ronnie Noonan-Birch led and facilitated a workshop that engaged ECOPs on the 10 Ocean Decade Challenges and brainstormed tech and social solutions that could be implemented during the UN Ocean Decade. The workshop brought together new key partners such as the Ocean Startup Project and COAST, which has led to developing future development opportunities for ECOPs as well as increased a strong partnership with the Ocean Decade Collaborative Center for the Northeast Pacific.



#### Coastal Conference in Victoria, British Columbia

- In October, Frankie Marquez attended the conference, hosted by the BC Métis Federation, to network with ocean professionals who are mostly Indigenous in British Columbia. The engaged professionals focused on conservation and who take part in high-level conversations about the protection and preservation of BC's delicate aquatic ecosystems.
- Frankie presented on ECOP Canada's initiatives and how ocean professionals can empower the voices of early career professionals during the UN Ocean Decade and join the ECOP network.
- View Frankie's presentation recording [here](#).

#### Climate Week NYC

- In September, Laura Hernandez attended New York Climate week. The primary event was the UN Oceans event that discussed the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction treaty. Laura also was researching the ocean-climate nexus and making connections with partners across the climate and ocean industry.
- Laura prioritized advocating for ECOP inclusion, ECOP career development and creating opportunities for partnership within Canadian advocacy spaces.



## 6 Further developed and offered registration and travel stipends to support the participation and attendance of ECOP Canada members at conferences and events focused on a diversity of ocean sectors both nationally and internationally



**19 ECOP Canada members** were supported with registration and/or travel stipends, and/or in-kind support (such as network connections or logistical advice) **to attend 11 conferences:**

- The Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society (CMOS) 57th Congress / ORCA 2023 National Meeting in St. John’s, Newfoundland
- Coastal Zone Conference in Victoria, British Columbia
- Marine Renewables Canada in Ottawa, Ontario
- PICES-2023 Annual Meeting in Seattle, USA
- Ring of Fire to Indigenous Rights and Food Gathering in Treaty 9
- ITECHMER in Lorient, France
- Advancing Sustainability in Higher Education - AASHE 2023 Conference & Expo in Boston, USA
- 11th European Conference on Echinoderms (ECE11) in Lyon, France
- National CMAC Fall 2023 Canadian Marine Advisory Council (CMAC) in Ottawa, Ontario
- Seafood and Fisheries Emerging Technologies (SAFET) Conference in Bali, Indonesia
- UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates



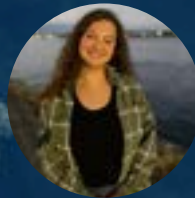


## 7 Recruitment and onboarding of new ECOP Canada leadership team - Advisory Board and Steering Committee Members

STEERING COMMITTEE



Frankie Marquez



Jovana Kornicer



Laura Hernandez Merlano

ADVISORY BOARD



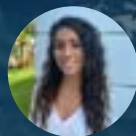
Ronnie Noonan-Birch



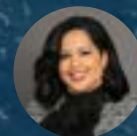
Neha Acharya-Patel



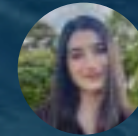
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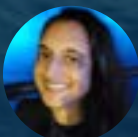
Cailin Burmaster



Amanda Horn



Sophie Treptau



Tara Mascarenhas

Since its conception in 2021, ECOP Canada has grown to be recognized as the Early Career Network in Canada's ocean space. This growth and trajectory has been due to the hard work of our founding Steering Committee and Advisory Board. As a result, the opportunity to serve on ECOP Canada's Advisory Board and Steering Committee has also led to growth and new career opportunities for the founding members.

In order to continue meeting ECOP Canada's capacity development goals are met, our founding Advisory Board and Steering Committee members termed to change on a rotational basis with members to serve two-year terms with a maximum of two terms.

The two-year rotation ensures that a new team of ECOPs can bring their strengths and vision to Canada's ocean table while honing their leadership skills. As well as that a diversity of ECOP perspectives are empowered and heard to support a strong Canadian contribution to the UN Ocean Decade.

From June to September 2023, the founding ECOP Canada Advisory Board and Steering Committee members planned their succession and developed a strategy for recruiting and onboarding new Steering Committee and Advisory Board members.

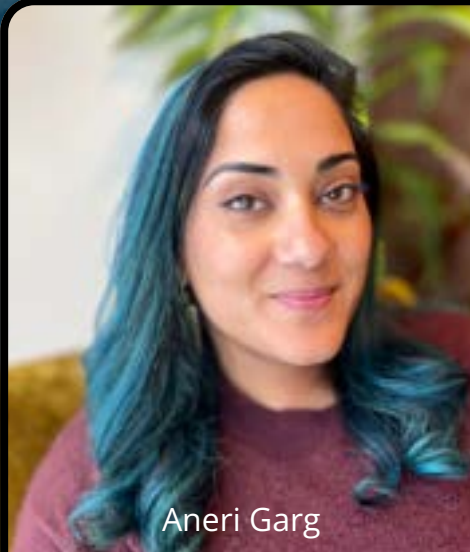
By formalizing the rotational process, ECOP Canada's Advisory Board has grown from 7 founding members to 15 new members with various geographical locations, cultures, and professional roles in the ocean sector. Each member has an assigned role within the board to focus on Communications, Community Engagement, Indigenous Engagement, International Partnerships, Grant Writing, Treasury, and Administration.

On the new Steering Committee, Frankie Marquez, Jovana Kornicer, and Laura Hernandez Merlano bring their leadership experience from diverse backgrounds in the ocean sector ranging from policy, governance, advocacy, funding, storytelling, Indigenous engagement, Equity, Justice, Inclusion, and Accessibility, communications, and grant writing.





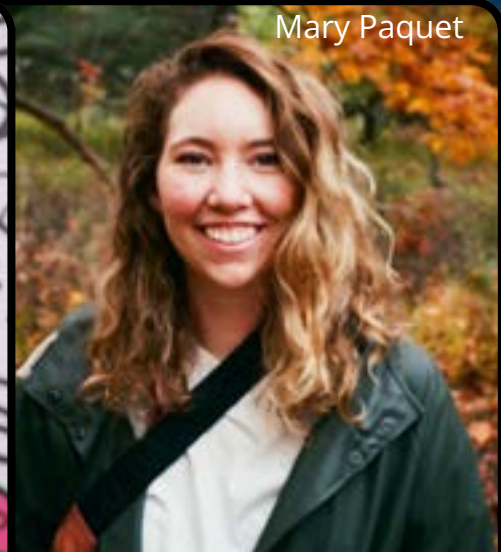
# 8 Hired early career ocean professionals in Canada to support the growth of the network



Aneri Garg



Samantha Dimitraki



Mary Paquet

- National Program Assistant

In September 2023, we hired ECOP Canada member Aneri Garg part-time to support our National Coordinator with social media, communications, programming, webinars, community and partner engagement, grant writing, and conference planning.

- Graphic Designer

ECOP Canada member, Mary Paquet was hired as a contractor to create graphics in French and English highlighting, "How ECOPs view the UN Ocean Decade Outcomes," which are perspectives we gathered while engaging ECOPs at IMPAC5. The graphic is being shared with our partners to amplify the voices of ECOPs and provide tangible solutions to meeting the goals of the Decade Outcomes with intergenerational equity as a priority.

- French Translator

ECOP Canada member, Samantha Dimitraki was re-hired as a contractor to translate our communication materials into French. This role is a pivotal part of ensuring we engage with ECOP Canada members who are Francophone and continue to build a network that is inclusive and diverse across Canada.

- Sponsorship and Grant Consultants

We hired ECOP Canada advisory board member, Alexa Goodman, and Laura Hernandez Merlano to develop ECOP Canada's Grant and Sponsorship Strategies, and propose a comprehensive funding ecosystem aimed at fortifying the organization's financial resilience and fostering growth. Overall, the strategies provide the required information to position ECOP Canada for sustained success, ensuring its role as a vital catalyst in empowering early career professionals within the ocean sector and blue economy.



## Accomplishments

### 8 Grew ECOP engagement on social media and newsletter outreach

By building and maintaining a social media and newsletter presence to 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.

Social Media Channels:

- [Instagram](#): 670
- [Twitter](#): 240
- [LinkedIn](#): 295
- [YouTube](#): 219 (Shared with Global ECOP Programme)
- We are actively sending out a monthly newsletter that highlights networking and development opportunities from our partner organizations.
- # of ECOPs engaged and subscribed to monthly newsletter: 441

### 9 Created media content for partners that increased ECOP engagement and spread awareness about ECOP Canada's impact



#### **Blog: How do Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) View the 7 Decade Outcomes?** Updated with IMPAC5 Graphic

Our workshop to engage ECOPs on the 7 Ocean Decade Outcomes was held at the 5th International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC5) in February 2023. ECOP Canada member Mary Paquet incorporated these solutions into an accessible graphic to showcase the many overlapping perspectives, interests, and outcomes that the international participants shared.

Read the updated blog post [here](#).

#### **The 4 Things You Didn't Know About ECOP Canada video series**

To celebrate the achievements of ECOP Canada over the last two years, our National Coordinator and former Steering Committee members created a video series shared with the Global ECOP community and on ECOP Canada's social media channels.

View the ECOP Canada video series [here](#)





ECOP Canada has been fostering connections and collaboration within the ocean community. We asked our members about the impactful connections they've made through our network.

## Here's what some of them said:



Connecting with the ECOP Canada Network has been a game-changer for my career. Through this network and collaboration, I've expanded my network significantly, meeting experts and like-minded individuals in the ocean sector and beyond. The network offered me stipends to attend conferences like CMOS, UN Decade, and AASHE, where I gained exposure to new industry intersections and cutting-edge developments. These experiences sharpened my skills, exposed me to diverse perspectives, and opened doors for collaborative projects with fellow ECOPs. Overall, it's been a transformative journey, shaping my approach to sustainability in the Blue Economy and positioning me for impactful work in the field.

— Alexa Goodman



Through this network, I've had the opportunity to connect with fellow scientists, researchers, policymakers, and industry experts, creating a dynamic ecosystem of knowledge exchange. One significant impact has been the enhancement of my skill set. Interacting with experts in various fields within the Blue Economy has allowed me to broaden my understanding of ocean sciences, marine biology, and cutting-edge technologies. Workshops and collaborative projects facilitated by other members within ECOP Canada have played a pivotal role in expanding my expertise, enabling me to contribute more effectively to the ocean sector. Networking opportunities within ECOP Canada have not only led to professional growth but also opened doors to exciting collaborations. By forging connections with like-minded individuals, I've been part of interdisciplinary research endeavours that transcend traditional boundaries, creating a synergy that is essential for tackling complex challenges in deep-sea science. Exposure to diverse career pathways in the Blue Economy has been another valuable aspect. Learning from the experiences of fellow members has provided insights into alternative career trajectories, inspiring new directions for my own exploration endeavours. This exposure has been instrumental in shaping my perspective on the multifaceted opportunities within the ocean sciences and technology landscape. The network has provided a platform for increased visibility within the industry. This visibility has translated into opportunities to share my deep-sea exploration experiences with a broader audience, fostering public awareness and understanding of the importance of ocean exploration.

— Moronke Harris



I was interviewed last year by ECOP and it was a fantastic opportunity to share my work and broadcast through the ECOP network. I am always encouraging others to join ECOP because of the opportunities, connections, and activities that are offered.

— Alexis Bahl



By serving on the ECOP Canada leadership team, I fostered incredible network connections with gov't, NPO and ocean science institutions. This has been invaluable to my career as it has boosted my reputation in these spaces which landed me my current job. Even in my current job, these connections prove to be useful and I know that I have many options in front of me.

— Ronnie Noonan-Birch



## Conference testimonials

# The North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) annual meeting in Seattle, Washington

### Testimonials



In this early stage of my career as an ocean professional, my primary objectives have been to refine my presentation skills for diverse audiences and build a robust multidisciplinary network of scientists. The PICES Annual Meeting emerged as a perfect platform to advance both of these goals. This conference provided a unique opportunity for me to present my work in a specialized session focused on seamount systems—a first for me. Being surrounded by experts in the field allowed me to contribute to discussions in a concentrated area and engage with like-minded professionals who share a specific interest in seamounts. The experience was particularly enriching as I fielded questions from an audience well-versed in my specific system, providing a great learning opportunity. Attending the conference proved to be both eye-opening and impactful.



Participation in any international conference typically comes with financial burdens, and my attendance at the PICES Annual Meeting was no exception. Fortunately, ECOP Canada's support became the crucial bridge to realizing these aspirations. Their funding not only made attending the conference possible but also alleviated the financial constraints, enabling me to fully immerse myself in the experience. The support from ECOP Canada was not merely financial; it acted as a catalyst for my professional development, shaping a pivotal chapter in my early career in ocean sciences.

— Megan Davies



PICES 2023 was the first in-person conference I attended post-grad school, and my goals were to reconnect with previous collaborators that I hadn't seen in years, meet people working in the specific area that I have transitioned into, and most of all to present my postdoc work for the first time.



The week began early on Sunday with a full-day workshop focused on building a framework to study urban impacts on coastal marine ecosystems. This workshop was an opportunity to have broader discussions with and spend time socially with collaborators of our research group from Tsleil-Waututh Nation. This was very beneficial because although we all work in Vancouver, it is a new relationship and most of our interactions have happened over zoom. Much of the discussion centered around how do we approach this work, both scientifically and as part of the political and social landscape. Being together in-person was an essential part of making those conversations possible.

The highlight of the week was giving my talk. I felt that it went very well and had great feedback from the audience, as well as discussion with several people during the coffee break afterwards. The PICES BIO committee awarded me best oral presentation! At PICES I was able to update many people on my current work and meet several important people studying zooplankton food webs at the Alaskan Science Center and Fisheries Oceans Canada.

As an ECOP, it can be difficult trying to meet all the people you should at a conference, especially when social situations can be draining. I try to focus on a few people that I want to make a new connection with, usually because their research is closely aligned with mine. After I gave my talk, a few senior scientists approached me later to introduce themselves. When people do that, it is such a relief because it is an opportunity to meet someone who may be working in your region but not your speciality, and you may not have approached on your own. I am grateful to ECOP Canada for the opportunity to attend this conference, as well as all scientists who go out of their way to include early career scientists.

— Anna McLaskey



## Conference testimonials

# The North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) annual meeting in Seattle, Washington



Having the opportunity to attend and present at conferences is essential for the development of Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP). Conferences can be safe place for young professionals to share their work and passions, network with peers and mentors, and learn from others working and studying within the ocean sphere. However, getting to and from these conferences can pose a financial hurdle that many struggle with. That is why support from organizations such as ECOP Canada is necessary to propelling ECOPs forward, both at home and abroad.



My main objective in attending the meeting was to present my Ph.D. research and gain valuable experience with public speaking and science communication. However, attending PICES 2023 also gave me the opportunity to meet other ECOPs from the international community, network with a mentor as a part of the PICES Mentoring scheme, and learn about international collaborations throughout the North Pacific. Overall, I believe my experiences at the PICES 2023 Annual Meeting were invaluable and will greatly benefit my research.

Without the support I received from ECOP Canada, the experiences I had in Seattle and the connections made along the way would not have been possible, and I am sincerely grateful for their support in my development as an ECOP!

— Lindsay Clark

## The Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Conference - AASHE 2023 Conference & Expo in Boston, USA



This conference made it abundantly clear that there is space for everyone to grow and thrive in advancing sustainability in higher education, regardless of our intersectionalities. Whether it's through small yet mighty projects or the implementation of policies driving change, we are in this together, and that collective power is immense.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Office of Sustainability Dalhousie University and ECOP Canada for making this incredible experience possible.

— Alexa Goodman



## Seafood and Fisheries Emerging Technologies (SAFET) Conference in Bali, Indonesia



Our goal as a company is to revolutionize fisheries monitoring through cutting-edge technology, and SAFET provided us with an invaluable platform to connect, collaborate, and catalyze positive change in the global fisheries and seafood sectors. We are sincerely thankful for the support of ECOP, and the big role they played in helping us to make this event a reality for us!

OnDeck had the privilege of engaging with a diverse and dynamic community that included fishers, industry representatives, fishery managers, scientists, policy-makers, and other key stakeholders. The range of topics covered at SAFET 2023 was comprehensive and aligned perfectly with our mission to leverage emerging technologies for the sustainability of global fisheries and the seafood sector.



— Alexander Dungate



Thanks to the support of ECOP Canada, I was able to attend the Indigenous Lands and Environment Gathering in Thunder Bay, Ontario, hosted by the Friends of the Attawapiskat River and Legal Advocates for Nature's Defence.

The purpose of this conference was for local First Nations' community members and their allies (non-governmental organizations) to discuss the protection of the Attawapiskat river and its watersheds. Specifically, we discussed the development of a Regional Assessment Terms of Reference document, which is intended to guide the federal and provincial governments when conducting environmental impact assessments of proposed mining projects in the Ring of Fire region. It is termed a 'Regional Assessment' because it is not tied to a specific proposed project, but rather an assessment of the cumulative effects that mining development may cause in that region, such as biodiversity loss, destruction of carbon rich peatlands, air and water pollution, and infringement of Indigenous peoples' inherent, Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

This conference allowed me to connect with individuals from a variety of environmental organizations (including Wildlands League, World Wildlife Fund Canada, Mining Watch, and West Coast Environmental Law) and engage directly with community members from various First Nations of the Hudson's Bay/James Bay Lowlands region. I was able to further my understanding of the terrestrial, marine and cultural impacts of mining in the Ring of Fire region, as well as the duty of the provincial and federal governments to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples and communities when a proposed project will impact their territories. As an environmental lawyer quite early in my career, attending this conference gave me the opportunity to expand my professional network, learn more about the importance of Indigenous-led conservation, and re-affirm my commitment to advancing environmental justice. Thanks, ECOP Canada!

— Kanisha Acharya-Patel

## ITECHMER 2023 in Lorient, France



When you start your career in the maritime world, it's a vast subject and a multitude of different players. When I first became interested in the fishing industry in Quebec, I was keen to understand the issues on the ground about the economic, social and environmental dynamics at play. In order to broaden my horizons in this sector and understand other dynamics in the world, and particularly in my native region Brittany, I found it very relevant to attend conferences at the ITECHMER trade show.

The only professional fishing trade show in France. This event put me right at the heart of the action and issues facing the fishing industry in Brittany, which is very similar to that of Canadian fisheries. I was able to attend round tables presenting points of view and solutions to these issues, and this helped to flesh out my thoughts and guide my next actions to contribute to the transition of fisheries to sustainable fishing.

During the event, some twenty start-ups pitched their projects, providing an opportunity to cross-fertilize innovations developed in France and Canada. I was able to meet key players in the maritime innovation sector, notably at the Pôles Mer Bretagne, which will enable me to build bridges between these two countries. Meeting the associations that support sustainable fishing also enabled me to continue learning, and to understand the barriers on this industry.

Attending these conferences on the other side of the Atlantic represents a certain cost, especially the flight to get there. ECOP Canada's contribution not only enables me to attend this highly educational event full of opportunities, it also relieves me of an expense that can be a source of anxiety when you're just starting out in your career. As a young professional, you know you have to build your network, and it's at these events that you raise real opportunities and make real contacts. All these steps represent a certain cost, and I'm really grateful that ECOP Canada can support these passionate early-career people like me in building their network.

— Anaïs Pierre





## Conference testimonials

# COP28 (Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Attending COP28 was one of the best and most enriching professional experiences I have ever had. Being an ECOP has impacted me in more ways than one, but I have to say that the most beneficial and enjoyable part of being an ECOP and a member of ECOP Canada has been the network I have built. While at COP28, if I had to describe my experience in 1 word, it would be “networking.” I met so many incredible ECOPs as well as other young professionals, mid-level professionals, and more, all working towards the cause of solving climate change.

Attending COP28 has been a goal of mine for years, and I was ecstatic that I was able to attend due to the generous support provided by ECOP Canada. My ECOP Canada network has also been incredibly helpful in helping me prepare for the conference as well, especially in terms of what to expect. While at the conference, I definitely leaned on other ECOPs I met to guide me through the conference as a first-time attendee. While at the conference, aside from networking, I also learned a lot due to attending side events, which expanded my climate knowledge and problem-solving capacity. However, the highlight of my experience was definitely participating in the negotiations. While at COP28 I participated in the just transition negotiations as a member of YOUNGO (Youth constituency of the UNFCCC). Since COP28, my participation in the negotiations and learning more about climate issues at COP28, I have been able to engage further in the UNFCCC process. I was recently elected the Youth Contact point for YOUNGO's Climate Change and Migration working group, where I hope to engage these topics in negotiations, events and policy discussions this year.

Aside from the professional opportunities that attending COP28 has opened up for me, I would like to speak to how incredibly eye-opening this travel/international experience was for me. COP28 was indeed the most international experience I have had to date, and I had no idea of all the nuances that exist amongst cultures, climate research being done internationally, and how international forums like these unfold. I met so many interesting people and saw/learned so many interesting things just from looking around and observing. It has really opened up my eyes as someone who has barely left Canada to the rest of the world and the possibilities that exist.

Overall, as someone who hopes to build a long-term career in international climate diplomacy, attending COP28 and learning about all the opportunities in this realm have been very exciting and enriching experiences.

— Iman Berry



# LOOKING AHEAD

## ECOP CANADA PROGRAM OBJECTIVES FOR 2024

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

ECOP Canada expects to continue growing and mobilizing our network through social media, Slack, and community events. We are actively engaging on these platforms to showcase network diversity and expertise, foster relationships, and adapt communication strategies and story telling to expose members of our network to opportunities in the Blue Economy.

### 2. Co-develop Professional Development Opportunities

As part of our commitment to support training opportunities for ECOPs to engage in the Ocean Sector, we are expanding our programming and professional development opportunities. In collaboration with other major Canadian Ocean organizations, we continue to seek opportunities for virtual and in-person trainings. Additionally, we aim to launch the Blue Economy Scholarship, providing unrestricted funding for ECOPs to enhance skills, access resources and pursue specialized trainings.

### 3. Continue Ocean and Climate Conference & Event Funding

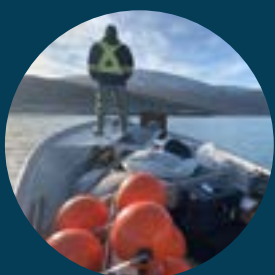
One of the priorities of ECOP Canada is to support ECOP Participation at major Ocean and Climate Conferences & Events, enhancing international visibility and contributing to intergenerational equity in the ocean sector. Sponsoring ECOPs facilitates representation at these events, network expansion and connections to foster ocean-climate solutions. We will continue to partner with Canadian Organizations to host in-person networking events at major conferences, and support Pan-Canadian ECOP gathering opportunities.

### 4. Launch Career Connector Pilot 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 developing a new program to match ECOPs with appropriate ocean organizations/institutions who are looking for ECOP engagement, exposure to diverse ocean employment opportunities, and address the growing need for skilled employees in the Blue Economy.

### 5. Continue Growing National and International Partnerships

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, Tula Foundation and the Ocean Decade Collaborative Center for the Northeast Pacific (DCC-NEP), SOI Foundation's Blue Futures Pathways, and Ocean Wise. These partnerships help strengthen our reputation and further develop opportunities for ECOPs through collaboration and co-creation.







# 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**



# THANK YOU TO OUR KEY PARTNERS!



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