



Annual Report 2020







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Letter from the VP



The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges, challenges that are impossible for any single person or entity to overcome. The devastating consequences of the pandemic call on us to build a new era of solidarity, to strengthen existing partnerships and to forge new ones.

Enhancing the collaboration between the public, private, academic and civil society sectors will benefit one of the most awe-inspiring and beautiful places on the planet as well as the resilient people who depend on those resources.

Our hearts have been heavy for everyone who have lost loved ones. We are all too aware that your grief has been compounded by the restrictions that have prevented families from physically being together during such difficult times. Please know you continue to be in our thoughts and prayers.

I realize there's still no end in sight for the pandemic, but I also realize that amid everything 2020 has brought to all of us, we can still find nuggets of joy, reasons to hope and moments of love that brighten the darkness. We commend all of you who have gone above and beyond to keep us all safe.

We champion those of you who have become your brother's and sister's keepers—whether that has meant delivering a care package or speaking a kind word. We salute everyone

who continues to work to ensure no one goes hungry, that spirits are lifted and that no one is suffering in silence. Whether you have held these people in prayer or been on the frontlines yourself, please know that we see you and are grateful for your contributions more than words can say.

These acts of kindness are testament to the resilience of our innate humanity. It confirms that we will get through this, together. By continuing to work together, we will not only survive all the challenges ahead, but we will also thrive well past them.

The COVID-19 pandemic has served to deepen Oceana's commitment to working together to achieve national policies that will strengthen the health and integrity of our shared natural resources. More than ever, efforts to ensure sustainable practices are critical.

One important step in this direction happened on November 4th, when the ban on gillnets, via Statutory Instrument 158 of 2020, was signed into law by the Minister of



Fisheries. For resource strapped enforcement agencies, this turns a complicated process into a binary matter. No gillnets, no problem. Gillnet? Fines and penalties apply. This policy outcome is therefore realistic—because it's easy to enforce and strategic because it eliminates by-catch and stops illegal fishing activity.

The ban on gillnets covers Belize's entire marine territory. This means that more than 36,000 square kilometres of the Caribbean Sea is now fully protected from gillnets, all forms of trawling and offshore oil activity. Through your unwavering support, that of the Oceana board and our incredible donors to a financial support package, the legal, Belizean fishers declared beneficiaries by the Government of Belize have received two of a total of 24 payments to facilitate their transition away from gillnets.

Following elections in mid-November, we have already begun conversations with Belize's new Prime Minister, Hon. John Briceno as well as key members of his Cabinet including the Minister of Natural

Resources and Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Cordel Hyde, the Minister of Environment Hon. Orlando Habet and Minister of Blue Economy, Hon. Andre Perez and their respective teams to apprise them of the work completed to date. We are also highlighting that this new administration can solidify key milestones such as making the ban on offshore oil permanent. And most importantly, we are emphasizing that organizations like Oceana are keen to work with the Government of Belize to create a vibrant, abundant Caribbean Sea, for the benefit of all Belizeans.

These initial conversations have had to include discussions regarding a developer's proposal to dump dredge spoils into the Caribbean Sea between the Belize Barrier Reef and the Turneffe Atoll. Oceana and several other organizations continue to maintain that ocean dumping should never be considered for Belize, given the inevitable negative impact of that material to the marine environment and key economic drivers such as tourism and fishing. When the mathematicians crunched the numbers, they

determined that 5 million cubic meters of dredge spoils were equivalent to 200,000 school buses; the length and width of Caye Caulker at a foot high; and those spoils would fill approximately half of Great Blue Hole if poured inside. And that's the minimum amount the developer would dump. We've collectively asked for this project to be rejected so long as ocean dumping is a part of the plan.

The Government has told us the project is on pause. While dumping the dredge spoils at sea would save the developer money, the true cost of the damage to the environment would be to the rest of us. The covid-19 pandemic has forced us to do a lot of reflection, to appreciate what truly brings value to our lives. What was once esoteric, is now an existential truth: the health and integrity of our natural world makes our lives possible.

No one can say for certain if, much less when, things will ever be "normal" again. But what is certain, is that if we manage our resources sustainably, generations of Belizeans to come

can depend on those resources for food and livelihoods. With the economic fallout from the pandemic still unfolding, those two things: jobs and where the next meal is going to come from are looming large for many of us.

As these surreal days of 2020 have taught us, working together to make Belize as strong and independent as possible is paramount to the quality of our collective future; a future that can be bountiful and beautiful if we manage our natural resources sustainably.

Only by working together will we emerge stronger, better versions of ourselves.

Sincerely,



Janelle Chanona
Vice President
Oceana in Belize



Oceana's Approach

How We Work

OCEANA WAS CREATED TO IDENTIFY PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND MAKE THEM HAPPEN.

Our oceans are in trouble. But the good news is that together we can restore the oceans to their former glory. Since it's founding, Oceana has won more than 100 victories around the globe and protected more than one million square miles of oceana.

Oceana has the tools to win. We are -

CAMPAIGN-DRIVEN:

We channel our resources towards strategic, directed campaigns to achieve measurable outcomes that will protect and restore our oceans to former levels of abundance.

FACT-BASED:

We believe in the importance of science in identifying problems and solutions for the oceans.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY AND EXPERT:

Our scientists work closely with our teams of economists, lawyers, communicators and advocates to achieve tangible results for the oceans.

SUPPORTED BY CITIZENS AND ALLIES:

Oceana has a base of close to one million supported, including 1.2 million Wavemakers globally. Our Ocean Council is a select group of academic, business, policy and philanthropic leaders who represent and support Oceana's efforts on the global stage. Locally, Oceana is supported by over 3,000 Belizean Wavemakers.



Photo taken pre-pandemic

Campaigns and Victories

Oceana's long-term vision for the Belize Barrier Reef is a thriving ecosystem, capable of producing abundant, healthy marine resources that support a vibrant and sustainable local economy for Belizeans.

To this end, in 2020, Oceana in Belize's primary focus was to obtain a commitment from the government to phase out and eventually ban the use of gillnets in Belize's marine environment.

Status: Achieved / Victory

An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. In the center, a large, branching coral structure is densely populated with many small, yellow-striped fish. To the left, a large, flat, brownish coral plate is visible. The bottom of the frame shows sandy seabed with green seagrass. The water is clear and blue, with sunlight filtering through from the surface.

On the Ground and in the Water

RESPONSIBLE FISHING

Belize's marine resources, if managed responsibly, can provide healthy seafood meals, stable income, and fulfilling livelihoods for countless Belizeans in perpetuity.

GILLNETS

On November 5th, in a landmark step to protect livelihoods and strengthen marine conservation, the Government of Belize passed the Statutory Instrument 158 of 2020 titled Fisheries Resources (Gill Net Prohibition) Regulations 2020, banning the possession and use of gillnets in Belize's marine territorial seas, Exclusive Economic Zone and internal waters.

This legislative step thus, renders all gillnet licenses invalid. This decision and action have been welcomed by Oceana, Belizean fishers, and NGO partners as a momentous step to protect invaluable marine environments and safeguard the livelihoods of tens of thousands of Belizeans. With the enactment of this Statutory Instrument, Belize becomes one of the first countries in the world to put an end to gillnet fishing in its territorial waters.

The Statutory Instrument was preceded by a government announced moratorium on

the issuance of gillnet licenses in 2019, and a collaborative agreement between the Government of Belize, the Coalition for Sustainable Fisheries and Oceana, to render support to gillnet fishers to transition to alternative income-generating opportunities and to support the voluntary surrender of gillnets.

Collectively, the Coalition for Sustainable Fisheries and Oceana have fundraised BZ\$2 million dollars to support eligible gillnet users to transition away from the gear to alternative means of income generation as well as by providing direct financial support during that process.

With a successful transition program in place, those gillnet fishers licensed in 2018 who met eligibility for the livelihoods transition program and agreed to surrender their gillnets, are being transitioned away from this destructive form of fishing. The implementation of the transition program is being overseen by an oversight committee appointed by the Minister of Fisheries, comprising Government, the Coalition and Oceana.

Oceana wholeheartedly congratulates the Government and people of Belize on this historic policy change. Our commitment to the longevity and success of the ban is unwavering.

Our efforts moving forward will therefore include enforcement to address the daily and rampant scourge of illegal fishing.

We continue to work to ensure that Belizeans will be able depend on a bountiful and beautiful Caribbean Sea for generations to come.



FISH RIGHT, EAT RIGHT

Oceana originally launched its Fish Right, Eat Right (FRER) program in 2016 to create incentives for fishers to use sustainable gear, as part of our larger gillnet campaign. It is designed to connect fishers not using destructive fishing gear with restaurateurs willing to pay a premium price for sustainably caught fish.

On October 31st, 2019, Oceana's Vice President, Janelle Chanona, and the Inter-American Development Bank's President, Luis Alberto Moreno, signed a technical agreement for the project "Market-based Incentives for Responsible Fishing". The aim of this project is to create a virtual marketplace focused on better connecting consumers with suppliers, key harvesting data like date and location of fish catch, and priority access to the virtual marketplace for participants in Belize's Fish Right Eat Right program.

Through this partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank, Oceana is piloting a mobile app to digitally connect

fisherfolk with restaurants, hotels, and other prospective buyers of domestically sourced finfish in San Pedro and Caye Caulker.

This digital platform will incentivize responsible fishing practices by providing premium visibility and advertising for individuals or organizations that participate in our FRER program.

Over this past year, Oceana has established data-sharing partnerships with relevant government agencies to ensure that any data collected on Belize's finfish sector is made available to relevant stakeholders. Such agencies include the Fisheries Department, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Ministry of Fisheries.

Through this project, Oceana has also conducted a market analysis of finfish supply and demand in San Pedro and Caye Caulker to better understand fishing pressure, identify knowledge gaps, and highlight opportunities for improved management of Belize's finfish sector. By compiling and updating such data, Oceana can help inform future government actions to limit overfishing either through public policy or incentives for private businesses.

Units 1 and 2 of a training curriculum for fisherfolk and restaurants has been developed. Unit 1 focuses on learning objectives such as: - Gain a basic understanding of the term "sustainable fishing" and how it is relevant to fisherfolk; - Describe the coastal and marine ecology in the Belizean context; - Understand the overall fishing and fisheries environment of Belize; - Have a basic understanding of fish biology and how it relates to sustainable fishing; - Explain the concept of marine protected areas and other fisheries management tools such as managed access; and - Develop a familiarity with the Belize Fisheries Regulations, such as special licenses, prohibited species, weight limits, and gear restrictions.

From this curriculum, a training packet was developed with infographics and is being distributed on a one-on-one basis (as a safety measure) to fishers. To date, 35 fishers have received the training.

Restaurant closures due to COVID-19 made it difficult to deliver the trainings to chefs and restaurant managers, but as tourism activity continues to increase and gold standard



certifications continue, we will move to target those participants in January 2021.

Unit 2 of the curriculum focuses on sustainable harvesting practices and covers the following: - Marine Ecosystem-Based Management; - Managed Access; - Marine Protected Areas; - Fishing and environmental sanitation; - Personal hygiene; - Fish handling practices; and - Fish processing. From this Unit, a first draft of a training tutorial video has been developed so that fishers can be trained in smaller groups following all Covid-19 protocols. We expect to distribute this video by the end of March 2021.

On November 18th, 2020, Oceana entered a direct contract with Shellcatch, the digital app provider.

In December 2020, a member of the Shellcatch team travelled to Belize to conduct the installation of Shellcatch technology in four fishing vessels. The fifth installation will happen in January. An initial Diagnostics Report from Shellcatch will be presented in January and will outline and identify the fisher/port selection, target market selection, seafood product selection, and implementing partner selection. Simultaneously, the project team has met with the Fisheries Department to update them on the technology and obtain their input on the customization process.

A man wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt, dark shorts, and a cap is walking barefoot on a sandy beach. He is carrying a large, full plastic bag filled with various pieces of plastic waste, including bottles and containers. The beach is covered with dry, brown seaweed. In the background, the turquoise ocean meets the shore under a clear blue sky. Palm trees are visible on the right side of the frame.

On the Ground and in the Water

REDUCING SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

We will continue to advocate for the ban on single-use, by championing the food vendors who are using environmentally friendly alternatives and practices ahead of the legal changes. We are also advocating that the approved alternative products will not be plastic based in any way, shape or form.

Green Vendor Registry continues, Oceana profiling local business who have to committed to reducing single-use plastic and Styrofoam dependence and use.

On July 15th, the annual manufacturing of 17 million single use polystyrene foam and plastic items (like bowls, plates, cups, lids, plastic forks, knives, spoons, sporks and straws) as well as 35 million carrier bags was to have stopped. Together with the considerably greater number of imported items, these items comprise 19% of the waste handled by Belize's formal solid waste management system.

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic broadsided Belize, use of these throw-away items increased, out of fear of transmission of the virus itself as well as the increase of take away food orders-- completely wiping out in-country inventory. That should have been a good thing. But importers of biodegradable and environmentally friendly products were unable to meet the sudden surge in

national demand for these food items. Within this context then, local manufacturers successfully lobbied to secure an extension of manufacturing until 2021. Sale and possession of single use plastics is also scheduled to take effect in 2021.

Holding the Government of Belize to these identified timelines will be even more critical in 2021, and Oceana, bolstered by public support, continues to advocate for banning these identified single use plastics and polystyrene products.

Oceana also continues to advocate for the phase-out/ ban on single use, by championing the food vendors, by way of our Green Vendor Registry, who are using environmentally friendly alternatives and practices ahead of the legal changes. We are also advocating that the approved alternative products will not be plastic based in any way, shape or form.

Click here to access our [Green Vendor Registry](#).



On the Ground and in the Water

CLEAN ENERGY

The Petroleum Operations (Offshore Zone Moratorium) Law, which indefinitely prohibits offshore oil exploration and drilling everywhere Belize exercises maritime jurisdiction, became law on December 31st, 2017. Since it was enacted, Oceana has referred to it as "The People's Law" because it has been the unwavering position of the Belizean people that the risks associated with offshore oil is simply too great; any "benefit" is short term and the damage to quality of life, job and food security is irrevocable.

In 2020, in the context of international news reports of devastating offshore oil spills, Oceana continued to champion the government and people of Belize for saying no to the inherently dangerous and dirty reality of offshore oil. We continued to observe the anniversary of one of the worse environmental disasters in human history: the BP oil spill which occurred on April 20th 2010.



HANDS ACROSS THE SAND

Held annually across the world since 2010, Hands Across the Sand (HATS) is a unique event to promote clean energy alternatives to fossil fuels, saying “NO” to fossil fuels and “YES” to clean energy like solar and wind power. This movement was founded by Dave Rauschkolb, a restaurateur in Florida, who saw the need for change after the horrific BP Oil spill.

Over the years, the movement has grown internationally with Belize joining annually. Participants come together to join hands in solidarity to symbolize unity against fossil fuel and the over dependency on nonrenewable energy. Normally, participants would meet at a location in their community to stand together holding hands in solidarity.

However, this year the team participated in the HATS online event, which was never done before. This was done by volunteers submitting their photos or videos displaying themselves with a message to protect our environment and to move to cleaner energy. Wavemakers from across

the country created their own videos/photos and upload it to the HATS website where they compiled it all together and created a video to display the fantastic work from participants globally.

You can learn more [here](#).



Community Outreach & Events

Across the country, Oceana continues to work with stakeholders, partners and the sensational Wavemaker community to protect Belize invaluable marine resources.



PRESENTATIONS & BROWN BAG SESSIONS

In 2020, despite challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Oceana's field representatives continued to engage Belizeans across the country on the destructive fishing practices such as the use of gillnets, as well as the benefits of a phase out of single use plastics in Belize.

To do this effectively, we reach Belizeans where they are – in the classroom, at the office, and at national events countrywide - through school presentations, brown bag sessions, and information booths.

In 2020, a total of 33 school presentations were conducted virtually at primary, secondary and tertiary institutions across the country. In addition, 29 brown bag sessions were hosted virtually with various organizations and institutions including banks, telecommunications offices, public utilities offices, hotels, restaurants, and other businesses countrywide. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to host any information booths in 2020.

Finally, xx information booths were hosted countrywide at national events, tourism expos, and school fairs to name a few.

Through these forums, Oceana continues to raise awareness on our campaigns while cultivating lasting relationships with Belizean supporters.

PARTNERSHIPS

Oceana continues to find ways to collaborate and partner with different organizations. Through these collaborations, we have been able to give back to various communities and to strengthen our relationships with people and partners.

Oceana once again partnered with Rotaract to support their food drive initiative which benefitted families in the fishing communities of Sarteneja and Copperbank as well as flood victims in the Cayo District, mainly San Ignacio, Bullet Tree and surrounding areas.

These families were selected based on vulnerability and also recommendations by

the public, then they were vetted by a committee which Oceana's Corozal Field Rep., Ryan Rivera, was a part of. Each family received a voucher to purchase at participating stores who were prepaid and notified with the list of beneficiaries selected. The beneficiaries ranged from the elderly to single mothers.

Oceana also partnered with local organizations near Christmas to provide frontline health care workers with meals in eco-friendly packaging.



We'd like to thank Tiburon Rum for this continued commitment and support to Oceana this past year, especially given the negative economic impacts caused by COVID-19.

As of late 2019, \$1 from every bottle of rum sold has been donated to Oceana. This relationship continued through 2020 with DeSteffano and the entire Tiburon organization's commitment to continuing their support of Oceana as well as future partners. As the company continues to grow and introduce more products, they hope to continue doing their part by "protecting the oceans, one sip at a time."

In September 2019, Tiburon became a major part of Oceana's campaign to deliver a new 29-foot, Bradley Pelican marine vessel to the Belize Coast Guard. The \$124,000+ boat, now dubbed "Tiburon", has been used as a multiply operational vehicle; serving the Coast Guard to conduct a variety of missions. The "Tiburon" is regularly used to patrol the sea in order to combat piracy and drug trafficking and crack down on illegal fishing operations. When the situation calls for it, the "Tiburon" is also used for search and

rescue operations, making it a valuable addition to the Coast Guard's fleet.



Photo taken pre-pandemic

REEF WEEK 2020: "TRUE TRUE REEF LOVE MEANS YUH STAY INVOLVED"

Held from March 7th to March 15th 2020, Reef Week is dedicated to raising awareness on the importance of protecting and preserving our beautiful Barrier Reef. The week coincides with the celebration of Mesoamerican Reef Day on March 10th, each

year launching under a different theme. This year's theme was: "True true reef love means yuh stay involved!".

During this week, Oceana, Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association and JICA collaborated to carry out school presentations at Sarteneja La Inmaculada RC School, Sarteneja Nazarene School, Chunox SDA Primary School and Copperbank RC School.

Our team also participated in this year's Reef Fair. The Reef Fair is always one of Reef Week's most exciting events and this year was no different! This year's fair took place at the Boardwalk in Placencia Village on Friday, March 13th. It was a day filled with music, art, green vendors, food and information booths with many interactive games for students to enjoy as organizations shared all there is to know about our beautiful resources. We had students visiting from St John's Memorial School and the Peninsula International Academy, as well as tourists and locals passing through the area. Music was provided by DJ Swagg and our food vendor was Galley's Restaurant.



Photo taken pre-pandemic

WORLD OCEANS DAY

Celebrated annually on June 8th, this year's World Ocean's Day theme explored the impact of innovation across all categories to ensure a sustainable ocean. Everything from resource management to technology, thought leaders are learning to adapt to an ever-evolving world.

Oceana continues to find ways to innovate how we work to protect the oceans. Our team alongside other partners are currently working towards the creation of a virtual marketplace to better connect seafood consumers with suppliers. This will allow Belize's fishers to advertise and sell their product beyond their local community and give consumers an easy way to vet and purchase local seafood from fishers who they trust. Now more than ever we are utilizing the benefits that technology offers in this changing world.

We were also lucky to have DML Bamboo straws there. Local artist, Anton Leslie, was also out on the beach working on a unique Reef Week art piece.

We continue to work diligently and improve our relationships so that next year's Reef Week is an even greater success!



ONLINE AND IN THE NEWS

In 2020, Oceana's social media following grew to 50,623 supporters; 26,102 followers on Facebook, 23,467 followers on Instagram, and 1,054 followers on Twitter.

OCEANA'S 11TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On Saturday, October 24th, supporters around the world tuned in as Oceana hosted its first virtual Annual General Meeting for its dedicated supporters, or 'Wavemakers', on Facebook live.

During the AGM, several Wavemakers were awarded certificates of appreciation for their sensational support for Oceana's campaigns and initiatives over the past year. The awardees included the Rotaract Club of Corozal; the SCA Wavemaker Club from Belize; Kanish Cocom from Cayo; Ishmael Garbutt from Stann Creek and Marvin Vasquez from Toledo. Oceana was also proud to recognize Carina Paz as 2020's National Wavemaker of the Year.

Carina Paz grew up in San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, finding her love for marine protection and education at an early age. In the past, she has organized and hosted two marine exhibitions aimed to raise awareness among young students about marine creatures. She has spearheaded numerous cleanup campaigns on the island as well as tree planting events in commemoration of Earth Day, World Environment Day, and Reef Week. She also served as the youth ambassador and lecturer at Green Reef Summer camps for the years 2013-2015. Carina has also broken records as the youngest swimmer to complete "Swim to the Reef" event, geared towards raising awareness of Hol Chan Marine Reserve and reef conservation. In her role as the Vice President of the SCA Wavemaker club, she has led the charge in advocating against plastic usage on campus. Through her passion and love for the sea and marine life, she has empowered others to work alongside her as she continues to advocate for marine conservation.

Keynote speaker, Celeshia Guy, is an advocate for marine conservation in her research and field work with the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. During her presentation,

she spoke about the ocean's significance in our everyday lives and the very real threats that marine health faces, including climate change, plastic pollution, illegal fishing, and overfishing. Moreover, she expressed how important it is that we take decisive action to mitigate these threats in order to safeguard our natural resources.

Oceana Belize is fortunate to have a tight-knit community of Wavemakers that assist in our campaign efforts countrywide. Belizeans Wavemakers are part of the more than a million Oceana members that support the protection and restoration of the world's oceans.

Entertainment was provided by local musician, JCas, and local comedian, Kris, of Just Kidding Entertainment.

The National Wavemakers award was made by local artist, Aesha Garel of Zest Handcrafted.

To see a recording of the virtual AGM, [click here](#).

OCEANA'S 2020 OCEAN HEROES

On Wednesday, October 14th, Oceana formally recognized two outstanding Belizeans as the 2020 Ocean Heroes during its first ever virtual award ceremony. This year's winners are Placencia fisher turned seaweed farmer, Lowell Godfrey and Punta Gorda fisher and businessman, Neville Smith.

Lowell 'Japs' Godfrey was born and raised in the popular Southern village of Placencia, where he has been fishing for over forty years.

Once a traditional commercial fisherman, Godfrey is now one of the pioneers of seaweed farming in Belize. During his decades as a commercial fisher, he has witnessed firsthand the decline in fishery stock over the years as well as the destructive nature of gillnets, a realization that prompted his transition to seaweed farming. Now, over ten years later, as the Chairman of the Placencia Producers Cooperative, Godfrey has propelled the seaweed farming industry to the forefront of Belize's marine conservation initiatives. A globally recognized trainer for

seaweed mariculture in Belize, Japs continues to educate himself and others on best marine practices, as he lives doing what he loves while protecting Belize's natural resources.

"An Ocean Hero to me is someone that is out there in the marine environment, [who] takes care of it, [who] educates people about it. [They go] about physically, trying to make a difference in how you approach or address problems facing the ocean.", shared Godfrey. Lowell Godfrey's daughter, Joelle Godfrey, presented his award on Oceana's behalf.



To see Lowell Godfrey's Ocean Hero video, click [here](#).

Born and bred in Southern Belize, Neville Smith's journey as a lover of the sea, began when he was only nine years old. Growing up between Dangriga and Punta Gorda, Neville inevitably found himself in the world of commercial fishing. A fisher for over twenty years, Smith has also worked as a tour guide for more than fifteen of those years.

Now firmly rooted in Punta Gorda, Smith hosts educational trips for youths, teaching many of them to swim, and all of them to appreciate and value Belize's bountiful marine resources. During each trip he takes out, whether it is an educational trip or a tour, he also always has a beach cleanup.

Neville continues to host countless cleanup campaigns throughout Punta Gorda and he continues to work within his community to ensure that others will be able to experience the beauty and bounty of the Caribbean Sea he grew up exploring and loving.

Smith shared, *"I want [the kids] to see and to feel what I felt even before now. You went out, the ocean was lively, you see fish, you see turtles, you see dolphins, porpoises – you see everything. There is never a dull day on the ocean."*



To see Neville Smith's Ocean Hero video, [click here](#).

During the virtual presentation of awards to both honorees, Oceana's Vice President, Janelle Chanona, stated ***"Every day courage has few witnesses. But theirs are no less noble because no drum beats and no crowds shout the names of unsung heroes. That's a play on something written by author Robert Louis Stevenson. I repeat it now because that's what this event means to the Oceana Belize team—a chance to beat the drum and***

shout the names of the ordinary men and women who are doing extraordinary work that benefits all Belizeans. They do it quietly, often at great personal cost and they do it with their whole heart. Tonight we are proud to recognize two more Belizeans as Ocean Heroes. The quality of the nominations always makes the choices extremely difficult. The work of this year's awardees have national impact, safeguard marine resources and ensure generational legacy."

The stained-glass awards were made by local artist, Leisa Carr-Caceres of Belizean Craft and Colors.

The Oceana Ocean Hero Awards began in 2009. Past award recipients are Lionel "Chocolate" Heredia, Dr. Melanie McField, former Fisheries Minister Rene Montero, Lisa Carne, Jamal Galves, Miguel Alamilla, Captain Romauldo Badillo Sr., Janet Gibson, Wil Maheia, Luz Hunter, Madison Edwards, Michael Heusner, Captain Earl David Jr, Guadalupe Lampella and Dale Fairweather.

OCEANA ADS AND PSA'S

On November 5th, 2020, the Government of Belize enacted a ban on the use of gillnets in Belize's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Just a week later, national elections were held. In an effort to celebrate the ban, we bought airtime on all major national radio and television outlets during election day coverage. Our ads and messages were featured prominently and consistently throughout the day and night and viewed by hundreds of thousands of Belizeans both in Belize and abroad who were tuned in for updates.

To complement this effort, we also developed a short PSA that spoke to the importance of public participation and encouraged Belizeans to vote, entitled "How do you show your love for Belize?"

In December, we re-aired the 12 Ways to Reduce Single-use Plastics over Christmas on major national channels, including Love FM, Love TV, Krem FM, and Krem TV. This was complemented by a social media campaign where the local influencers and celebrities featured in the 12 Ways PSA all posted #TBT or #FBF reminding their followers of ways to reduce single-use plastics over the holiday season.

To see the full Christmas ad, click [here](#).

OCEANA JOINS CONSERVATION COMMUNITY: “NO DUMPING OF DREDGE SPOILS IN BELIZE’S EEZ!”

Oceana along with its allies and partners (inclusive of the Belize Network of NGO’s) arranged and executed a publicity blitz, with media interviews and presentations to local media outlets such as Breaking Belize News, Channel 7, Channel 5, Love TV and KREM TV featuring various spokespersons from different

organizations all calling for the developers all calling for the developers to abandon the ocean dumping proposal included as part of the Waterloo’s Port Expansion Project.

These interviews started in early November and intensified when the NGO community signed a letter of objection addressed to the Prime Minister, John Briceno. These NGO’s include WWF, BTIA, Oceana, Belize Audubon Society, Fragments of Hope, and more. In the letter, we raised three important points.

The first is that ocean dumping should not even be considered for Belize, because of the dangers it poses to the barrier reef and other marine life, and the idea should be abandoned immediately. The second is that a comprehensive cruise port strategy should be prepared by an independent consultant before the continuation of any ports currently in development. And finally, we asked that the laws be revised so that the public can play a larger role in the management of shared natural resources.



Engage with Oceana

Please Give Today to Help us Rebuild Ocean Abundance

Each of us has the power to help save the oceans and feed the world. The support of people like you allows Oceana to carry out targeted campaigns to end overfishing, limit bycatch, protect habitats and curb ocean pollution.

With your help, Oceana can win victories that will help to restore the ocean's biodiversity and abundance for generations to come. Become part of a growing circle of ocean advocates by joining Oceana today.

Take Action

Become a Wavemaker and join more than 1.2 million Oceana supporters from around the world who have signed up with Oceana to save our oceans. Being a Wavemaker means you won't stand by while shrimp nets drown sea turtles and airgun blasts deafen dolphins to enable offshore drilling. With you by our side, we can fight these and other threats.

Follow Oceana

Follow Oceana on social media for breaking news from all over the world and insights into our research and campaigns.



@OceanainBelize



@OceanaBelize



@Oceana_Bze

By the Numbers

Facebook Followers:

26K+

Twitter Followers:

1K+

Instagram Followers:

23K+

Wavemakers

3K+

Staff

Executive Committee

ANDREW SHARPLESS

Chief Executive Officer

JOSHUA LAUGHREN

Executive Director, Oceana Canada

KATHY A. WHELPLEY

Chief of Staff

RENATA TERRAZAS

Vice President, Mexico

JAMES SIMON

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MATTHEW LITTLEJOHN

Senior Vice President, Strategic Initiatives

PASCALE MOEHRLE

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Vice President, Belize

BETH LOWELL

Deputy Vice President, U.S. Campaigns

SUSAN MURRAY

Deputy Vice President, U.S. Pacific

KATHRYN MATTHEWS

Chief Scientist

NANCY GOLDEN

Vice President, Global Development

JACQUELINE SAVITZ

Chief Policy Officer, North America

GLORIA ESTENZO RAMOS, J.D.

Vice President, the Philippines

ADEMILSON ZAMBONI

Vice President, Brazil

MICHAEL HIRSHFIELD, PH.D

Chief Executive Officer

PATRICIA MAJLUF, PH.D.

Vice President, Peru

CHRISTOPHER SHARKEY

Chief Financial Officer

Belize

JANELLE CHANONA

Vice President, Belize

KYLE MONTERO

Administrative Assistant

JACINTA GOMEZ

Outreach and Project Director

SHANDA SAINSBURY

Field Representative, Stann Creek

DARIUS AVILA

Office Administrator

ALYSSA CARNEGIE

Communications Director

KLEON COLEMAN

Field Representative, Belize

RYAN RIVERA

Field Representative, Corozal

KELSIE CUEVAS

Executive Assistant

MARTINIQUE FABRO

Communications Officer

ANALEE CHUC

Field Representative, Toledo

Contact Oceana

BELMOPAN, BELIZE
2358 Hibiscus Street
P.O. Box 731
City of Belmopan,
Belize, Central America
P | +501-822-2792
F | +501-822-2797
E | info@oceana.org



Oceana is the largest international advocacy organization dedicated solely to ocean conservation. Oceana is rebuilding abundant and biodiverse oceans by winning science-based policies in countries that control one third of the world's wild fish catch. With more than 200 victories that stop overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution and the killing of threatened species like turtles and sharks, Oceana's campaigns are delivering results. A restored ocean means that one billion people can enjoy a healthy seafood meal, every day, forever. Together, we can save the oceans and help feed the world. Visit www.oceana.org to learn more.