

SUSTAINABLE OCEANS

INTO THE BLUE:
THE BODY **CONNECTING** US ALL



Introduction

The 5th annual [Sustainable Oceans Conference](#) took place at the Halifax Central Library on September 30 and October 1, 2016. The Sustainable Oceans conferences are supported by the Sobey Fund for Oceans (SFO), a unique partnership between the Marine Affairs Program (MAP), Dalhousie University, and WWF-Canada.



Winning submission of the Sustainable Oceans Conference Photography Contest, taken in St. Andrews, New Brunswick by Lauren Dehens (2016).

The overall theme of the 2016 conference “Into the Blue: The Body Connecting Us All” was well reflected in the oral and poster presentations, which centered on four connecting sub-themes:

- Our Brain: Ocean Education and Literacy
- Our Stomach: Sustainable Seafood
- Our Heart: Marine Conservation
- Our Lungs: Ocean Resources

Breakout session discussions were designed to produce recommendations to Canadians on how they can contribute to the targets of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources.

Sobey Fund for Oceans Scholarship Awards

The evening started with the SFO awards announcements. The SFO fund awards scholarships to support students pursuing graduate studies at Dalhousie University with the goal of integrating governance and management solutions for healthy oceans. Rob Sobey, President of the Donald R. Sobey Family Foundation, presented the scholarships.

The [recipients for 2016-2017](#) are:

- Kelly Fretwell (Masters of Marine Management)
- Laura Steeves (Masters of Marine Management)
- Leah Beveridge: (Interdisciplinary PhD)
- Laurene Schiller (Interdisciplinary PhD)



Leah Beveridge



Laurene Schiller



Laura Steeves



Kelly Fretwell

Brian Skerry - Illustrates Ocean Conservation



Brian Skerry, a world renowned photojournalist specializing in marine wildlife and underwater environments, delivered the keynote address entitled “Luminous Seas”.

Brian has been a contract photographer for National Geographic Magazine since 1998, and in 2014 was named a National Geographic Photography Fellow. He has produced a wide range of stories on subjects such as the planet’s last remaining pristine coral reefs, the global fish crisis, and the plight of shark and marine mammal species.

In addition to sharing tales from behind the lens, a major focus of Brian’s keynote address was to celebrate the sea and raise awareness. He highlighted some of the major challenges our oceans are facing, but with the bad news came a new hope. Skerry’s breathtaking footage of first-hand encounters with massive tiger sharks reminded even the most disheartened marine advocates that the battle has not yet been lost, and there is still plenty worth fighting for.

Saturday Conference Presentations and Breakout Sessions



Alba Garcia-Rodriguez presenting her project on Queen conch conservation in the Grenadine Islands at the 2016 conference (L. Dehens, 2016).

On Saturday, eight oral and 15 poster presentations were given in each of the subthemes of the conference. The guest speakers who presented at the start of each sub-theme section were:

- **Ocean Education and Literacy** - **Kerry McPherson** SRES Masters Candidate and science and math teacher with the Halifax Regional School Board
- **Sustainable Seafood** - **Colleen Turlo** MAP Alumni and Seafood Coordinator at the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) and the SeaChoice Representative for Atlantic Canada
- **Marine Conservation** - **Brendal Townsend** MAP Alumni and Senior Project Manager, Ocean Tracking Network
- **Ocean Resources** - **Justine McMillan** PhD candidate in Oceanography at Dalhousie University

Oral Presentation Awards

First Place: Jenny Weitzman - Stakeholder perceptions to aquaculture eco-certifications and ecolabels in Nova Scotia's finfish aquaculture industry

Second Place: Catherine Schram - Spatial protection for Porbeagle sharks (*Lamna nasus*) in the Northwest Atlantic - The road to recovery?

People's Choice: Alba Garcia Rodriguez - Queen conch (*Lobatus gigas*) in the Grenadine Islands: A preliminary assessment on its abundance and current management needs

For additional information about the oral and poster presentations, please see [conference abstracts](#).

Academic Poster Awards

First Place: Kayla Glynn - Assessing damage to the marine environment for the practical purpose of compensation

Second Place: Kendra Moore - Evidence-based conservation: Mitigating whale watching vessel noise pollution in grey whale foraging habitats

People's Choice: Meghan Borland - A tale of two standards: A case study of the Fair Trade certified Maluku handline yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) fishery

Breakout Sessions



Breakout session groups discuss the UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 and how they can contribute towards its achievement (Meghan Borland, 2016).

Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) is composed of 10 targets. During the breakout sessions, conference attendees had the opportunity to explore how we can work towards achieving these targets at individual, community, national, and global levels.

Key questions relating to the Sustainable Development Goals that were explored included:

1. How can we increase awareness and education on pressing ocean issues (such as ocean acidification; pollution; illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing; and other destructive fishing practices and methods)?
2. Often, purchasing sustainably sourced seafood is noticeably more expensive than seafood of indeterminate origins. How can we make sustainably sourced seafood accessible to more consumers? What actions can be taken to prioritize sustainable seafood?

Breakout Sessions Cont.

3. Marine pollution is one of the major problems plaguing coastal and marine ecosystems. How can you contribute to decreasing the amount of marine pollution?
4. How can technology be used to promote the sustainable utilization of coastal and marine resources?

Through lively and insightful discussions surrounding these questions, it became apparent that while national and global action is required to achieve these goals, individuals and communities also have the opportunity to make a contribution.

A policy document outlining the details of these discussions and recommendations for subsequent action will be available on the [conference website](#).

You, Me and the Sea Family Program



Young ocean enthusiasts enjoy interactive touch tanks (W. Wang, 2016).

You, Me and the Sea Family Program was new to Sustainable Oceans this year. This program enticed children of all ages - including those young at heart - with fun and educational games. The program hosted live marine animals by the Back to the Sea Society's touch tank, providing hands on experience with local intertidal species. There were also craft activities, a movie session, and presentations by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Sea Turtle Network.



You, Me and the Sea movie session (L. Dehens, 2016)



Sharks versus Rays game (W. Wang, 2016)

Activities ranged from interactive games such as Sharks versus Rays by Anika Riopel, which involved teaching participants about the human impacts on marine ecosystems through experiential learning, to a shark necropsy demonstration by Dr. Chris Harvey Clark, Manuel Bureuil (PhD Candidate) and Alexandra Vance (MAP Alumni) from Dalhousie University.



Shark necropsy demonstration (W. Wang, 2016)

There were also demonstrations by the CLEAN Foundation, an information booth by WWF-Canada, microscopes displaying tiny zooplankton provided by Dalhousie's Biology department, and a marine debris sculpture by Jennifer MacLatchy.



Demonstrations taught kids about important marine issues (W. Wang, 2016)

The You, Me and the Sea program engaged participants to connect to the ocean through interactive and educational activities demonstrating the importance of unifying our actions to sustain the global ocean.

Events Leading up to the Conference

Oceans Week 2016 (June 3) and Halifax 100 in 1 Day (June 4)



The MMM class of 2016-2017, captured by Sarah Saunders of WWF

On June 3, the conference team held a small fishing trivia game for children at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic's "The Ocean and You" event. Travis the scuba diving tiger was there as well to help celebrate all things ocean.

The following day, the team was at the Seaport Market engaging the public to help build Fin, the happy fish, as part of the 100 in 1 Day Halifax event. People were encouraged to decorate a scale for Fin, describing their connection to the ocean.



Fin the happy fish (W. Wang, 2016)

The Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-Up

The Marine Affairs Class helped to keep our shorelines clean by volunteering at the Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up, an annual event sponsored by WWF-Canada and Vancouver Aquarium, at Point Pleasant Park. The class set up children's games and an information table to promote the Sustainable Oceans conference. The event was a huge success, with participants managing to collect over 60 lbs of garbage!

Halifax Central Library Partnership

The Marine Affairs Class of 2016 would like to acknowledge the Halifax Central Library for partnering with them to generously host the conference. Marine Affairs is excited to announce that this partnership will continue through to support the Sustainable Oceans 2017 conference.

Sustainable Oceans Conference Photography Contest

The 2016 Sustainable Oceans Conference held a photography contest, inviting the public to submit their ocean-themed photos along with an explanation of their personal connection to the ocean. These photos were posted on the conference website, where and the public was invited to vote for their favourites. A panel of judges selected the top 15 photos, which were included in the Sustainable Oceans 2016/2017 Calendar. Proceeds from the sales of the calendars went to the [Canadian Sea Turtle Network](#).

Lauren Dehens was awarded first place and a cash prize of \$100 for her stunning photo of a sunset over low tide in the Bay of Fundy. Over 70 photos were submitted, and the top 15 may be viewed on the [conference website](#).

Conference Acknowledgements



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The Marine Affairs Class of 2016 extends sincere gratitude for the contributions made by the donors and supporters of the conference, including: Sobeys Fund for Oceans, Marine Affairs Program, NEXUS Coastal Resource Management, Dalhousie Association of Graduate Studies, Marine Affairs Student Society, the SFO Steering Committee, Cicada Design, The Oakville Dental Health Centre, Halifax Port Authority, Patrick Bohan, Labatt Brewing Company, Terra Cotta Clothing Design, Scotiabank, Face of Grenada, Cooke Aquaculture, Corporate Residency MBA, Faculty of Management, and Dalhousie University.

Last but not least, the class would like to thank all the presenters, judges, volunteers, and participants, who made this event a wonderful celebration of *The Body Connecting Us All*. **Counts made by library staff indicate that near 900 people participated in the event's programs, indicating its success in reaching a broad audience.**

This newsletter was put together by Jordan Gardiner, Liz Wilson (MAP alumni) and Augusta Lipscombe from material compiled by Monica Reed, Laurie Starr, Kendra Moore and Kayla Glynn.

For further information about the conference please contact Becky Field, Marine Affairs Program (marine.affairs@dal.ca)