

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

BELOW THE
SURFACE



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OCEAN CONSERVANCY PROMOTES HEALTHY AND DIVERSE OCEAN ECOSYSTEMS AND OPPOSES PRACTICES THAT THREATEN OCEAN LIFE AND HUMAN LIFE. THROUGH RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND SCIENCE-BASED ADVOCACY, OCEAN CONSERVANCY INFORMS, INSPIRES, AND EMPOWERS PEOPLE TO SPEAK AND ACT ON BEHALF OF THE OCEAN. IN ALL ITS WORK, OCEAN CONSERVANCY IS THE WORLD’S FOREMOST ADVOCATE FOR THE OCEAN.

WELCOME

WITNESS TO CHANGE IN WASHINGTON, DC

Despite an economic climate as tough as anyone could remember, 2009 could not have started for the ocean on higher or more energetic notes than when the outgoing Bush administration designated three marine national monuments in the Pacific that protected pristine ecosystems half-again larger than all US National Parks combined. That announcement was followed by inaugural initiatives of the Obama administration and the unveiling of new policies shaped during a fast-paced transition period. So began a profoundly transformative year for the ocean and for all who depend upon it for life or livelihood.

From the Arctic to the Gulf of Mexico, and from Maui to Maine, 2009 was another year Ocean Conservancy asserted its leadership on the key conservation issues of our time. We continued to cement our role on the national stage as leader on issues ranging from ecosystem protection to ocean governance reform, fisheries recovery to marine debris prevention. Our acknowledged credibility and our hard work during the new administration's transition process led directly to a seat at the tables where important policies were hammered out—policies that will transform our ocean far into the future. From our invitations to the White House to witness President Bush designate an unprecedented series of Marine National Monuments in the South Pacific and President Obama unveil his first climate change policy, to congressional requests for our help in shaping national legislation on aquaculture, to the strong scientific guidance we are providing for the effort to end overfishing once and for all, 2009 was Ocean Conservancy's year.

There were tremendous successes for Ocean Conservancy, but those successes were made possible only through the generous support of individual, corporate, and foundation donors, and by the continued help of hundreds of thousands of our volunteers across the globe. We could not achieve our goals and we cannot continue the good and important work expected of us without that generosity. Thank you, one and all, for your financial support, your good wishes, and your strong voices in the interest of a healthier, more vibrant, and more beautiful ocean.

Sincerely,

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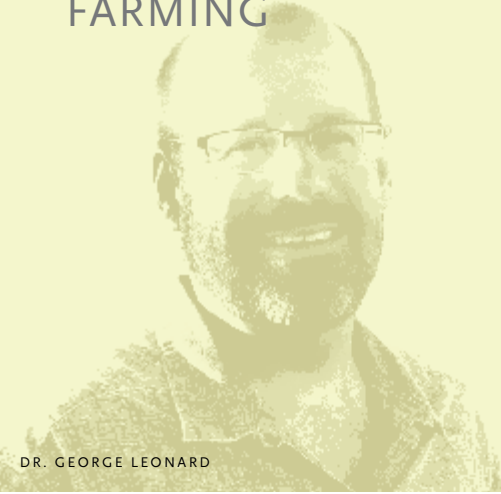
With the advent of the Obama administration and a new perspective on environmental concerns like climate change and comprehensive ocean management, 2009 proved to be a year of tremendous change in how America views and protects its natural resources. Perhaps more than ever before, the attention of the conservation community has turned to the ocean, the least protected of all America's environmental assets. From the outset, the Obama administration made its intentions clear: The ocean and the Great Lakes are national treasures, and it is time to treat them as such. The new administration has taken several steps to protect our nation's beleaguered waters.

Ocean Conservancy has been a close advisor on these developments and has solidified its place as one of the most respected conservation organizations in the nation. Two-thousand-and-nine was another year that Ocean Conservancy's scientific acumen, strategic foresight, and programmatic efficiency were in high demand as our nation began in earnest to deal with the considerable environmental challenges before us.

Last year was filled with programmatic highlights and victories for the ocean on almost every front. It was the year of change ... in how we think and act on behalf of one of our nation's greatest natural assets, the ocean.



SETTING THE STANDARD FOR SAFE FISH FARMING



DR. GEORGE LEONARD

As the world continues to overfish the ocean, causing the supply of wild fish to wane dramatically, fish farming is likely to grow rapidly to meet our ever-increasing demand for seafood. Already, nearly one-half of all seafood feeding the world is farmed. Though still a nascent industry in the US, fish farming—sometimes known as “aquaculture”—will expand substantially in coming years.

Ocean fish farmers are expected to look farther out to sea for suitable waters in which to anchor their facilities. From pollution to parasites to disease, however, such operations are not without serious environmental consequences. Anticipating the potential harm of expanding offshore fish farming, Ocean Conservancy acted decisively before the industry takes root. While not opposed to responsible development of the aquaculture

industry, we became a leading and resolute voice in opposing any plans to allow fish farming in ocean waters under US jurisdiction unless the United States enacts a comprehensive and precautionary law to manage the industry’s growth and prevent environmental harm.

Our prescience and caution were warranted. In the fall, the US Commerce Department approved a misguided plan by regional fishery managers to allow open-ocean fish farms in the Gulf of Mexico. Ultimately, the hasty actions of managers in this one region made the need for national standards all the more urgent.

The director of Ocean Conservancy’s aquaculture program, Dr. George Leonard, was invited to speak before a key subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee on the need for sound legislation, saying: “Now is the time



for strong leadership from Congress on the future of open-ocean aquaculture in the United States. If Congress fails to act, an unregulated industry is likely to develop, and the environmental consequences could be severe.” As the decade drew to a close, representatives in Congress introduced the National Sustainable Offshore Aquaculture Act of 2009, the first step toward a comprehensive law.



**Nearly one-half of
all seafood feeding
the world is farmed.**

PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE ARCTIC


The Arctic is home to some of the world's few remaining intact ecosystems, where iconic species like polar bears, walruses, ice seals, and whales thrive. Yet the Arctic faces unparalleled environmental challenges from climate change, loss of seasonal sea ice, ocean acidification, and the encroachment of oil and gas development, commercial shipping, and industrial fishing.

Human exploitation poses significant and as-yet-unknown dangers to this important region. Ocean Conservancy led a chorus of conservationists **calling for a timeout on expanding industrial uses in the Arctic**. Our voice joined many others urging that, instead of forging ahead with development, we must first gather more and better science from which to craft a comprehensive plan to protect the fragile Arctic before any development proceeds.

In 2009, our efforts met with considerable success. In February, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council **voted to prevent the expansion of industrial fishing** into all US waters in the northern Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort seas, an area of nearly 200,000 square miles. With our partners, Ocean Conservancy was a leading proponent for this decision and advocated strongly for its passage. Most critically, the decision came before commercial fishing could gain a toehold in the area; and it established one of the largest preventative and precautionary measures in fisheries management history. Advocates hailed it as a turning of the tide in Arctic conservation and Ocean Conservancy was a key leader on the issue.

In another area of focus, Ocean Conservancy board member Philippe Cousteau, grandson of legendary ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau,

testified before the House Natural Resources Committee on the impact of offshore oil drilling and the need for better management of industrial demands on the ocean. Later in the year, heedless of our warnings and the entreaty of 70 members of Congress urging a timeout from Bush-era drilling plans in the Arctic, the Minerals Management Service nonetheless approved a plan for exploratory drilling in the Chukchi Sea. It was a move with unpredictable ramifications for the environment and for the people of Alaska, as well as a setback for conservationists. Ocean Conservancy was unbowed, however, and immediately set about exploring alternative routes to block the expansion of drilling in one of America's last pristine ecosystems.



The Arctic faces unparalleled environmental challenges from climate change, loss of sea ice, ocean acidification, and industrialization.

ENDING THE TRASHING OF OUR OCEAN

Once again, Ocean Conservancy and **hundreds of thousands of volunteers around the world** joined in the International Coastal Cleanup—our twenty-fourth annual event. Participants removed trash and debris from coastlines, keeping track of every piece of trash they found. Ocean Conservancy, in turn, compiled and published the data in the world's only annual country-by-country, state-by-state index of the problem of marine debris. *A Rising Tide of Ocean Debris and What We Can Do About It*, our report on results of the 2008 International Coastal Cleanup, was a resounding call to action for prevention of trash in our ocean and highlighted the interconnectedness of marine debris, wildlife, and climate change on ocean health. As such, it represented a significant shift for the Cleanup by combining the power of data with our in-house wildlife and climate change



expertise to provide a roadmap for the ultimate elimination of marine debris.

In 2009, the main theme for the International Coastal Cleanup was “partnership.” We solidified our role as **the *de facto* leader of a broad coalition of public, corporate, non-profit, and government interests** who are working together closely to find a solution to marine debris. Ocean Conservancy and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) joined forces to publish the first-ever examination of marine litter in 12 seas around the world. We

also announced an extensive new partnership between Planet Green, UNEP, Philippe and Alexandra Cousteau, Oceana, and the Natural Resources Defense Council in Planet Green’s “Blue August”—an entire month of programming dedicated to ocean-themed conservation issues. Lastly, we formed a partnership with Earth Day Network in which volunteer participation in the ICC will be counted towards Earth Day Network’s “Billion Acts of Green” campaign in commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day in 2010.

The International Coastal Cleanup is a resounding call to action to prevent trash in our ocean.



BRINGING ORDER TO THE OCEAN

Ocean Conservancy is a leading advocate for bringing order to our ocean through stronger ocean management policies and we are **recognized on Capitol Hill as the go-to conservation organization on ocean issues**. We started the year on a high note when President and CEO Vikki Spruill authored an op-ed in *The Washington Post* both congratulating President Bush on the creation of a series of massive new Pacific Ocean national monuments and laying out specific steps for President Obama to shape his own blue legacy.

In the spring of 2009, Spruill was invited to the White House for a front-row seat as President Obama signed the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, a significant piece of environmental legislation. Ocean Conservancy **helped ensure the inclusion of a package of ocean bills in the Act** and mobilized a coalition of ocean groups

in support of provisions to address acidification, ocean and coastal mapping, ocean exploration, and estuarine protection.


We also worked hard with the new administration to protect the Endangered Species Act (ESA), a campaign that culminated with President Obama's formal revocation of rules established by the outgoing administration. Ocean Conservancy was the only marine group active in this effort. We submitted joint comments, generated a sizable public outcry, and **championed a comprehensive approach to call attention to the dangers of a weakened ESA**.

Late in the year, President Obama's Ocean Policy Task Force released preliminary **recommendations for a first-ever national ocean policy** that includes a new federal ocean governance structure. Specifically, the Arctic was singled out as a focus

for the new National Ocean Council—a key priority of Ocean Conservancy.

In another highlight, Dr. Dennis Kelso, Ocean Conservancy executive vice president, followed Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Nancy Sutley, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, and US Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Thad Allen in **testifying before a US Senate committee on the need for a unified national ocean policy**. Kelso espoused the virtues of coastal and marine spatial planning, a system of ocean governance Ocean Conservancy promotes strongly as a way to ensure ecosystem protection while balancing the existing and emerging uses of our ocean—from recreation to fishing, fossil fuels to renewable energy.

DR. DENNIS KELSO



A leading advocate for bringing order to our ocean through stronger ocean management.

PROTECTING OUR “YOSEMITES OF THE SEA”



In California, Ocean Conservancy was a key driver in **the adoption of a new network of science-based marine protected areas (MPAs)** along the state’s North Central Coast. Since 1999, California’s first-in-the-nation law, known as the Marine Life Protection Act, has sought to protect majestic and environmentally significant places all along California’s storied coast. The law calls for a network of underwater parks—marine protected areas—where human uses like fishing are fully or partially prohibited. Such prohibitions allow vital ecosystems to thrive as naturally as is possible in today’s world. Ocean Conservancy played a key role in the creation and passage of the overarching law in 1999, and, in the decade since, in defining and implementing each protected area designated by the law. On the North Central Coast, Ocean Conservancy was the leader of an inclusive design process that included a diverse

group of coastal stakeholders and we were a voice of thoughtful advocacy throughout more

than two years of public meetings needed to finalize the protected areas.



**Since 1999,
California’s Marine
Life Protection Act
has guarded the
state’s storied coast.**

REALIZING SUSTAINABLE FISHING

Ocean Conservancy believes that we can have both a healthy ocean and strong seafood businesses, but we are taking too many fish from the sea and many species are in woeful shape because of it. To promote our sustainable fishing work, Ocean Conservancy **launched a new online platform called “From Fishery to Fork”** (www.oceanconservancy.org/fisherytofork) that tracks the major steps in the progression of wild-caught seafood from the ocean to the consumer. The site highlights the opportunities for fishery managers, policy makers, fishermen, retailers, consumers and others to improve sustainability throughout the industry.

On a policy front, emboldened by the profound victory that we and our partners secured with the Alaska fishery management plan for the Arctic (see page 4), Ocean Conservancy was

a key advocate for a decision in Florida to apply federal grouper management standards in that important ocean state’s waters. Also in the Gulf of Mexico, **a scientific assessment of red snapper showed that conservation measures**

were working—measures put forward by Ocean Conservancy years ago—helping to end overfishing of red snapper. It was a positive development, but much work remains before this important fishery is declared fully rebuilt.



**We can have both a healthy
ocean and strong seafood
businesses.**



RENEWING THE CALL FOR BOLD ACTION

A more favorable political climate and conservation victories aside, tremendous challenges lie ahead. Ocean Conservancy has only just begun its work in the Arctic, our seas remain overfished, and other perpetual and oft-changing issues require our continued diligence. In 2010 and beyond, Ocean Conservancy will build on our successes and expand our influence when and where it's environmentally warranted and strategically prudent. In particular, we will remain vigilant as the recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force are implemented and an era of more effective and coordinated ocean governance is ushered in. Surely, there are years of hard work ahead as the process of defining the who, what, and where of ocean uses is implemented. No one believes it will be easy, but we know it will be profoundly important.

Likewise, in coming years, Ocean Conservancy will continue ensuring that the mandates of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act are fully realized; not just in the Gulf of Mexico, where we have enjoyed considerable success on red snapper and other important species, but in other critical fishing regions across the nation as well. The end of overfishing must be the cornerstone in any effort to restore the ocean to health.

Of course, our unquestioned legacy in the elimination of marine debris will continue to grow. Ocean Conservancy is building out its expertise into a full-fledged marine debris program that focuses as much on prevention and stopping marine trash at its sources as it does on our role as the global leader in cleaning up trash that has made it into our ocean and waterways.



Lastly, we remain vigilant to any critical ocean conservation issues, like oil spills, that might arise in the future. The ocean remains far from healthy, and Ocean Conservancy is committed to working at the crossroads of science and policy in the interest of our one-and-only ocean. And that's a position we cannot maintain without the support of our members, activists, volunteers, and partners who dream of a day when the ocean has been restored to the vitality it once knew. With your support and a great deal of hard work, that lofty goal will one day be ours ... and our children's.



**We dream
of a day when
the ocean has
been restored
to the vitality
it once knew.**

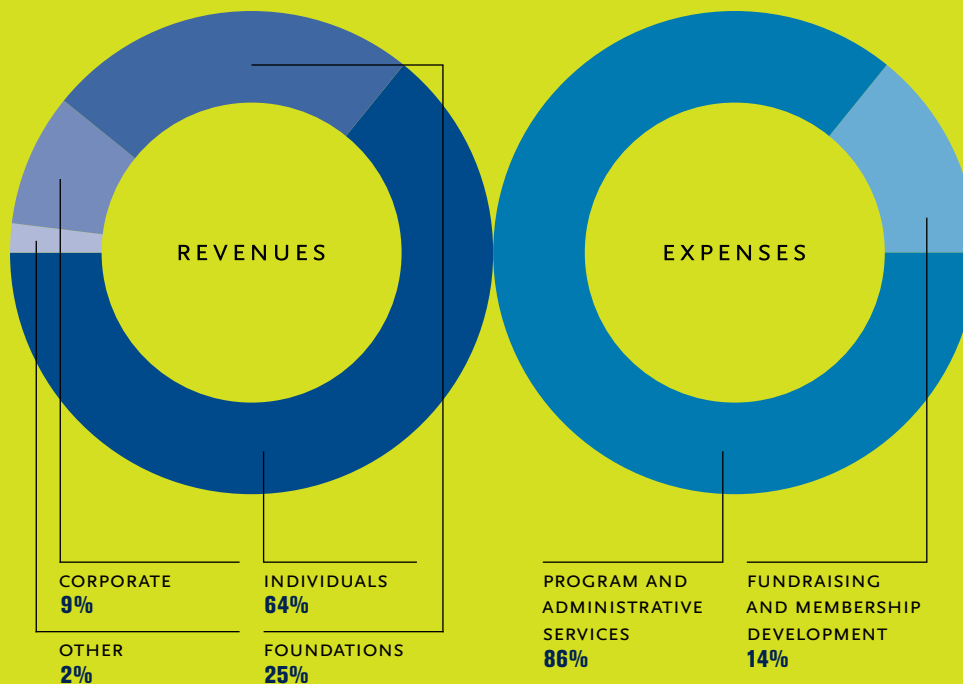
FINANCIALS

Ocean Conservancy continues to deliver high-impact programmatic results in an operationally efficient and cost-effective manner, made possible through the ongoing commitment, involvement, and financial contributions of individuals, foundations, and corporations who understand the critical importance of protecting and preserving the ocean.

Ocean Conservancy's revenue totaled \$16.7 million, primarily from grants and contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations, up slightly compared to \$16.4 million in the previous fiscal year. Expenses totaled \$16 million, down five percent from the previous year. Eighty-six percent of expenses were for ocean conservation programmatic activities and supporting services, and fourteen percent for fundraising and membership development.

Ocean Conservancy strives to be a good steward of the resources entrusted to it by its supporters. The financial results depicted on page 10 are derived from Ocean Conservancy's September 30, 2009 audited financial statements. Copies of the complete audited financial statements are available upon request.

REVENUE AND EXPENSE SUMMARY



REVENUES

	2009	2008
Contributions, Grants, and Bequests	\$16,096,398	\$18,290,543
Government Grants	241,149	306,838
Investment Income	99,132	(2,345,712)
Rent, Royalties, and Other	239,653	107,096
Total Revenues	16,676,332	16,358,765

EXPENSES

Restore Sustainable Fisheries	3,911,657	2,246,596
Protect Marine Wildlife	981,342	2,177,818
Conserve Special Ocean Places	1,533,764	1,557,928
Ocean Governance	1,927,855	1,277,605
Outreach and Awareness	2,906,205	2,437,445
Communications, Marketing, and Publications	880,747	1,940,070
Total Program Expenses	12,141,570	11,637,462
Fundraising and Membership Development	2,207,434	3,442,519
General and Administration	1,681,526	1,813,603
Total Supporting Services	3,888,960	5,256,122
Total Expenses	16,030,530	16,893,584

GAINS/LOSSES

Losses and Allowances	(136,211)	(193,986)
Change in Net Assets	509,591	(728,805)
Net Assets, Beginning of the Year	14,788,035	15,516,840
Net Assets, End of the Year	\$15,297,626	\$14,788,035

CONTRIBUTORS

CHAMPIONS FOR SEA CHANGE DONOR LIST

OCT. 1, 2008 – SEPT. 30, 2009

Ocean Conservancy values all of the dedicated members, volunteers, and activists who make our work possible. We thank all contributors for their generous financial support of our ocean conservation work.

Ocean Conservancy is grateful for the generous support provided by our Champions for Sea Change, those who support our work with gifts of \$1,000 or more, during fiscal year 2009 (Oct. 1, 2008 to Sept. 30, 2009).

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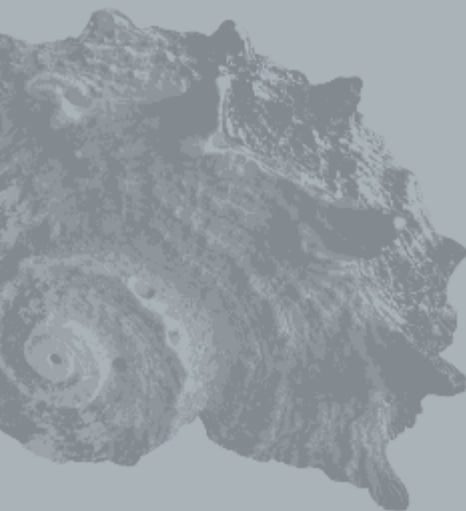
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