

2017 Accomplishments for Save The Whales

Our mission is to preserve and protect the ocean and its inhabitants.

Save The Whales educates many thousands of children, students, and adults every year, locally and worldwide, with information and news about marine mammals and other marine species. We believe children, the future caretakers of the planet, need to be empowered and know that their actions can promote change and make a difference locally and globally. We bring science to the classroom in a mini-museum format, and provide hands-on marine science-based school presentations, student water quality monitoring programs, and after-school programs. We educate the public through e-newsletters, our educational website, social media channels, radio interviews, community participation activities, partnerships, and public speaking events. Each year, we provide opportunities for selected local students to work with our marine science instructors. In 2017, twenty college students and one middle school student assisted with our outreach efforts. We have a proven track record for innovative and excellent outreach programs. Save The Whales has been voted a “Top-Rated Nonprofit” on Great Nonprofits, with a five-star rating, since 2010.

School Outreach: In 2017, Save The Whales reached over 8,040 students with interactive, educational programs for K-12 schools in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, California. Since 1990, Save The Whales has educated over 321,908 students locally and across the country through **WHALES ON WHEELS (WOW™)**. WOW™ is a mobile display of marine mammal artifacts that travels to the schools. Save The Whales commits to bringing quality programs to culturally diverse and under-represented youth. Many of the children we reach have never visited the ocean, even though they may live only 30 miles away. Our programs teach inland communities about storm drains in their neighborhood and their connection with creeks, rivers, and the ocean, and why it is important to reduce pollution on streets (litter, plastic pollution, pet waste, motor oil, pesticides, and paint) from entering storm drains which lead to waterways. In 2017, bus field trips were provided for 486 students, parent chaperones, and teachers, to visit the ocean and participate in outdoor field science, build a blue whale activity and a beach cleanup. With the limited resources available to schools, our presentations provide a valuable learning opportunity for students.

We offer in-class and after-school K-12 programs. All of our educational programs are taught by qualified marine science instructors and conform to National Science Education Standards. The **WOW™** program series brings the marine environment into the classroom through hands-on educational activities and problem-solving games, visual aids, marine mammal artifacts and discussion on how to help marine life. The programs focus on a different marine or watershed topic. Presentations include **Whales and Marine Mammals** (amazing facts about the different species), **Sea Otters** (the smallest marine mammal), the **Land & Sea Watershed Model** (featuring a hands-on model that teaches children about urban runoff); **Amazing Lives of Sea Turtles** (with sea turtle artifacts, and a leatherback sea turtle costume to teach children about sea turtle anatomy); and **Whale of a Rhythm Program** (where students use percussion instruments to play along with patterns of whale vocalizations and learn how noise pollution in the ocean can mask the communication of whales in the ocean). We often combine our presentations with **Schoolyard Litter Pickup** events to teach children about the harmful impacts of urban runoff and marine debris and to enable them to participate in hands-on stewardship activities.

Our newest program, **Dee The Beautiful Whale** is a life-size, 43-foot inflatable humpback whale. Students can go inside the whale and see the heart, lungs, stomach, and intestines and compare the size of the whale’s organs to their own. They will learn that whales are mammals and need our help to

survive. We emphasize how actions such as keeping trash out of streets and storm drains can protect whales and other marine life from ingesting deadly plastic.

The whale is named after the Texas teen named Dee, who became a victim of cyber bullying when someone made a fake Twitter profile with the username fatwhaledee. She was devastated, but decided to turn something negative into something positive and created a tee shirt with the slogan “Dee the Fat Whale Saves The Whales.” Dee raised funds on an online platform which she donated to Save The Whales to help purchase the life-size whale.

We participated in the Leatherback Sea Turtle Symposium, and the annual Wildlife Disturbance Symposium, and were one of the guest speakers at a Plastic Straw Summit, to discuss the dangers of plastic straws in the marine environment.

Our **Balloon Alert Ambassador** program offers opportunities for students to educate their school and communities about the dangers balloons can cause to marine life. In 2017, we recognized the efforts of a middle-school student. Her story is featured on the website to inspire others to participate.

Community Engagement and Participation: A total of 67 volunteers assisted with the below efforts in 2017. **Storm Drain Marking** activities were achieved with volunteer participation. A total of 135 storm drain inlets were marked (and 4,756 since 2006). The land and sea connection is emphasized by leading these activities with students, volunteers, and when possible, disadvantaged adults. The program educates participants and the larger community about urban runoff and the connection between storm drains and the ocean. The emblems display the message “No Dumping – Drains to Bay” (in both English and Spanish). Efforts are coordinated with local municipalities.

Trash assessments and litter pickups are done with students and volunteers in neighborhoods, parks, beaches, and school yards, throughout the year. The storm drains from streets are the conduits for litter to enter rivers, creeks, and the ocean. We prevented hundreds of pounds of plastic and trash from entering the storm drains and helped protect waterways and wildlife.

Community events reached 8,882 members of the public. Save The Whales is highly popular at local fairs, with our enthusiastic educators, traveling museum of marine mammal artifacts and our colorful, attention-getting, life-size marine mammal costumes. Educational materials are provided in English and Spanish languages.

Partnerships:

Our Water Our World (OWOW)

This program helps consumers find less-toxic products for use in their homes and gardens. There are ten trained OWOW advocates in the state of California, and the Executive Director from Save The Whales is the only advocate in Monterey County, CA. She partners with the high-volume local garden stores and labels their pesticide alternatives, speaks to the public and garden store staff, and helps answers their questions. This unique partnership encourages the option of using alternatives to pesticides in order to protect pets, children, wildlife, and waterways by reducing chemical runoff.

Seafood Watch Partner

Save The Whales has been a partner since 2016. The coalition of partners reaches across North America, Europe and Asia. The Seafood Watch program helps consumers and businesses choose seafood that is caught in ways that promote a healthy ocean now and for future generations. The educational tools include a wallet sized fold-up card on sustainable seafood, a mobile app, and updates on sustainable seafood. The card lists Best Choices, Alternatives, and Seafood to Avoid. This information helps individuals make informed decisions when shopping or dining out.

Respect Wildlife Campaign

Save The Whales is part of the Respect Wildlife coalition representing state and federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and local businesses to address marine wildlife disturbance issues in the coastal California area. The goal is to provide consistent messaging in multiple languages in order to reduce disruptive human encounters with marine wildlife in coastal California.

Local Whale Disentanglement Network

Save The Whales is a support organization for this network. We educate the public about who to call and what to do if you see an entangled whale. Following the proper protocol enables authorized responders reach the distressed animal. Assist with getting volunteers to help with spotting distressed whale from shore and qualified boat captains to help locate the entangled animal.

Whale and Dolphin Captivity

Save The Whales raises awareness about the plight of the captive orcas and dolphins. Program Director was interviewed on multiple radio stations on this topic. We educate the public through digital and school outreach platforms.

International Stranding Network

Save The Whales provides Information on their website to assist people locally and globally to obtain help with distressed or stranded whales. The International Stranding Network is compatible with digital platforms and devices.

Protecting Vaquita Porpoise

Focused partnership efforts with national and international organizations to bring awareness to the plight of this critically endangered marine mammal that lives in a small range in the Sea of Cortez, Mexico. A photograph of the vaquita taken by Save The Whales has been used globally by organizations, and press. International Vaquita Day event is held each year, in July, to heighten the plight of this animal.

Save The Whales believes education is the key to saving the whales, oceans and ourselves.