

FISCAL YEAR 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

From July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

Expanding Access. Advancing Science Education. Strengthening Long Island Sound.



**Project
Oceanology**[®]
Since 1972

Where hands-on learning
and innovative research
help shape the future of
marine science

Message from our Chair, Board of Directors & Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

For over 50 years, Project Oceanology has served as a cornerstone of marine science education, engaging more than one million students in hands-on exploration of Long Island Sound. As we reflect on the past year, we recognize a moment of growth — building on our legacy while expanding our regional leadership through citizen science, workforce development, and student advocacy.

Our impact is measured not only in numbers, but in access. Students come to Project Oceanology from communities across Connecticut and beyond. Aboard our vessels, along the shoreline, and in our laboratories, students unite around shared scientific inquiry. Many step onto a research vessel for the first time and leave having collected real-world data and contributed to meaningful environmental understanding. We are committed to ensuring that every participant can see themselves in science — building confidence, belonging, and the skills needed to lead.

Preparing the next generation requires more than exposure; it requires opportunity. This year, we expanded our Internship Program, providing high school and college students with immersive leadership and field experience. From maintaining aquaria to mentoring younger learners, interns gain practical skills that serve as a foundation for careers in marine science and related fields.

Our reach extended beyond the shoreline. Through leadership within the Long Island Sound Study Citizens Advisory Committee, we contributed to the development and publication of the updated Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, ensuring that education and public engagement remain central to regional environmental strategy. In June, students represented Connecticut at Capitol Hill Ocean Week, meeting with lawmakers and participating in national conversations about ocean and climate solutions.

Our commitment to the health of Long Island Sound remains steadfast. Whether serving as a technical resource for watershed organizations or building new partnerships with school districts across the state, our goal is clear: to ensure that meaningful marine science education and access to Long Island Sound remain available to all communities.

As we look toward the next decade, we are investing in our people, our facilities, and our fleet to meet the evolving needs of Connecticut's learners and communities. We remain focused on growth, access, and long-term impact.

This work is made possible by a community that believes in it. Thank you for your partnership, your trust, and your continued support.

With respect and gratitude,



KATHY HOWARD
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS



J. ANDREW ELY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ABOUT US

Since 1972, **Project Oceanology** has been sparking curiosity and a passion for marine science in students, educators, and the public from our waterfront facility in Groton, Connecticut.

As **marine educators, scientists, and environmental advocates**, we provide immersive, inquiry-based experiences that bring learning to life, from exploring Long Island Sound aboard our research vessel to investigations on the shore and in our labs.

Inspiring the next generation of marine scientists and environmental stewards is more critical than ever. Through innovative, standards based educational programs; research opportunities; internships; and community partnerships, we empower students and the public to understand, protect, and advocate for our marine ecosystem.

Advancing an Informed and Engaged Public

Throughout the year, Project Oceanology strengthened its regional leadership through continued service on the Long Island Sound Partnership's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Executive Director Andrew Ely assumed the role of Connecticut Vice-Chair, contributing to bi-state collaboration and public engagement efforts centered on the long-term health of Long Island Sound.

In 2025, the CAC marked its 40th year of supporting implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). A key priority of the updated plan is Goal 4: Informed and Engaged Public — ensuring that communities across the watershed understand the ecological and economic importance of Long Island Sound and have access to meaningful educational opportunities.

Andrew serves on the Informed and Engaged Public Work Group, focusing on expanding access to environmental education, strengthening literacy around coastal science, improving multilingual outreach, and broadening participation across diverse communities.

Education as Regional Infrastructure

Project Oceanology's hands-on marine science education, citizen science initiatives, and youth leadership programs directly support this regional vision. By connecting classroom learning with real-world science experiences on Long Island Sound, Project Oceanology helps cultivate a well-informed public equipped with knowledge and appreciation for this vital estuary.





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** Founding Districts Since 1972*



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Long Island Sound Partnership
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Mystic Oysters
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U.S. Coast Guard Research and Development Center
University of Connecticut
University of Rhode Island
Wequetequock Cove Water Coalition



FEATURED PROGRAMS



LOBSTER TRAP RECOVERY & ASSESSMENT PARTNERSHIP (L-TRAP)

Reducing Marine Debris. Restoring Habitat. Advancing Science.

Project Oceanology is a lead partner in the Lobster Trap Recovery & Assessment Partnership (L-TRAP), a collaborative effort to locate, remove, and study abandoned lobster traps in Long Island Sound.

Since 2022, nearly 3,000 derelict traps have been recovered in Connecticut waters — reducing ghost fishing, protecting marine life, and improving seafloor habitat health.

Learn more information about the program [here](#).

UNIFIED WATER STUDY

Monitoring Water Quality. Informing Restoration. Engaging Community.

Through the Unified Water Study, Project Oceanology conducts consistent, field-based water quality monitoring in Mumford Cove and the Poquonnock River from May through October.

Educators collect:

- Temperature
- Salinity
- Dissolved oxygen
- Marine algae (macrophyte surveys)

This data contributes to the Long Island Sound Report Card and supports regional understanding of embayment health.

The Unified Water Study strengthens local stewardship while contributing meaningful scientific information to watershed management efforts.

You can see the latest Long Island Sound Report Card [here](#).

FEATURED PROGRAMS



NOAA BAY WATERSHED EDUCATION & TRAINING (B-WET)

Empowering Environmental Literacy & Watershed Stewardship

Through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program, Project Oceanology supports students and educators — particularly in underserved communities — in becoming informed watershed stewards.

Participants:

- Design and build outdoor learning spaces
- Investigate watershed systems and local environmental challenges
- Connect classroom learning with field-based inquiry
- Develop civic engagement and leadership skills

B-WET programming strengthens environmental literacy while building long-term community resilience in the face of climate change.

View current and past B-WET Grantees [here](#).

CONNECTICUT RIVER CONNECTIONS

Science. Stewardship. Shared Experience

For over two decades, CRC has united students from urban and rural districts in hands-on marine science investigations along the Connecticut River.

Aboard research vessels, students collect data on water quality, fisheries, seal populations, and eagle activity — contributing to long-term watershed monitoring.

CRC strengthens scientific skills, environmental stewardship, and cross-community connection while fostering a shared sense of responsibility for the river.



6,750 students
31 schools
18 towns



371 shipboard experiences
199 benthic trawls
101 eagle surveys
71 harbor seal studies



87,472 pieces of trash removed
61 watershed cleanups

This program is made possible by an interdistrict grant from the Connecticut State Department of Education and delivered in partnership with the Connecticut River Museum.



STRONGER TOGETHER: COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Marine Science Magnet High School and Robert E. Fitch High School students attended Capitol Hill Ocean Week in DC, where they received advocacy training, met with Connecticut lawmakers, and joined talks on ocean challenges with scientists, policymakers, indigenous tribal leaders, and business leaders.

We expanded our summer camp program, providing tuition assistance to 50 young people out of 443 campers. Thanks to our sponsors and partners, including Community Foundation of Eastern CT, Eastern CT Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Elevate+, Robin's Ice Cream Truck, SCIENT Federal Credit Union, Scripps Family Fund for Education and the Arts, The Just Brand, and Town of Groton, we enhanced campers' experiences with additional resources.



We also hosted a variety of public events, including Paint & Sip, Prints & Pints, Public Cruises, Family Day, Marine Science Day, and SnorkelFest, bringing people of all ages together to explore and learn about marine science while strengthening our community's connection to the ocean.

WELCOMING OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS



We are pleased to welcome two outstanding additions to the Project Oceanology team this year. Tremaine Swinson joins us as our Custodian, playing a vital role in maintaining our facilities and supporting daily operations. Allison Keck has come aboard as our Marketing & Communications Specialist, where she is leading efforts to strengthen our outreach, visibility, and community engagement.

We are excited to have Tremaine and Allison as part of our team and look forward to the many contributions they will make to our mission.

CREATURE FEATURE

Sea Angel

A Sea Angel was caught in the plankton net aboard Project Oceanology's Research Vessel, Enviro-Lab II! A sea angel is a type of swimming snail. The muscular foot found in land snails has evolved into a pair of winglike structures called parapodia that are used for swimming in open water. Sea angels have a small, transparent, gelatinous body and do not have a shell.



For **over 50 years**, we've been igniting a passion for marine science, engaging **over 25,000 students** annually in our programs.

This year, over **443 summer campers** from **20 states** and **3 countries** dove into discovery along our shorelines.

349 passengers, ages 6 to 84, explored Long Island Sound on our public cruises this year.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Investing in Access. Sustaining Impact. Building the Future.

Financial stewardship is central to our mission. Every dollar entrusted to Project Oceanology supports hands-on marine science education, vessel-based research experiences, and expanded access to Long Island Sound for students, educators, families, and community partners across Connecticut.

This past fiscal year was a year of strong program participation, continued grant support, and disciplined investment in high-quality marine science education and public engagement. While funding streams evolved, our diversified revenue base and long-term planning keep us focused on growth, access, and sustainability.

Project Oceanology serves K–12 students, college learners, educators, public participants, and community-based organizations, ensuring that meaningful marine science experiences remain accessible to all.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 REVIEW

REVENUE

From July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

Program Revenue – \$884,880 (59%)

Strong participation in member programs, public programs, and summer camp continues to demonstrate demand for immersive, field-based marine science education.

- Member & Public Programs: \$427,460
- Summer Camp: \$457,420

Grants & Contributions – \$495,223 (33%)

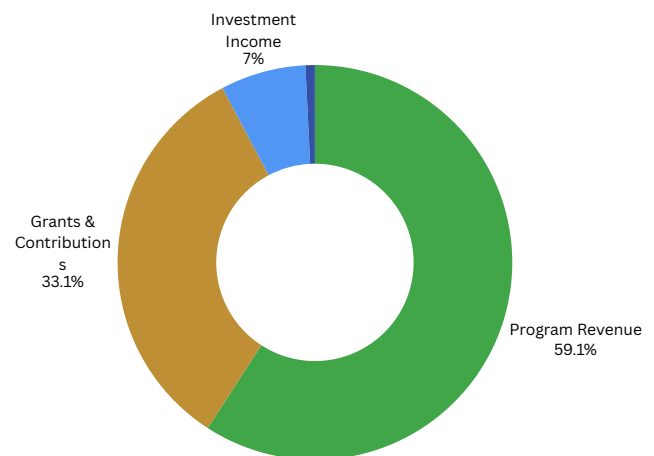
Restricted grants and contributions supported the expansion and delivery of marine science education initiatives across Connecticut.

- State Grants: \$125,000
- Other Restricted Grants: \$370,223

Investment Income – \$104,683 (7%)

Responsible investment management provided additional stability through interest, dividends, and realized gains.

Other Income – \$11,459 (1%)



REVENUE, GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS

Program Revenue	\$ 884,880	59%
Grants & Contributions	\$ 45,223	33%
Investment Income	\$ 104,683	7%
Other Income	\$ 11,459	1%
Total Revenue	\$ 1,496,245	100%

FISCAL YEAR 2025 REVIEW

EXPENSES

From July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

Marine Programs – \$1,459,406 (86%)

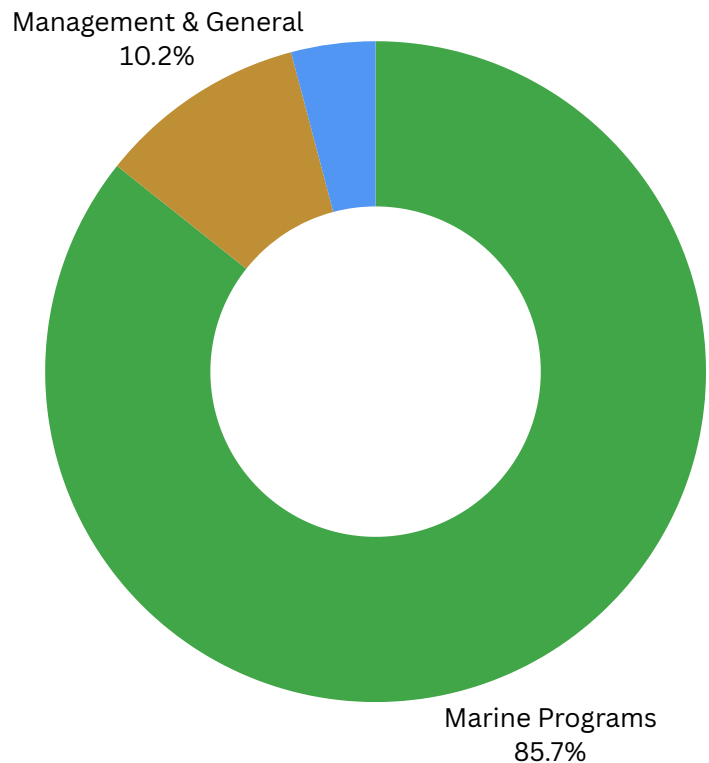
Direct delivery of marine science education to member schools, partner districts, colleges, public participants, and community programs.

Management & General – \$173,443 (10%)

Operational leadership, safety oversight, compliance, and administrative infrastructure that sustain high-quality programming.

Fundraising – \$70,148 (4%)

Philanthropic engagement and strategic development that support continued access and program expansion.



EXPENSES

Marine Programs	\$ 1,459,406	86%
Management & General	\$ 173,443	10%
Fundraising	\$ 70,148	4%
Total Expenses	\$ 1,702,997	100%

FISCAL YEAR 2025 REVIEW

FINANCIAL POSITION

From July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

A Strong Foundation for the Future

Total Assets – \$1,869,956

- Current Assets: \$417,619
- Investments: \$1,105,082
- Net Property & Equipment: \$100,640
- Other Assets: \$246,615

Total Liabilities & Net Assets – \$1,869,956

- Current Liabilities: \$565,051
- Long Term Liabilities: \$246,615
- Net Assets: \$1,058,290

With and without donor restrictions.

Project Oceanology maintains a healthy balance sheet and long-term financial strength, ensuring resilience, stability, and responsible growth.

LOOKING AHEAD: BUILDING THE NEXT CHAPTER

The last fiscal year marked a year of transition as funding streams evolved. Through it all, Project Oceanology remained strong, stable, and deeply committed to delivering transformative marine science education.

Our focus is on growth.

In fiscal year 2026, Project Oceanology will report approximately \$1.725 million in federal investment dedicated to expanding our infrastructure and educational capacity, including:

- A second research vessel
- Small boats
- Scientific equipment
- Aquaria systems
- Critical field and laboratory upgrades
- Hostel upgrades

These are more than capital purchases, they are capacity builders that will allow us to deepen hands-on scientific experiences, strengthen partnerships, and generate new earned revenue opportunities.

We are investing in the tools that will power the next generation of marine science education, our future Blue Economy workforce, and our future citizens.

The future is not uncertain. It is expanding.

\$1.725 million investment in the future of marine science education



“Project Oceanology is simply the best! As a teacher, my goal is for all of my students to develop an understanding of, appreciation for, and passion toward the ocean. For some students, their experiences with Project Oceanology may lead them into marine science careers, while for others, their experiences may simply be “wow!” moments that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

- Member Teacher

“Project Oceanology serves as a cornerstone to our Marine Science curriculum from elementary through High School. I have personally brought over 5000 students to Project Oceanology, and every one of those students has had an experience they will not forget.”

- Member School

“I’m so grateful for this program. It reignited my son’s passion for animals and confidence in himself. He was able to see there are other kids like him, with similar interests and mindsets. I will be forever grateful for this amazing program and only wish I’d discovered it earlier.”

- Summer Camp Parent



**Join Us.
Support Marine Science Education.
Partner With Us.**

PROJECT OCEANOLOGY

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