



# 2018 Impact Report



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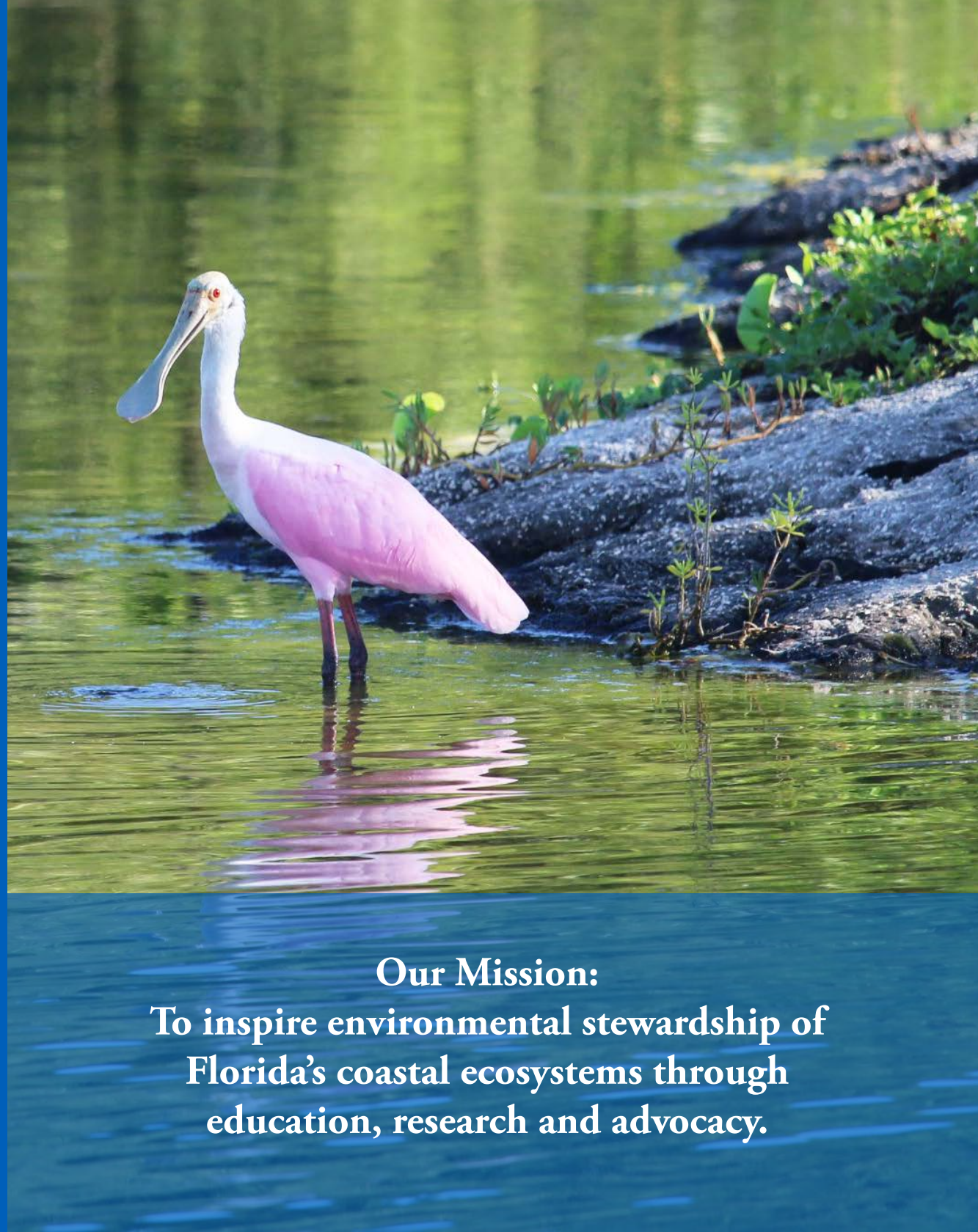
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### Photography:

Florida Oceanographic Society  
Steven Martine Photography



890 NE Ocean Boulevard, Stuart, FL 34996  
(772) 225-0505 | FloridaOcean.org



**Our Mission:**  
**To inspire environmental stewardship of  
Florida's coastal ecosystems through  
education, research and advocacy.**

# 2018: Engagement & Expansion

This has been a significant year for Florida Oceanographic Society as we embarked on a new Capital Expansion Program at the Coastal Center on Hutchinson Island. The new Ocean EcoCenter will provide exciting and innovative exhibits that will expand our ability to educate guests and advocate on behalf of Florida's coastal ecosystems. We are on the path to completing the funding campaign with construction anticipated to start in spring of 2019.

Our research and conservation programs continue to focus on restoring local coastal habitats including oyster reefs, seagrass beds and living shorelines in the estuaries. Although significant discharges from Lake Okeechobee continued to cause major impacts to these ecosystems, we expanded our seagrass nursery and built 18 new oyster reefs with recycled shell from local partner restaurants.

The harmful algae blooms and red tide this year were devastating to our environment, and the threat to human health increased awareness of the serious problems in our coastal waters. Our advocacy efforts stepped up with our Save Our Waters campaign to stop the sources of pollution and restore the natural flows of freshwater in south Florida.

A record number of 64,418 visitors came to the Coastal Center this year. Everyone enjoyed the wide diversity of marine life within our care and had the opportunity to learn about local waterways and ecosystems. Florida Oceanographic Society's professional science and education staff have given several hundred programs and presentations to thousands of students and visitors, including interactive virtual programs to classrooms in faraway lands. Our volunteers have given more than 17,000 hours helping with habitat restoration, water quality monitoring, exhibit programs and much more.

Our sincere thanks to all of our generous supporters and members as we work to expand responsible environmental stewardship of Florida's coastal ecosystems.

**Mark D. Perry**  
*Executive Director*

**Allen Herskowitz**  
*Board Chair*



# Capital Expansion Campaign

## Coming Soon!

### Ocean EcoCenter - *Explore Florida's Coastal Ecosystems*



This year Florida Oceanographic Society announced plans for an exciting expansion to the Coastal Center. The components of our Capital Expansion will allow us to engage our community in ways that we were unable to do before. The new Ocean EcoCenter will support our continued growth and inspire our ever-growing number of visitors to understand and protect Florida's coastal ecosystems. We will be able to share our mission through interactive exhibits, play-based learning activities and educational programming. The Ocean EcoCenter will include a dedicated indoor

classroom space and an Ocean Deck that can be used for lectures and special events.

In addition to the new Ocean EcoCenter, we will be adding Lagoon Bridges that will carry visitors to the island and give them a unique point of view of our 750,000 gallon Gamefish Lagoon and the animal ambassadors that call it home.

Our Gift Shop will also be expanding from 300 sq. ft. to 1,100 sq. ft. The anticipated increase in sales will help to support our programming at the Coastal Center. Lastly, the Waterworks Exploration Zone will be an area that mixes education and fun with water-based learning. Visitors will learn more about how water moves and flows through different ecosystems in Florida.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we've raised nearly \$4 million during the quiet phase of our campaign towards our \$6.5 million plan. For more information about the expansion and ways you can help, please contact our Development Office at 772-225-0505 x108.

#### Our Capital Expansion will:

- Inspire an increased number of visitors
- Engage guests in education, restoration and advocacy of Florida's coastal ecosystems
- Enable us to host lectures, seminars and special events

### Key Features of Expansion Plan



#### Ocean EcoCenter

Allows us to expand the reach of our mission and provide larger exhibit and classroom spaces.



#### Lagoon Bridges

Gives guests the opportunity to view gamefish in the Gamefish Lagoon with better top-down viewing.



#### Gift Shop Expansion

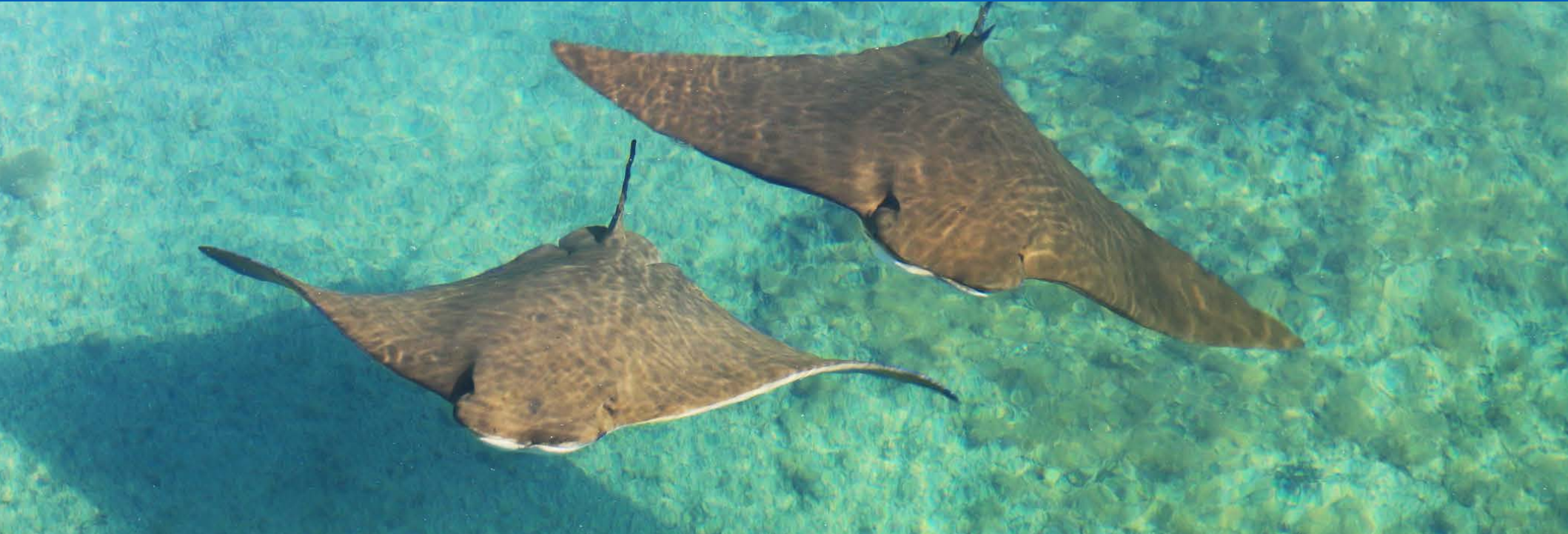
Increases our funding to support our programming at the Coastal Center and in the community.



#### Waterworks Exploration Zone

Engages visitors in an interactive manner with water-based learning.

# At The Coastal Center



**We care for more than 300 animals every day including:  
3 Green Sea Turtles, 1 Loggerhead Sea Turtle, 10 Nurse Sharks,  
17 Stingrays, more than 200 bony fish and 80 invertebrates.**



## Over 64,000 Visitors in 2018

Florida Oceanographic Society's 57-acre Coastal Center on Hutchinson Island is home to sea turtles, nurse sharks, local gamefish, and a number of invertebrates. Daily educational programs allow visitors to interact with stingrays, see a sea turtle up-close, and witness a feeding frenzy in our 750,000-gallon Gamefish Lagoon. Visitors can explore exhibits in both the Frances Langford Visitor Center and the Children's Pavilion, or take a stroll through the Butterfly Garden or down the Nature Trail that leads to the Indian River Lagoon. This is all while learning about Florida's unique coastal ecosystems and how to best protect and preserve them.

# Animal Care

## Animal Care

Our Animal Care and Life Support team is responsible for caring for our animal ambassadors by creating a safe and healthy environment across 17 exhibit tanks totaling nearly 1 million gallons of water. Our animals play a critical role in our education endeavors, and their quality of life is achieved by ensuring they receive fresh, ethically sourced food, clean habitats and daily well-being checks during operant training sessions. All animals onsite help us accomplish our mission by allowing visitors to experience and learn more about how wild populations can be impacted by human actions. Through our programming and hands-on experiences, animals that may often be misunderstood are showcased so visitors can understand how to interact with and protect their wild counterparts.



## Water Quality Concerns

Sourcing our water directly from the Atlantic Ocean has always been a great asset to our facility. Sadly, this year we were faced with the possibility that toxic algae and cyanobacteria could creep into our exhibits through this resource. While there were temporary closures to our animal exhibits, we had no negative impacts to our animal ambassadors. We believe our pre-planning efforts and diligent awareness of our surrounding water quality helped us prepare and respond to changing environmental conditions.

## Life Support System Updates

This past year, we were able to make critical system upgrades to our infrastructure and emergency equipment. We replaced our old generator with a newer model, installed a permanent propane tank and increased the number of systems we can run during periods of power outages. More upgrades are needed to provide the best care possible for our animals and we are eagerly moving in that direction.

## Seahorses

This year we were able to breed a large number of lined seahorses onsite. The happy seahorse parents were both captive-bred themselves, meaning they were not taken from the wild, and produced a second-generation captive brood. Seahorses are an animal of special concern in our local waters as habitat loss may be impacting the survival of wild populations. Florida Oceanographic always chooses captive breeding or other low-impact methods to supply creatures to our animal exhibits.



# Education

Education is at the heart of Florida Oceanographic Society's mission. Through daily educational presentations, field trips, and educational programming, we hope to inspire Coastal Center guests of all ages to become stewards of Florida's coastal ecosystems. Additionally, using high-tech distance learning tools and staff-led outreach programming, we are able to spread Florida Oceanographic's mission around the community and around the globe.

## Coastal Center Field Trips

2,100 participants attended 47 standards-based educational field trips this year. An additional 2,300 participants from 76 groups visited the Coastal Center as part of the Self-Guided Field Trip Program. For students unable to visit the Coastal Center in person, we offer a Virtual Field Trip Program that streams live, interactive lessons directly into the classroom. This year, we conducted 42 Virtual Field Trips, reaching 1,200 students from places around the globe, including South Africa, India, and Bosnia & Herzegovina. Virtual Field Trips were provided at no cost to teachers thanks to the generous support of the Marmot Foundation.

## Deserving Kids to the Coast

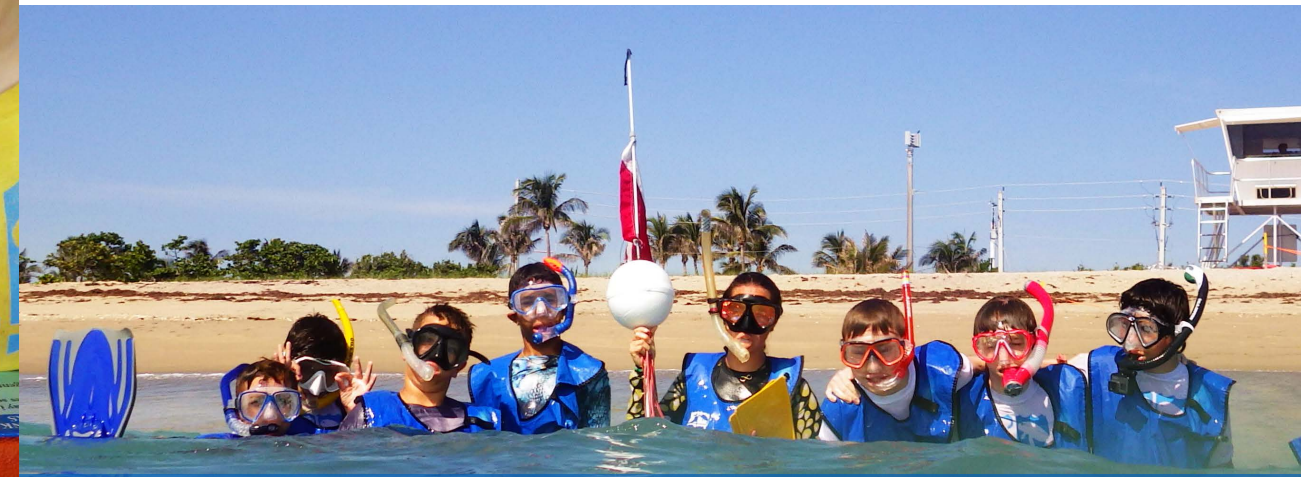
We are committed to providing educational opportunities for socioeconomically disadvantaged children in our community. Our "Deserving Kids to the Coast" marine science education program, generously supported by the William and Helen Thomas Charitable Trust, provided free educational Coastal Center field trips for seven classes from Title I elementary schools in St. Lucie County.

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## Coastal Lecture Series

The 2018 Coastal Lecture Series attracted nearly 1,400 guests to eight thought-provoking lectures focused on marine science and conservation. Record-setting attendance over the last two years truly underscores the popularity of these free lectures. This series, which was supported by the Marmot Foundation, is one of the most important outreach tools we have for bridging the gap between the scientific community and the public.



## Marine Science Summer Camp

Our marine science summer camps are really something to splash about! Over 8 weeks, 113 campers participated in Coastal Discovery Camps (ages 5-11) and Specialty Immersion Experiences (ages 12-16). These hands-on, learning-focused programs expose children to Florida's coastal ecosystems, while cultivating an early sense of environmental stewardship.

## Sea Turtle Nesting Walks

A popular summertime tradition, our nighttime sea turtle nesting walks give guests a rare glimpse into the secret life of the prehistoric reptiles that nest on Hutchinson Island's beaches. We inspired 420 attendees on 19 turtle walks to take action to protect and conserve Florida's nesting sea turtles. Florida Oceanographic is one of a handful of local organizations that are able to offer this unique educational experience, conducted under a special permit from the State of Florida.



## Game Fish & Fish Games

Fifty girls and boys, ages 8-14, excitedly gathered at the Coastal Center for our 7th annual Game Fish and Fish Games Youth Fishing Clinic. The children learned fishing and conservation skills in preparation for our three-month-long Youth Fishing Tournament. Young anglers caught an incredible 502 fish, and spent countless hours enjoying the great outdoors. A grant from Fish Florida allowed us to provide free rods to all clinic participants.



Photo taken in accordance with marine turtle permit # MTP-16-099

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# Research & Conservation



## FLOOR

The FLOOR (Florida Oceanographic Oyster Restoration) program works to restore and expand critical oyster reef habitat in the St. Lucie Estuary and southern Indian River Lagoon while involving the community in direct, hands-on efforts. The program relies on local partner restaurants that have collected over 44,000 pounds of shell this year, saving the shell from a landfill and returning it to the estuary to restore oyster habitat. To date, the recycled shell has been used to build over 118 reefs encompassing approximately 61,100 sq. ft.



## FOSTER

The FOSTER (Florida Oceanographic Seagrass Training Education and Restoration) program works to restore seagrass meadows in the Indian River Lagoon as they are important nursery habitats for commercial and recreational fish species. Stranded seagrass fragments are collected from shorelines and are grown in 9 land-based nursery tanks. This innovative restoration method results in a non-destructive source for seagrass restoration and eliminates the chance of injuring natural beds. Ongoing monthly surveys show declines in natural seagrass populations in the southern Indian River Lagoon, necessitating developing new and effective restoration techniques. To date, the program has planted over 589 sq. ft. of seagrass into the Indian River Lagoon.



## Living Shoreline & Plant Restoration

Our scientists have been developing new approaches to living shoreline and plant restoration that will improve water quality, provide habitat and naturally adapt to changing sea levels. Living shorelines provide an alternative to traditional hardened stabilization methods by using natural elements like oyster reefs, seagrasses, mangroves, and salt marsh plants.

Shoreline plant restoration involves restoring mangrove and salt marsh habitat to stabilize shorelines and promote accretion in the southern Indian River Lagoon. In a newly developed plant nursery, we are raising over 600 mangrove propagules and over 100 salt marsh plugs to support ongoing living shoreline restoration efforts. This year, with the help of the local community, we deployed 25 juvenile mangroves and 15 plugs of salt marsh into an integrated oyster reef approach to improve the shoreline and surrounding ecosystems.

## Collaborations & Partnerships

Recognized for having subject matter expertise, our scientists participate in local, state and national conferences and other efforts related to conservation. Collaborations include:

- Oyster Integrated Mapping & Monitoring Program
- Bimonthly plankton monitoring for NOAA
- CERP RECOVER Science Coordination Group
- Martin County Agricultural and Natural Resources Advisory Committee
- University of Florida
- Indian River State College
- FAU Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College
- Gettysburg College
- Clark Advanced Learning Center



## Water Quality

Our water quality program has been providing valuable data to local and regional environmental managers and scientists for 20 years. We currently have 37 testers that monitor 30 sites across 10 zones. These volunteers test for weekly changes in salinity, temperature, water clarity, oxygen, and pH to track the health of our local waterways. Over the years, this program has involved more than 110 volunteers who have collectively submitted over 15,000 data sets.



# Advocacy

## Taking the Message to the Community

As active advocates, we fight for our waterways and the preservation of Florida's environment. In addition to being members of the Rivers Coalition, Everglades Coalition and Blue Frontier Campaign, we lead conversations, take part in stakeholder meetings and work to educate the community about water quality issues. Examples of our participation include:

- Participating in 42 local, state and federal agency meetings and conference calls
- Attending March for the Ocean in Washington, D.C., and meeting with elected officials regarding our ocean and coastal environments
- Representing our community at the annual Everglades Coalition Conference, attended by over 300 participants from around the state
- Attending America's Everglades Summit in Washington, D.C.
- During the 2018 election year, meeting with and educating candidates running for local and statewide offices



## News & Media

It is our mission to advocate for our waterways, and one of the methods we use to accomplish that is by sharing important information with the press and the community. Over the past year Florida Oceanographic has been featured in not only local and national newspapers, but also various television and radio stations and social media channels. During periods of Lake Okeechobee discharges, it is not uncommon to see several news stations walking in and out of our office on any given day. They know that the information our educators and researchers can provide is invaluable!

Visit our website at [FloridaOcean.org](http://FloridaOcean.org) and follow our social media channels @floridaoceanographic



## Rally for the River

Over 250 people were engaged at this year's Rally for the River event in Stuart's Flagler Park. This community awareness event incorporated science in action with a water quality testing area, oyster shell bagging, mangrove propagule planting station and more! Booths were hosted by Florida Oceanographic's research, education and advocacy staff along with 12 other environmental organizations.

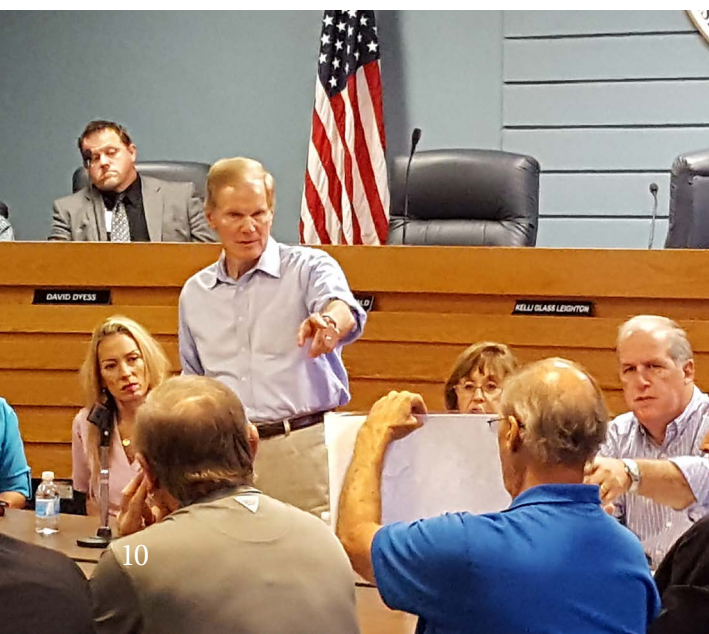
## Save Our Waters Pledge

In 2018, discharges brought another round of toxic blue-green algae into our waterways. We also faced red tide, which hadn't been seen in this area for over a decade. This experience left many citizens asking what could they do to help. Working with our community, we developed the Save Our Waters campaign. It defines our water issues and what can be done by each of us to help make a positive impact on our watershed. By signing the pledge you are committing to join Florida Oceanographic in protecting our waterways!

## Advocacy in Action & Community Engagement

Through outreach we have advocated for the environment at local events and meetings with both the community and visitors from out of town. We share our Dark, Flat and Clean messaging with hotels on Hutchinson Island so that all beach-goers can play a part in protecting sea turtles. Volunteers put advocacy into action monthly at every adopt-a-highway, beach and waterway cleanup.

We have also been able to gather the community for conservation workshops and programs. By providing people with valuable information about our waterways, they can advocate for better environmental practices in the community.



Congressman Brian Mast signing the Save Our Waters Pledge during our annual Rally for the River.

# Volunteers



## Overview

Florida Oceanographic Society volunteers all have one thing in common, they believe in and carry out our mission. Over 200 active volunteers donated over 17,000 hours this past year. There are volunteers who enjoy helping us with events and others who can't wait for their shift as an exhibit guide - either way we wouldn't be able to do what we do without them. Their energy, commitment, eagerness and zeal helps us in so many ways. They inspire us and we are grateful for everything that they do!

## Hours Well Spent

- Exhibit guides helped to educate over 64,000 Coastal Center guests
- Green team gardeners spent 400 hours maintaining our gardens
- 137 oyster volunteers helped to bag 3,337 oyster shell bags and deploy 4,050 bags
- Water quality testers completed 1,500 tests in the Indian River Lagoon
- There were over 350 hours dedicated to beach and roadway cleanups
- Our seagrass volunteers created 196 planting units
- Animal Care volunteers donated nearly 400 hours this summer in assisting our Animal Care Department



# Special Events



### Oceans Alive



### Lights on the Lagoon

This past year Florida Oceanographic Society hosted and participated in various fundraising events that supported our mission to inspire environmental stewardship through education, research and advocacy.



### Culver's Cares Night



### Clay Shoot



# Donors

## Major Donors (As of Sept. 30, 2018)

### \$1,000,000 +

The Kopf Family  
Frances Langford Foundation

### \$500,000 +

Thomas A. Evinrude & Family  
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Martin County Tourism  
Capital Project Grant

### \$200,000 +

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### Up to \$2,000

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Matthew & Jane Hooks  
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## Annual Donors (Oct. 1, 2017 through Sept. 30, 2018)

Thank you to ALL of our loyal donors and members, including Benefactor, Patron, Family and Individual Members. We truly appreciate your support!

### \$25,000 +

Thomas Buhr  
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Dan & Janet Chabot	Mary Ann Houghland	Malcolm R. Myers	Clayton & Anna May Timmons
Bill & Sue Conner	Dale & Mary Hudson	John & Joanne Payson	Toll Brothers, Ron Blum
Stuart & Barbara Cozzens	Wayne & Marti Huizenga	Robert & Suzanne Pearson	The Trimble Family
Doug Crompton	Marion L. Hutchison	Alden & Jane Peck	Hugo & Patti Unruh
Larry & Diana Cusick	Jock & Twinks Irvine	Perkins Charitable Foundation, Leigh Perkins	Judy Viny
Charles deGarmo	Leslie F. Johnson & Lisa Berry	Nils & Susan Peterson	Gail & Lois Warden
John & Lore Dodge	Bud & Marjorie Jordan	John Pierson	Jill & Stan Wattles
Carolyn Donigan & Deane MacMillan	Kantner Foundation	Bonnie Pitman	Robert & Carol Weissman
Bob & Ellen Drisner	Ulla & Harold Kaplan, Jr.	Louise Potter	John & Dot Whiticar
Mr. and Mrs. Willis H. du Pont	Kiplinger Foundation, Knight Kiplinger	Thelma A. Powell	Bill & Donna Whittaker
David & Cheryl East	Paul & Helen Kleinfeld	John & Janey Pratt	Karl & Sheila Wickstrom Family
Lee & Gaby Elsey	Fred & Betty Kopf	Publix Super Market Charities	Sam Zemsky
Melissa W. Escobar	Arthur & Marilyn Levitt	Frances Rago	John & Kay Ziegler
Thomas A. Evinrude & Family	Peg Lindberg	Douglas & Carol Rearick	Cindy & Jim Ziemba
Jordan & Jean Fields		Nathaniel P. & Alita Reed	Pat Zygmun
Free Family Foundation			

### Lifetime Members - - In Memoriam

Bob & Liz Ball	Joseph & Ray Gordon	Arthur & Augusta O'Hara	Art & Doris Schneyman
Eunice H. Drewsen	Arthur G. Jager	Jim Oehlberg	Barbara Briggs Trimble
Edward Hagerty	Joseph LoTufo	Suzanne & Thomas Reynolds, Jr.	
Gustave & Rita Hauser	George & Nancy Montgomery	Adele Roach	

## Ocean Legacy Society

Mary Jo & Jim Askew	The Charles & Audrey Faust Foundation	Twinks Irvine	Briggs-Trimble Family
Margaret Bradley	Carole & William Hauke, Jr. Fund	Arthur G. Jager	Charitable Fund of the
Arthur & Doris Schneyman Fund	Paul & Verna Hederman	Clifton & Margaret Perry Fund	Community Foundation for
Harry & Helyn Brubeck Fund, a gift of Kay & John Ziegler	Margaret B. Hurlburt Charitable Remainder Trust	Robert & Suzanne Pearson Fund	Palm Beach
Dwyer Family Fund		Rich & Yvonne Ross	& Martin Counties
		Mr. & Mrs. George H. Swift, III, Fund	Jean A. Walsh

## In Memoriam

This past year we were saddened by the loss of three of our Honorary Trustees, John B. Dodge, Nathaniel P. Reed and Karl Wickstrom. These three men supported Florida Oceanographic Society with their words and actions and helped us to achieve our mission. Their shared beliefs to protect and preserve Florida's coastal ecosystems and waterways have inspired us all. Their legacies and impact will continue to inspire our community and visitors to the Coastal Center for many years to come.



**John B. Dodge**  
Honorary Trustee  
1990-1998  
2013-2017  
Board of Directors  
1998-2013



**Nathaniel P. Reed**  
Honorary Trustee  
1990-2018



**Karl Wickstrom**  
Honorary Trustee  
2013 - 2018  
Board of Directors  
1998-2013

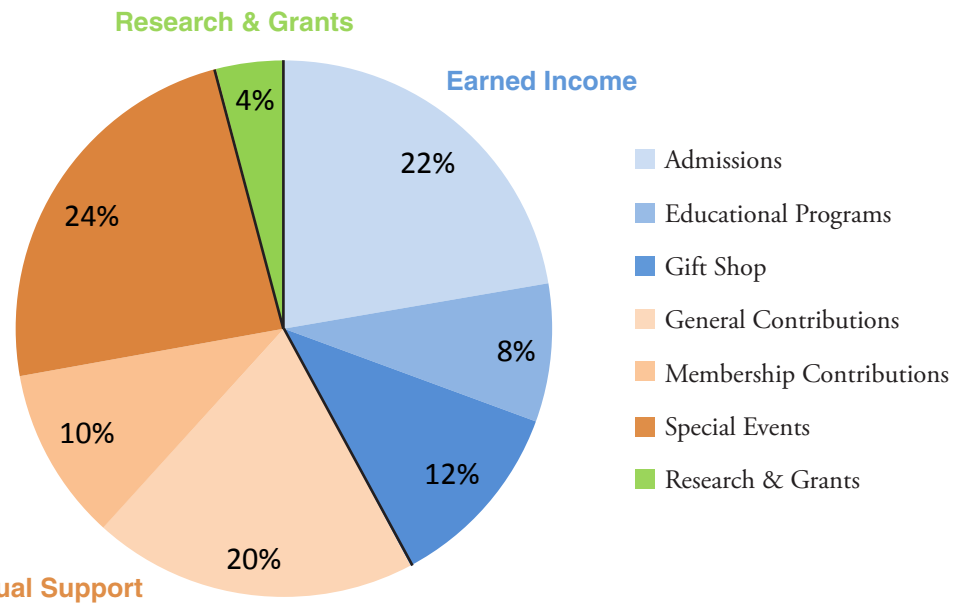
# Operating Performance

Fiscal year Oct. 2017 - Sept. 2018, from Financial Statements 9/30/18

## Support and Revenues

Admissions.....	\$394,146
Educational Programs.....	147,195
Gift Shop.....	204,672
General Contributions.....	345,873
Membership Contributions.....	184,163
Special Events.....	420,283
Research & Conservation.....	72,083

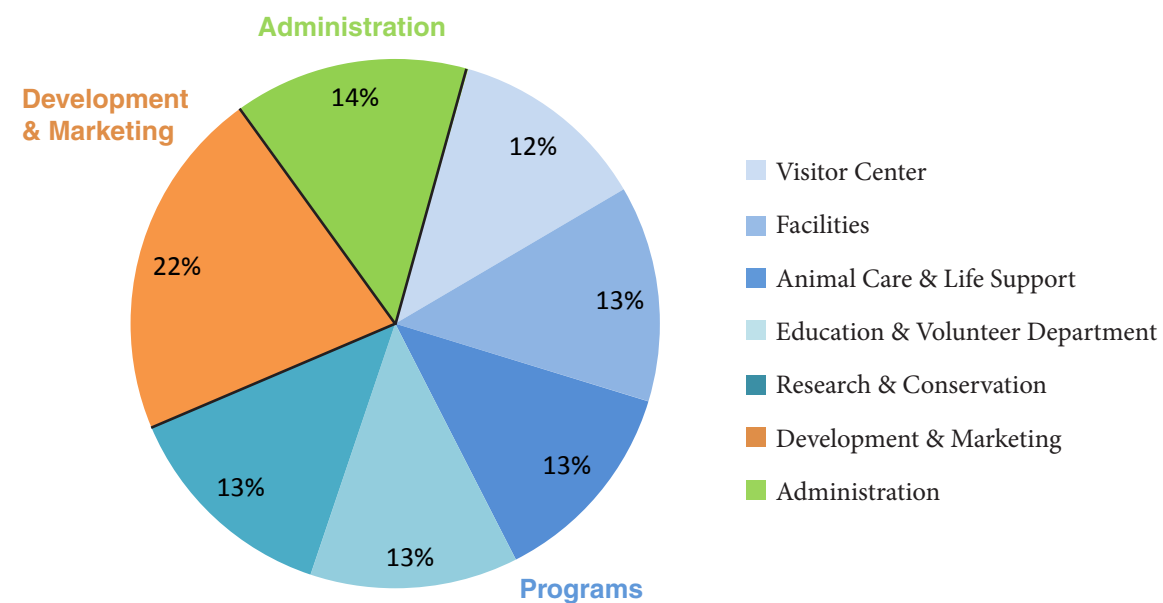
**Total Support and Revenues.....\$1,768,415**



## Expenses

Visitor Center.....	\$208,113
Facilities.....	227,018
Animal Care & Life Support.....	219,068
Education & Volunteer Department.....	218,633
Research & Conservation.....	231,257
Development & Marketing.....	369,443
Administration.....	246,819

**Total Expenses.....\$1,720,351**



# Board & Staff Directory

## Board of Directors

**Board Chair**  
Allen Herskowitz

**Vice Chair**  
Patricia Noonan

**Secretary**  
Gary Goforth, Ph.D., PE

**Treasurer**  
Mark Cocorullo (2018)  
Matthew King

**Directors**  
W. John Amerling  
Mary Jo Askew (Retired 2018)  
Paul R. Hederman  
Matthew Hooks, DMD  
Bob Mathias  
Nancy Rand  
W. Scott Turnbull  
Phil Wintercorn (Retired 2018)

### Honorary Trustees

Bob Bauman  
\*John B. Dodge  
Tom A. Evinrude  
Dale Hudson  
Edwin Massey, Ph.D.  
Jack Nicklaus  
John Pratt  
\*Nathaniel P. Reed  
Paul A. Shirley  
\*Karl Wickstrom

\* In Memoriam

### Administration

*Executive Director*  
Mark D. Perry

*Director of Business Administration & Operations*  
Jo Marie Bruno

*Administrative Assistant*  
Cathy Muir

### Animal Care & Life Support

*Director of Animal Care & Life Support*  
Brittany Biber

*Animal Care Specialist*  
Chris Britton

*Animal Care Technician*  
Angelina Bruno

*Animal Care Specialist*  
Elisa Kermani

### Development

*Director of Development & Marketing*  
Abigail Flood

*Community Outreach & Event Coordinator*  
Michelle Byriel

*Public Relations & Marketing Coordinator*  
Renée Salvat

*Development Assistant*  
Rita Kimmons

*Volunteer Coordinator*  
Rosemary Badger

## Staff Directory

### Education

*Director of Education & Exhibits*  
Zack Jud, Ph.D.

*Education Specialist*  
Shannon Dack

*Education Specialist*  
Yasmeen Fadlallah

*Education Specialist*  
Nicole Harper

### Operations

*Operations Manager*  
Shaun Jackson

*Operations Technician*  
Joseph McWilliams

### Research

*Director of Scientific Research*  
Vincent Encomio, Ph.D.

*Research Associate*  
Glenn A. Coldren, Ph.D.

### Research Continued

*Research Associate*  
Kathryn Tiling, Ph.D.

*Research Associate*  
Pam Hopkins, Ph.D.

### Visitor Center

*Visitor Services Manager*  
Susana McHale

*Admissions Associate*  
Joyce Gherlone

*Admissions Associate*  
Jan Kurtz

*Admissions Associate*  
JoAnn McCann

*Admissions Associate*  
Bonnie Smith

*Gift Shop Associate*  
Gail Neward





Florida  
Oceanographic  
Society

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