

NOVEMBER 2024

MAKING WAVES

ATLANTIC HEALTHY OCEANS INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER



AHOI

ATLANTIC HEALTHY OCEANS INITIATIVE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our first edition of Making Waves! This newsletter will keep you updated on AHOI’s work toward protecting the health of the ocean and the coastal communities that rely on it. From community beach cleanups to marine research, we’re excited to share the work that we’re doing with the communities in Gros Morne, our partners, and our committed volunteers! Continue reading to get an update on our summer activities, our current projects, upcoming plans, and ways you can join us!



Community volunteers and AHOI staff remove nets, ropes, and other debris from Wild Cove, Norris Point, at a community beach cleanup during the Trails, Tales, and Tunes festival.

DID YOU KNOW?

AHOI has been conducting beach cleanups in Gros Morne since 2019 and has collected over **11,000 lbs of debris** with over **500 volunteers!**

For more information, please visit www.ahoi.ca

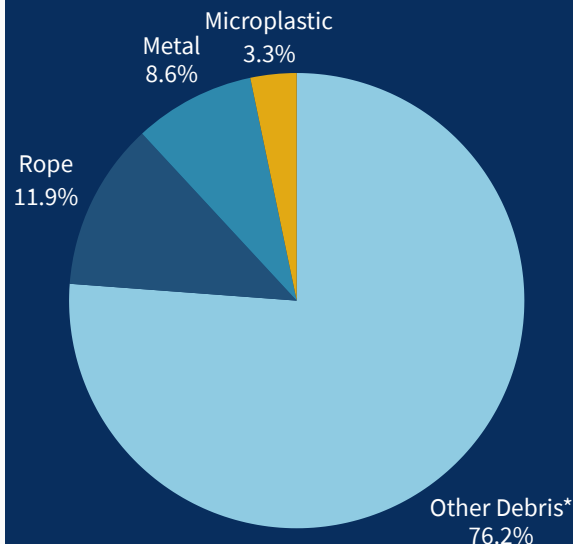
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Email sydney@atlantichthyocean.com to sign up for our e-newsletter!

2024 Beach Cleanup Recap



*Other debris includes items such as household waste and takeout packaging

RESEARCH PROGRAM UPDATE

Aquatic Species at Risk in Gros Morne

Our 2023-2026 Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk project brings together experts from AHOI, Dalhousie University, Memorial University, Edgewise Environmental and the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) to study and help conserve aquatic species at risk in western Newfoundland. Some of our key activities include beach cleanups to reduce entanglement risks to vulnerable species from marine debris, genetic research on redfish to evaluate the uniqueness and size of the population in Bonne Bay, acoustic surveys to detect the presence of marine mammals such as the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale off the south-west coast of NL, and zooplankton tows to better understand the distribution of key prey for whales, mackerel and herring. We are also continuing our ROV surveys to explore and assess the health of marine habitats important for at-risk species in Gros Morne. As we analyze the collected data, findings will be added to EAC's Community-led Marine Atlas, with annual updates shared on our website and social media to keep you informed!



[Left] Dr. Laura Helenius (DAL) deploys a plankton net in Bonne Bay.
[Right] Jordan Woolfrey (AHOI) and Dr. Jordy Thomson (AHOI) conduct eelgrass snorkel surveys in St. Paul's Inlet.

Eelgrass: The Underwater Hero

We mapped and conducted an initial assessment of the health of eelgrass beds, which support marine biodiversity and local fisheries. We gathered data on eelgrass abundance and threats from invasive green crabs through ROV and snorkel surveys. Understanding the status of these habitats will help sustain both the marine ecosystem and community livelihoods!

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Our work is possible with financial support from Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada.



ATLANTIC HEALTHY OCEANS INITIATIVE

Engaging with the local and global community

- AHOI held several public outreach events in 2024, including World Ocean Week, engaging with over 400 people across the Gros Morne region.
- Sydney and Jordy attended the International Marine Conservation Congress 7 (IMCC7) in Cape Town, South Africa. Sydney presented community-based approaches to ghost gear retrieval and marine conservation in NL!
 - Key takeaways include empowering the next generation, strengthening ties with local stakeholders, and using research to inform decision-making in conservation efforts.
- Check out our website www.ahoi.ca/events for upcoming events to stay involved!

Daniel sets a green crab trap in an eelgrass bed as part of our efforts to monitor invasive species in eelgrass habitats.

