 

Ocean Watch Action Committee Report – May 2022 - April, 2023

**Since the last HSCF in April 2022, the committee met over Zoom:** June 10th, September 23rd, January 13th and April 14th. Meeting notes, plans and Action Tracker [can be viewed here.](https://www.howesoundbri.org/partners-and-tools/2021/3/9/ocean-watch-action-committee)

**Participating organizations**: Representatives of the Howe Sound Community Forum member communities- Town of Gibsons, District of West Vancouver, District of Squamish, Bowen Island Municipality, Gambier Island Local Trust Committee, Area A Metro Van, SLRD, MLA Sturdy’s office, Squamish Nation, David Suzuki Foundation, Marine Stewardship Initiative, Squamish River Watershed Society, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society

**Organizer & Moderator:** Ruth Simons, Executive Director, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS)

# Objectives of the Committee – Terms of Reference:

1. Learn and build consensus on collective actions Local Governments can take to advance Ocean Health.
2. Advance actions emerging from [Átl’ḵa7tsem/Txwnéwu7ts/Howe Sound Edition 2020](https://oceanwatch.ca/howesound/) [(OWHS](https://oceanwatch.ca/howesound/) [2020)](https://oceanwatch.ca/howesound/)
3. To review and share updates on each of the recommended actions and strategic plan.

# Activities and major actions resulting since April 2022 report:

1. Introduction to newly elected Council members now participating on the committee.
2. Monitoring, restoration and funding actions taking place around the sound added to the [Ocean Watch Action Tracker.](https://www.howesoundbri.org/ocean-watch-action-tracker) A few highlights:
   1. Marine Reference Guide [received an Esri Canada top spot](https://resources.esri.ca/news-and-updates/announcing-the-winners-of-the-2023-esri-canada-map-calendar-contest) in their calendar.
   2. Herring surveys continue with this winter’s spawn recorded at 5 kms long.
   3. Re-commencement of Rockfish monitoring by Marine Life Sanctuaries Society
3. Education and presentations received on:
   1. Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Howe Sound Glass Sponge Reef, Rockfish Conservation area alignment and education.
   2. Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan – HSBRIS
   3. West Coast Environmental Law’s Marine Protected Area Project
   4. UBC Institute for Fisheries and Oceans – eDNA sampling for key species

**Collaborative Actions:**

1. Metro Vancouver barge sharing in Howe Sound Marine Debris clean-up and cooperation with Marine Stewardship’s Marine Debris Coordinator and the development of the [Debris Tracker tool.](https://howesoundguide.ca/marine-debris-reporting/)
2. Increased locations at the entrance of Howe Sound for Green Crab Monitoring - Invasive Species Council
3. Participation at the Fisheries and Oceans workshop on GSA and RCA alignment

# Recommendations to HSCF:

* To support the establishment of a Marine Debris Fund to cover the costs incurred by local stewards for handling and removal of marine debris. The fund would fill a gap in the absence of any other available funding. More information to follow.

**Note Takers:** Bridget John, Research Assistant, Marine Reference Guide (MRG) & Diane Mitchell, HSBRIS

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