

EcoOcean's Year in Review – Working Together to Protect Our Ocean

Thousands of children, teachers, communities, and partner organizations – a year of action for the sea.

The past year was yet another complex year for all of us. However, despite the high level of uncertainty and the difficulty of securing the continuity of our operations—particularly within our educational programs—we succeeded, even during this period, in bridging knowledge and action, connecting communities with the ocean, and uniting partners from diverse sectors who chose to assume shared responsibility for the marine and coastal environment.

Against the backdrop of the war, absent staff, and various personal and community challenges, we chose to remain steadfast in our commitment to our marine environment and to fostering a shared society. We did so out of the conviction that times of crisis make civic engagement—which unites diverse population groups—and long-term educational activity especially vital.

In the community and business spheres, we strengthened the ties between the business sector, the community, and the sea. Dozens of employee groups and organizations—such as the Olympic Committee—participated in beach cleanups, training sessions, and volunteer days. For the first time, employees from business firms joined the "Marine Emergency Volunteer Network," while we simultaneously collaborated with other organizations in sensitive areas as part of recovery efforts following a particularly challenging period.

None of this work would have been possible without our partners. Heartfelt thanks to the Robert Weil Family Foundation for their continued trust and long-standing support, and especially to Andreas—the founder of EcoOcean and a true partner on this journey. We are grateful to Dylan Tauber for his support, involvement, and personal connection, to Yad Hanadiv, and to the Azrieli Foundation for a meaningful partnership that enables us expand and deepen our educational and community activities.

I hope our work inspires hope and I look forward to the coming year - being a year of recovery and growth for us all.

Shana Tova

Arik Rosenblum, CEO



Marine Emergency and partnerships

Preparing for oil spills through partnerships

A network that continues to grow!

EcoOcean continues to build a nationwide Marine Emergency Volunteer Network strengthening preparedness for marine emergencies through training, coastal patrols, and collaborations with local authorities, civil society organizations, and the business sector. Over the past year, the national marine emergency volunteer network has continued to bolster readiness to handle oil (petroleum and its derivatives) pollution incidents affecting the sea and coastline, alongside ongoing environmental activities along Israel's shores.

A highlight of the year was the participation of network volunteers in a large-scale emergency drill conducted by the Rishon LeZion Municipality—in collaboration with the Ministry of Environmental Protection—to address oil pollution at sea and on shore. During a scenario simulating a spill of approximately 30 tons of heavy fuel oil onto the shore, the response teams and volunteers practiced field operations, including cordoning off the polluted area, protecting the backshore, deploying pollution-control equipment, and conducting shoreline surveys to assess the extent of the damage. This practical exercise demonstrated the vital role of skilled volunteers within local and national emergency response frameworks.

Alongside strengthening emergency response capabilities, network volunteers participated throughout the year in a variety of professional lectures, field tours, and enrichment activities designed to deepen their familiarity with the marine and coastal environment, expand their professional knowledge, and foster stronger connections and engagement within the volunteer community. Additionally, network volunteers took part in Citizen Science initiatives. This comprehensive range of activities enables the network to continue building a professional, connected, and skilled community—one that acts on behalf of the sea during routine times and stands ready to mobilize and respond during emergencies. Five years after the "Tar in the Storm" incident, we continue to translate lessons learned into action; this year, we also opened our doors to the business sector, aiming to recruit and train companies and their employees as part of the marine emergency volunteer force.



44.2% Women



55.3% Men



851 Volunteers

A nationwide network of volunteers united by one shared purpose: being there for the sea, everyday and in times of emergency!



Ecoocean's Marine Emergency Network is a long-term community effort built on shared responsibility, partnership and preparedness – ready to stand by the sea when it matters most. Join the Marine Emergency Network [here](#)

2026 Year in Review
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Educational Programs

Environmental education leadership that combines knowledge, experience and community

The passing school year was challenging, yet we continued to create impactful educational experiences, foster innovation and deepen students' connection to the marine environment.

The 2025–26 school year brought significant challenges due to the security situation in Israel. Nevertheless, we continued delivering a wide range of educational activities, develop innovative programs, and foster a deep connection between students and the marine environment. We are proud to share a glimpse of some of the leading projects we carried out over the past year. We are grateful to all our partners, teams, and students who made this work possible.

We look forward to another year of meaningful environmental education and action!



The GENIUS Program

The future generation develops sustainable solutions

This year saw the launch of the GENIUS program (Green Engineering & Innovation for Universal Sustainability). This educational initiative addresses sustainable development challenges within food, energy, water, and environmental systems, aiming to strengthen national resilience. Through the program, secondary school students use advanced STEM tools to develop innovative engineering solutions—grounded in scientific inquiry and tailored to the specific needs of any community or location. Developed by the Ministry of Education and the EcoOcean education team, the program included introductory sessions and field trips to the coast and the “Megalim” Center to examine environmental challenges, guidance for student teams in developing their engineering solutions, and a concluding hackathon to evaluate the students' proposals.



‘Children of Sea’ Program

A grassroots connection to the sea and to the community

This year, we successfully launched the “Children of the Sea” program, a unique program designed to deepen the connection between children from fishermen families and the marine environment through new and diverse experiences combining science, culture, and community activities. The program aims to strengthen their sense of belonging and responsibility toward the sea and the coast.

This year, the program was held in Jisr al-Zarqa for children from fishing families in the communities of Jisr al-Zarqa and Fureidis. It included classroom and beach-based learning, field trips, special activity days, and community gatherings that brought together fishing families and members of the wider community.

The shore, the sea and the Olympic spirit

An inspiring collaboration between EcoOcean and the Israel Olympic Committee. Olympic athletes joined EcoOcean instructors to lead students in beach cleanups that combined sport, education, and environmental responsibility. Students collected litter, learned about the importance of protecting the marine environment, and took part in Olympic-themed competitions and activities on the beach.

This year, two events were held in collaboration with local authorities—one at Hadera Beach and the other at Rishon LeZion Beach



Partnerships with corporation and peer civil society organizations

Connecting business, communities and the sea

In 2026, we continued to build connections between the business sector, local communities, and the sea. Throughout the year, dozens of employee groups and organizations took part in beach cleanups led by the EcoOcean team. Additional companies joined the Marine Emergency Volunteer Network after completing training that combined professional knowledge with hands-on practice on the beach, becoming part of a volunteer network ready to assist in times of emergency.

Alongside our work with the business sector, we held beach cleanup events with students and athletes from the Israel Olympic Committee, bringing new audiences into our efforts to protect the sea.



Beach cleanup in collaboration with L'oreal

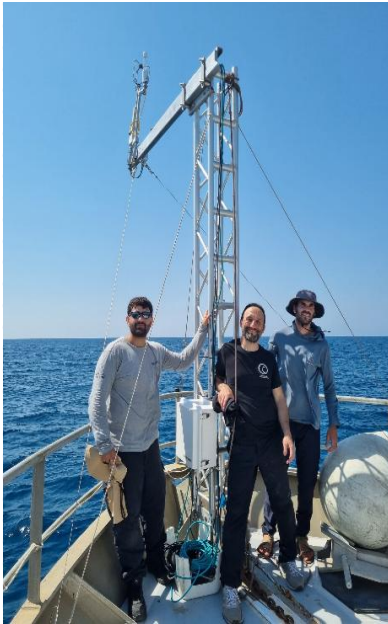


Tel Shikmona cleanup in collaboration with Elbit

[Watch our team in action !](#)

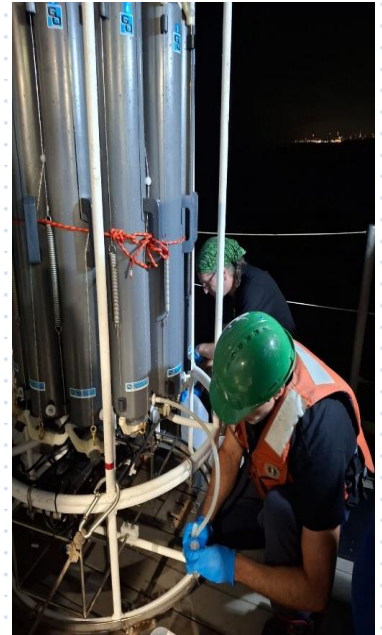
To schedule an activity for your team please write to adi@ecoocean.org

The Sea – a space that combines learning, exploration and action



The MedEx research vessel has been upgraded with a water-sampling system (rosette), with a maximum water collection capacity of 144 liters—an increase of 50%. In addition, thanks to the replacement of the cable, water can now be sampled at depths of up to 2,000 meters.

A meteorological station of the Hebrew University was established on board, led by Dr. Aviv Solodach from the Institute of Earth Sciences. A system of advanced sensors was installed on the vessel to allow for continuous monitoring of the atmosphere and sea surface throughout the vessel's voyages. This is part of an approach that positions the vessel as a platform where researchers can install advanced instruments and collect data over extended periods through its regular operations, rather than only during dedicated research expeditions.



Marine Environmental Management

Managing the marine and coastal space

Advancing the Blue Economy and Coastal Tourism

EcoOcean's Environmental Management Department works to promote sustainable and responsible stewardship of the marine and coastal environment, while supporting initiatives across the blue economy—from coastal and marine tourism and fisheries to education, community engagement, and international cooperation.

Here are some of the highlights of our work over the past year:

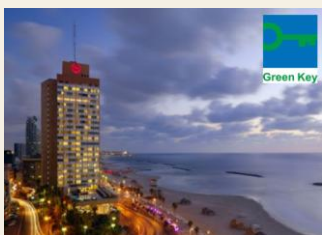
The Blue Flag

In 2026, the Blue Flag continued to set an international standard for environmentally responsible, safe, and accessible beaches and marinas. This year, 62 beaches and 3 marinas across Israel were awarded Blue Flag status.

The 2026 Blue Flag season opening and the ceremony honoring the country's Blue Flag beaches were held this year in Ashdod.

More about the [Blue Flag](#)





The Green Key

The Green Key program, which promotes sustainability in the tourism industry, continues to grow in Israel. This year, two ibis hotels in Jerusalem joined the program, becoming the first hotels in the city to receive Green Key certification. At the same time, we are preparing to introduce an updated certification process and new criteria, in line with evolving European standards and regulations.

More about the [Green Key](#)

The National Coastal Trail

We continue developing the Israel National Coastal Trail as a community-based tourism initiative that connects people, nature, and communities along the coast. In partnership with the University of Haifa, we organize guided walks, develop content in Hebrew and Arabic, and run educational activities with schools along the trail.

Want to join the Coastal Trail community of hikers and explorers?

[Join the community](#) !



The fishermen community



A three-year joint project of EcoOcean and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority.

The *With the Fishermen* project strengthens relationships and collaboration with Israel's professional fishing community, aiming to promote sustainable fishing and safeguarding the future of fish stocks and the marine ecosystem.

This year, we produced educational videos on sustainable fishing and successfully completed the *Children of the Sea* educational program for children of fishermen families in Jisr al-Zarqa and Fureidis.

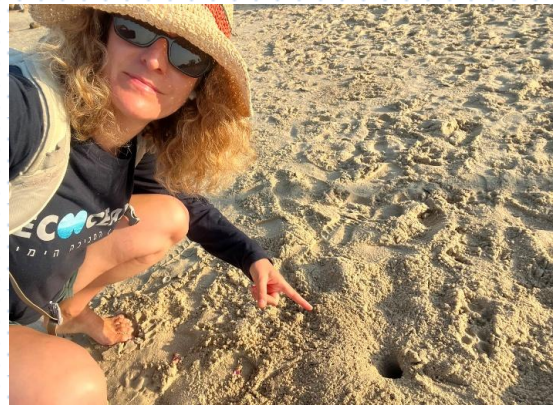
Community Relations and Citizen Science

The public in the forefront of science

Turning curiosity into knowledge to protect our marine and coastal habitats

In 2026, EcoOcean's citizen science program continued to connect public curiosity with scientific knowledge. Volunteers from across the country collected valuable data that contributes to protecting marine and coastal habitats.

This year, our volunteer communities continued to make important contributions on several fronts. The MedEx community, centered around our research vessel, continued to serve as a platform for marine research. Our Media Ambassadors community continued to share personal stories inspired by a deep connection to the marine environment. The Blue Flag community helped ensure that Blue Flag beaches continued to meet the required standards, while the Marine Emergency communities maintained their readiness to respond to emergencies. Our citizen science communities continued to contribute valuable knowledge.



The Marine and Coastal Citizen Science project is now in its third year. The project connects communities with scientific research and the marine environment through several marine and coastal wildlife monitoring programs. These programs provide valuable indications of the health of the ecosystem and support decision-making for the management and protection of the sea and coast.

As part of the project, we continued our Sand Crab monitoring program at selected beaches, as well as the Great Sand Crab Count, in which volunteers from across the country set out early in the morning to count crab burrows. We also continued monitoring key marine species—and are now beginning a new monitoring season—as well as the stranding of oysters along the northern coast of Israel.

This year also marked the third year of monitoring young guitarfish, cartilaginous fish from the ray family that use Israel's coastline as a nursery habitat—a phenomenon that is almost unique to Israel's shores.

Beyond our field activities, we took part in several media stories, presented the project's findings at the Citizen Science Conference at the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History at Tel Aviv University, and continued to build important partnerships.

Continuing the Journey Together



EcoOcean's work is made possible by a growing community of donors, partners, volunteers, and supporters who share the belief that the sea belongs to us all—and that protecting it is a responsibility we share.

We hope you'll join us in this journey in the year ahead!

To learn more about EcoOcean's activities, projects, and work, follow us on [social media](#) or visit our [website](#).

[Donate](#)

We appreciate your partnership!
The **EcoOcean** team

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