

Ocean Health and Function

We reveal how the ocean works and how to better care for our planet.



Thousands of PFAS chemicals have been developed, but scientists still don't have a good grasp of how these complex pollutants impact ecosystems. Our researchers recently launched ambitious and collaborative research to understand the prevalence and fate of PFAS in coastal environments and to increase access to testing services in Maine. bigelow.org/2023-pfas



Viruses play an essential role in the ecology and evolution of microbial life. Last year, our scientists discovered the first evidence of "giant," double-stranded DNA viruses that may be infecting fungi in the deep ocean crust. Their results open up a whole suite of new questions on the role of viruses in biogeochemical cycling in this extreme environment. bigelow.org/2023-giant-viruses

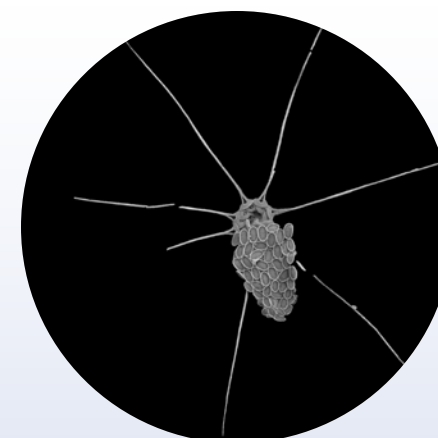
From rising seas to shifting food webs, our planet has undergone dramatic changes over the last 50 years.

Throughout this time, Bigelow Laboratory has advanced the leading edge of ocean science through our discoveries — and through innovative technologies we've developed and shared with the world.

We hope you enjoy this look back at how our bold science has led the way to a brighter future during the last year.



Phytoplankton form the foundation of a rich marine ecosystem in the North Pacific. Volcanic ash, including "aged" ash that's blown into the ocean even years after an eruption, might provide the nutrients, like iron, phytoplankton need to grow. A team of our scientists explored this connection between ash and phytoplankton blooms this year, drawing on interdisciplinary expertise and student research. bigelow.org/2023-volcanic-ash

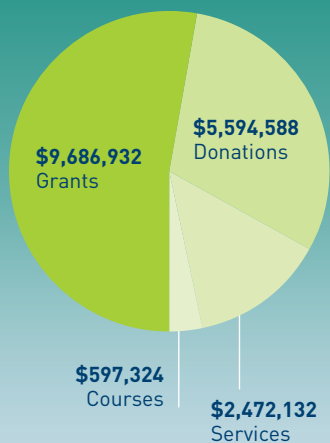


Some organisms can switch between photosynthesis and other methods of getting energy and nutrients, and we now know these mixotrophs are much more common in the ocean than once thought. Several of our scientists published research last year on mixotrophy, illuminating the molecular basis of the phenomenon and how it may make organisms more resilient to changing conditions. bigelow.org/2023-mixotrophy

2023 FINANCIALS

JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

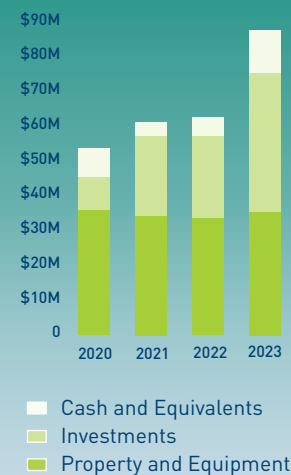
REVENUE \$18,350,976 Total*



EXPENSES \$18,589,257 Total



ASSETS 2020 – 2023





As warming temperatures become the norm across the world's ocean, marine animals are likely to become more vulnerable to disease. Our scientists are using diverse methods, in collaboration with resource managers, to understand the potential impact of different marine pathogens on ecosystems and fisheries, including new work on epizootic shell disease in the Gulf of Maine's lobsters. bigelow.org/2023-marine-disease



As carbon dioxide continues to increase in the ocean, its waters are becoming more acidic — and many marine species are struggling to adapt. However, new research published by one of our scientists last year showed that ocean acidification may actually support the growth of one species of copepod that's a vital food source in the North Atlantic, highlighting the complex impacts of climate change on ocean health. bigelow.org/2023-ocean-acidity

Our Changing Planet

We focus on key species to predict, combat, and adapt to climate change.

Bigelow Laboratory works closely with community groups, tribal organizations, and local government partners to create resilient communities and ecosystems.

Last year, our researchers began a collaboration with tribal communities in northern Maine to apply advanced techniques like environmental DNA to monitor the impacts of dam removal in the light of rapidly changing conditions.

bigelow.org/2023-local-science



Climate change and warming ocean temperatures are reshaping the distribution of species in the ocean.

Supported by a cohort of student scientists, our researchers are using cutting-edge techniques and developing new tools to track the movements of marine species, like white sharks, in the Gulf of Maine and forecast where they might appear in the future.

bigelow.org/2023-white-sharks



Blue mussels in the Gulf of Maine have declined significantly in recent years, making it difficult for aquaculture farmers to collect the young larvae they need.

Our researchers recently began developing innovative technologies to detect and quantify the abundance of blue mussel larvae that will eventually lead to the creation of user-friendly, field-ready toolkits for mussel farmers.

bigelow.org/2023-larval-mussels



Single-celled organisms shape food webs and nutrient cycling in most ecosystems, including the ocean.

For 15 years, Bigelow Laboratory's Single Cell Genomics Center has pioneered technology to unlock the DNA of individual cells. That expertise enabled recent scientific advances that include linking genes to the activity rates of microbes and building a genomic atlas of ocean microbial life.

bigelow.org/2023-single-cells

The Ocean's Potential

We develop the tools needed to unlock the opportunity of the ocean.



Microplastics are ubiquitous in marine and inland waters around the world.

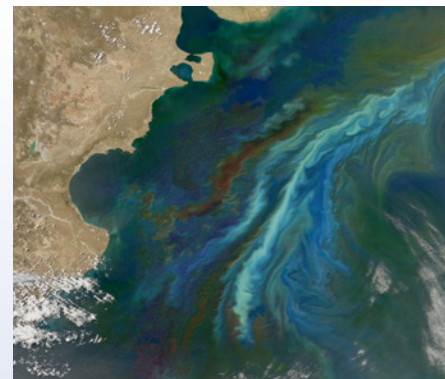
Last year, our scientists created a new analytical method that creatively combines different specialized techniques to characterize and count some of the smallest varieties of microplastics in water. It's a critical step to understanding the persistence and impact of different kinds of plastic in the environment.

bigelow.org/2023-microplastics

Fertilizing the ocean with iron to spur phytoplankton growth is one strategy that's been considered to help remove excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Our scientists published research last year, though, that showed that iron fertilization could negatively affect far off marine ecosystems. These findings highlight the critical need for more research into both the benefits and unintended consequences of marine carbon dioxide removal.

bigelow.org/2023-iron-fertilization



GIVING OUR SINCERE THANKS

Bigelow Laboratory is an independent, nonprofit institute. Our impact is only possible with the help of our community of supporters. Their generosity fuels our discoveries, powers our solutions, and enables us to inspire the next generation of ocean leaders.

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