

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Plastic Ocean Project

[www.plasticoceanproject.org](http://www.plasticoceanproject.org)

**If the Ocean Could Talk-Would You Listen?**

In 2019, we began making a full-length documentary film, **“If the Ocean Could Talk-A Voice for the North Atlantic.”** The goal is to explore how human interaction impacts marine life, including the severely endangered North Atlantic Right whale. Along this journey, we have met so many inspiring **“solutionaires”** who have given us hope.

**Through the power of cinema,  
we plan to share that message of hope with the world.**

Filming off the northern coast of NC in November of 2020, POP’s film crew set out to document migrating whales but instead learned of a deceased newborn whale, just days old. NOAA reported that the highly anticipated birth of this healthy newborn calf brought the North Atlantic Right whale’s population up to 356. Now (Jan/2023) that number is closer to 330. Another grave concern is that less than one quarter of today’s existing Right whale population is female.

The unexpected death of the newborn whale had a profound impact on POP’s team and led them to create a separate documentary short, “356,” which was accepted into 7 film festivals including LA’s prestigious Awareness Film Festival and Portugal’s Vila Real film fest. The short film features cameo commentary from numerous experts in the field including world-renowned marine biologist and ocean explorer, Dr. Sylvia Earle, marine ecologist and author, Dr. Carl Safina, and finally, esteemed economist, Ralph Chami, who recently presented at COP27, the UN’s Climate Change Conference in Egypt.

**Chami, is an assistant director in the International Monetary Fund’s Institute for Capacity Development, puts it this way: “When it comes to saving the planet, one whale is worth thousands of trees.”**

**Here’s why:**

**-In their lifetime whales accumulate carbon in their bodies and when they die a natural death and sink to the bottom of the ocean, an average of 33 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> is sequestered, taking that carbon out of the atmosphere for centuries. A tree, meanwhile, absorbs only up to 48 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> a year. (IMF)**

**-Whale poop fertilizes phytoplankton, the food source for all marine food chains that’s in all 7 of the world’s oceans and covers 70% of the planet.**

**Phytoplankton produces 50% of the world's oxygen supply and absorbs an estimated 40% of all carbon dioxide produced or four times the amount captured by the Amazon rainforest. (National Geographic Sept. 24, 2019)**

The goal of our film project is to create awareness that leads to sweeping action towards saving these majestic creatures. Only when whales are not threatened from ship strikes, recreational boat traffic, fishing gear entanglement, marine micro plastics debris, chemical pollution and noise pollution that interferes with their communication will they have a better chance for survival.

POP's director Bonnie Monteleone explains, **“In 1990 the number of right whales dropped to 270 but new protections and increased consciousness brought their population back up to 500 by 2010. We can do it again, but only if everyone understands how important this effort truly is so that we can work together!”**

You can help by supporting our film project, becoming a member of POP, following us on social media and spreading the word:

**Saving the Whales Can Save the Planet**