

QUARTERLY NEWS SPLASH • ISSUE NO. 4



## JANUARY 2025 | QUARTERLY NEW SPLASH | ISSUE 04

## CONTENTS

#### NOTE FROM THE FOUNDER

**January Is Starting Anew** 

As we step into 2025, the lotus flower reminds us of the beauty in starting anew. Just like the lotus blooms from the mud, we too have the power to rise above challenges and embrace fresh beginnings. This year, we focus on renewal—not just in our personal lives, but for our planet and our oceans. The ocean can heal, shifting from unhealthy to thriving, and we can create lasting change with the support of incredible people like you. Together, we can nurture the Earth's recovery, transforming it into a vibrant, flourishing world for future generations. Let's bloom together this year and make waves of change towards our ocean's health.

Coming this quarter is our new podcast Balance4Blue! In our first episode we discuss why the lotus flower has a significant meaning to Zen4Blue and how if you look close enough you can see it hidden in the organization's logo. Join us with our new hostess Hannah Roverse as we breach topics from whales to environmental policy and more!

We moved! Zen4Blue opens its new commercial space this month, home to the Zen4Blue Marine Science Center—a hub for marine conservation projects, research, and educational classes. Sign up for our newsletter and follow us on Instagram and Facebook for upcoming events, education classes and our very first Marine Open House!

And as always thank you so much for your ongoing support of our mission to Make Marine Careers Possible For Everyone!

Beverly Williams Founder, CEO





#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 ECOSYSTEM INFOGRAPHIC: MASTERS OF THE ARCTIC
- 4 WE MOVED! WE ARE EXPANDING!
- 7 OCEAN OF GIVING: COASTAL FAMILIES IN NEED
- 9 SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: POLAR BEAR
- **12** CAREER HIGHLIGHT:

#### WHALE TOUR CREW MEMBER

- 14 WE ARE HIRING!
- 16 UPCOMING EVENTS
- 17 THANK YOU SPONSORS



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#### Zen4Blue Ecosystem Infographics: Arctic



#### THE ARCTIC ECOSYSTEM

What is the Arctic Ecosystem?
The Arctic is a cold and unique environment covered in sea ice and bordered by frigid waters.
This ecosystem supports a variety of life, from microscopic plankton to massive mammals.

Apex Predator:
Polar bears sit at the top of the Arctic food chain, playing a crucial role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem.

Seasonal Shifts:
When sea ice melts during summer, polar bears are forced onto land, where they face competition from orcas, which hunt seals in open waters.

Climate Change Impact:
The Arctic is warming nearly four times faster than the global average, causing permafrost thaw, sea ice loss, and rising sea levels that threaten wildlife, ecosystems, and human communities worldwide.

#### **RESTORING THE BALANCE**

The Role of Polar Bears in Recovery:

Polar bears regulate seal populations, which, in turn, control fish populations and support the food web. Protecting polar bears ensures the stability of this intricate balance

A Thriving Arctic Ecosystem:

With polar bears hunting on sea i.e., the ecosystem functions naturally, supporting biodiversity and sustaining Arctic communities that rely on healthy wildlife populations.

Climate Action Is Key:

Efforts to slow climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions are critical to preserving sea ice and the Arctic environment.

#### SEA ICE

Threatened by Warming:
As sea ice melts, polar bears lose their primary hunting platform, forcing them to swim longer distances and rely on less nutritious food sources on land.

#### **POLAR BEARS**

Specialized Hunters:
Polar bears hunt seals, using sea ice as a platform to stalk and catch their prey. Their hunting patterns control seal populations and influence the broader ecosystem.

Adapting to Change:
As sea ice disappears, polar bears face starvation,
making conservation efforts and climate change
mitigation vital.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Reduce Carbon Footprint: Minimize greenhouse gas emissions by using clean energy, reducing waste, and supporting sustainable practices.

Advocate for Climate Action:
Support policies to address global warming and reduce Arctic ice melt, helping preserve the natural habitat of polar bears and other species.

Educate and Inspire:

Spread awareness about the importance of polar bears and the Arctic ecosystem to inspire global action.

#### **SEALS AND ORCAS**

Orcas: The Summer Competitors:

During summer, when polar bears are stranded on land, orcas dominate Arctic waters, hunting seals and competing for the same food resources.

Seasonal Interactions:
The balance between polar bears, seals, and orcas is critical. Changes to one species can ripple throughout the ecosystem.

## BRINGING THE ZEN4BLUE MARINE SCIENCE CENTER TO LIFE IN 2025

## ZEN4BLUE FINDS A NEW HOME IN SAINT PETERSBURG, FLORIDA, BRINGING HOPE AND OPPORTUNITIES TO ASPIRING MARINE SCIENTISTS

In a time when the world's oceans are in crisis and the challenges of climate change loom large, the mission to save marine life has never been more urgent. For Beverly Williams, Founder and CEO of Zen4Blue, the solution lies not just in awareness, but in action—specifically, in empowering the next generation of marine scientists. Now, thanks to a pivotal move to a new commercial space in Saint Petersburg, Florida, Zen4Blue is expanding its reach with the proposed opening of the **Zen4Blue Marine** Science Center by Fall 2025. This new center will not only serve as the home base for its programs, but also represent a beacon of hope for anyone looking to turn their passion for marine conservation into a career.

#### THE HEART OF ZEN4BLUE: A MISSION TO MAKE MARINE CAREERS POSSIBLE FOR EVERYONE

For Beverly, the decision to leave behind traditional academic pathways and dive into the world of marine environmental consulting was born from a desire to make a more immediate **impact on ocean preservation**. A dedicated student of various sciences, Beverly realized that while many people have the drive to protect marine ecosystems, too few had the practical experience needed to **pursue careers in marine science** outside of academia. The high cost of advanced degrees and the competitive nature of academic research were barriers she wanted to help break down.

In response, Zen4Blue created the PHME Program (Post High School Marine Experience)—a unique marine vocational experience designed for aspiring marine biologists, environmental technical writers, and ocean advocates. The goal is to provide hands-on experience, technical training, and real-world project opportunities, without the demanding and often prohibitive requirements of a formal academic track. As Beverly puts it, "Our hope is to bring their vision to life; to help them share in our common goal of saving marine life and restoring our ocean resources for future generations." Now, the Zen4Blue Marine Science Center will be the heart of these efforts. providing a collaborative space for aspiring scientists to work on aquatic

ultimately launch their careers.

projects, build their skill sets, and





Zen4Blue Headquarters, Saint Petersburg, FL

#### ZEN4BLUE MARINE SCIENCE CENTER

#### OVERCOMING CHALLENGES: A TRIUMPH OVER HURRICANE SEASON

The organization's expansion into Florida has not been without its challenges. Florida's hurricane season is notorious for wreaking havoc on businesses and nonprofits alike, but Zen4Blue's resilience has shown that no storm—literal or metaphorical—can derail its mission. The center's opening is a testament to the strength of the Zen4Blue community, and those who have worked tirelessly to ensure that the impact of nature's fury would not hold them back.

That resilience echoes the ethos of Zen4Blue itself. Whether it's overcoming natural disasters, financial limitations, or the rigors of academia, Zen4Blue is committed to helping people find their way into marine science, no matter what obstacles they may face.



#### WHAT'S TO COME: THE ZEN4BLUE MARINE SCIENCE CENTER AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Zen4Blue Marine Science Center, located in the heart of Saint Petersburg, will be a dynamic space offering far more than just research opportunities. It will serve as a community hub, hosting a variety of fundraising activities, mindset retreats, environmental awareness events, and educational programs aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of marine life and the planet. In addition, it will provide a much-needed space for Tidal Wave Writers, a program focused on helping individuals develop the technical writing skills needed to document and share their scientific findings with the world.



The center will also offer mentorship to young scientists and writers, guiding them through every aspect of their projects, from technical skills and laboratory work field knowledge and project development. Each year, the center will select candidates for its programs, providing them with the resources and hands-on training necessary to build their careers and contribute to marine conservation efforts.



But what truly sets the Zen4Blue Marine Science Center apart is its commitment to diversity and accessibility. Many aspiring marine scientists face barriers that prevent them from entering the field—whether financial, academic, or personal. **Zen4Blue strives to create opportunities for everyone**, particularly those who may not have the means to pursue traditional academic pathways or those who thrive better outside of the classroom environment.



#### ZEN4BLUE MARINE SCIENCE CENTER

#### A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

As the Zen4Blue Marine Science Center prepares to open its doors to the Saint Petersburg community, the vision for the future is clear: to create a world where careers in marine science are accessible to all who have the passion and drive to make a difference.

I want to see more young people—especially those who may not have had access to traditional educational opportunities—be able to say, 'I can be a marine biologist, I can be a conservationist, I can be part of the solution," says Beverly. Founder, CEO Zen4Blue "If we want to save the oceans, we need more hands on deck, and that means opening the door to a wider range of voices and talents. Everyone has a role to play."



The opening of the Zen4Blue Marine Science Center marks the beginning of a **new chapter**, one filled with hope, opportunity, and a deep commitment to ocean restoration through an expansion of the marine science workforce. With this new center, Zen4Blue is not just offering a place to learn; it is offering a place to grow, collaborate, and change the future of our oceans.

For more information on the <u>PHME Program</u>, get involved with Zen4Blue's mission, or <u>donate</u> to support its work, visit Now, the Zen4Blue Marine Science Center will be the heart of these efforts, providing a collaborative space for aspiring scientists to work on aquatic projects, build their skill sets, and ultimately launch their careers. or email info@zen4blue.org.

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE MARINE CAREERS POSSIBLE FOR EVERYONE!





## OCEAN OF GIVING: HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS BY ZEN4BLUE

Restoring hope in the coastal community recovery

In the wake of recent hurricanes, countless communities have been left grappling with destruction, loss, and uncertainty. Zen4Blue is stepping up with its "Ocean of Giving" Hurricane Relief Initiative, aimed at bringing hope and support to those most affected.

Natural disasters leave a lasting impact, but together, we can make a difference. Zen4Blue is calling on compassionate individuals and organizations to contribute to this vital cause in the following ways:

- Donate: Every dollar counts. Your contribution delivers essential support —food, shelter, and resources—to those who need it most.
- Sponsor: Businesses and organizations are encouraged to sponsor relief efforts, making a tangible impact in rebuilding lives and communities.
- Share: Spread the word and inspire others to get involved. Awareness is key to driving change and fostering a culture of giving.

Your support has the power to change lives. By joining this initiative, you become part of a movement that prioritizes hope, resilience, and community strength.

Visit Zen4Blue.org/hurricanerelief to learn more about how you can help. Together, we can rebuild lives and create brighter tomorrows.





#### ZEN4BLUE OCEAN OF GIVING HURRICANE



## RELIEF



Following the destruction caused by recent hurricanes, countless communities continue to face an urgent need for assistance.



#### **Ways to Make a Difference**



Every dollar delivers essential support to those who need it most



We are actively seeking sponsors to help support this important cause



Share the message and inspire awareness within your community.



We invite you to join us in bringing hope and support to those impacted.

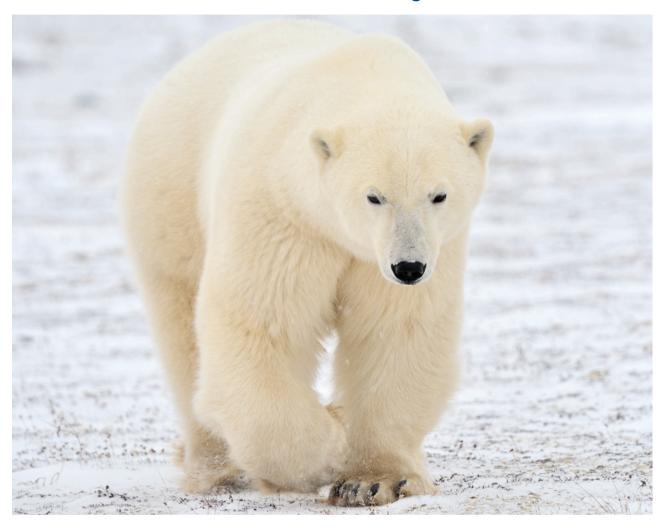
To donate or learn more about how you can help, visit:

Zen4blue.org/hurricanerelief

Together, We Can Make a Difference

#### Species Spotlight: Polar Bear

## The Vital Role of Polar Bears in the Arctic Ecosystem



Polar bears, the majestic icons of the Arctic, are more than just charismatic creatures—they are essential to the survival of the Arctic ecosystem. As apex predators, these magnificent animals play a critical role in maintaining the balance of life in one of the most extreme environments on Earth.

#### The Role of Polar Bears in the Arctic

Polar bears are at the top of the Arctic food chain, with seals, particularly ringed and bearded seals, as their primary prey. By regulating seal populations, polar bears indirectly safeguard the ecosystem's stability. Seals feed on fish, and an unchecked seal population could deplete fish stocks, throwing the Arctic food web out of balance. In this way, polar bears ensure that the delicate interplay of species—from fish to plankton—remains intact.

The hunting practices of polar bears are a marvel of patience and precision. They rely on sea ice to access their prey, waiting near breathing holes to ambush seals. This dependence on sea ice ties their survival directly to the health of their environment.





#### **Challenges in a Changing Climate**

Climate change poses the greatest threat to polar bears. Rising temperatures are causing the sea ice to melt earlier in the spring and form later in the fall, reducing the time and space available for polar bears to hunt. As a result, they are forced to travel greater distances, often exhausting themselves in the search for food. This has devastating consequences, especially for mothers with cubs who rely on the stability of sea ice for safety and sustenance.

The plight of polar bears serves as a warning for the Arctic as a whole. Known as an "indicator species," their struggle to survive reflects the broader environmental changes impacting the region. The loss of polar bears would signal a cascade of ecological disruptions affecting countless other species that rely on the Arctic for survival.



#### **Conservation Efforts and Hope for the Future**

Protecting polar bears means protecting the Arctic. Conservation efforts focus on combating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable practices. Additionally, measures to limit industrial activities in the Arctic, such as oil drilling and shipping, help preserve the fragile sea ice habitat.

On an individual level, supporting organizations dedicated to polar bear conservation, reducing carbon footprints, and raising awareness about climate change can make a difference. Every effort to preserve sea ice and reduce global warming contributes to safeguarding the future of these incredible creatures and their environment.

#### **A Symbol of Resilience**

Polar bears are more than just Arctic inhabitants—they are powerful symbols of resilience and the interconnectedness of life on Earth. These maiestic creatures have adapted to one of the harshest environments on the planet, playing a crucial role as apex predators that maintain balance in the Arctic ecosystem.







Their struggle against climate change and melting sea ice serves as a wake-up call, highlighting the broader environmental challenges facing our planet. Protecting polar bears goes beyond saving a species -it's about preserving the breathtaking beauty and biodiversity of the Arctic for future generations.

By safeguarding these iconic animals, we honor the cultural heritage of Indigenous Arctic communities and take a stand for the planet's future. Polar bears inspire hope and remind us that even in the face of immense challenges, we have the power to make a difference. Their survival is a call to action—for conservation, for the Arctic, and for the world.

Every effort to protect polar bears is a step toward addressing the root causes of climate change, from reducing greenhouse gas emissions to advocating for sustainable practices that respect the planet. In fighting for the Arctic, we are fighting for a global future where wildlife, ecosystems, and human communities can thrive together in harmony. Polar bears, with their resilience and undeniable beauty, symbolize the urgency of this mission.



#### Their survival also emphasizes Zen4Blue Stickers Are Here! the interconnectedness of ecosystems worldwide. The Arctic may seem distant, but the effects of its melting ice ripple across the globe, influencing weather patterns, sea levels, and biodiversity everywhere. Protecting polar bears means acknowledging our shared responsibility to care for fragile environments and recognizing that the

Furthermore, supporting conservation efforts fosters innovation and collaboration across nations. By investing in research, renewable energy, and sustainable development, we can create solutions that benefit both wildlife and humanity. Polar bears serve as powerful ambassadors for environmental stewardship, reminding us that our collective actions today will shape the legacy we leave for generations to come.

health of the Arctic directly impacts the well-

being of the entire planet.





## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WHALE TOUR CREW MEMBER: ADVENTURES ON THE OPEN OCEAN

BY ADRIANA DIAZ

Working as a crew member on a whale tour boat is more than just a job—it's an adventure filled with ocean breezes, breathtaking encounters with marine life, and the excitement of sharing unforgettable experiences with passengers. From prepping the boat in the early morning to scanning the horizon for whales and engaging with guests, every day brings new surprises and opportunities to connect with the wonders of the sea. Join us for a behind-the-scenes look at what it's like to spend a day on the water, where no two tours are ever the same!

### OF POSSIBILITIES



## Tell us about a typical shift working as a whale tour boat crew member:

My shift starts at 8:00 am with the wonderful smell of the ocean in the air. First things first we must get the boat and the kiosks prepped before passengers start checking in at 8:30 am.

If I'm on boat duty that day we stock up dock carts with any lunches, snacks, and items that we need to bring to the boat before heading down to the dock. Once on the boat the magic begins. One of the many important parts of this job is making our famous blueberry buckle cake!



Baked fresh on the boat every morning for our passengers, which means I'm not only a boat crew member but also a baker! The boat can hold up to 145 passengers which means we make and bake 6-8 cakes before every tour! Once batter is made, cakes are in the oven, and the boat is stocked and ready to go it's time for passenger check-in. At 9:15 am our boat captain brings all checked-in passengers to our lovely 72 ft foil assisted catamaran where they take their seats and listen to a safety briefing as well as a short presentation on how to look for whales presented by our naturalist.



Once we untie the boat from the dock we are off to find whales wherever they may be! Whales don't have any tracking systems, so we have to look for them. We do this by using good old binoculars as well as checking in with other boats and social media pages for any sighting that have been reported.

On the water my duties include, serving food/snacks/cake, washing dishes, collecting trash, scanning for whales, restocking, and if there is time I also go around and talk to passengers about the whales we may see or just have a friendly conversation.

And of course one of the best parts of the job is seeing the whales! We are a whale guarantee company so it's very rare the we don't see any. However where the whales are, what species we see, and what they are doing is always a mystery!



Once everyone's stomachs are full of cake and hearts full of whales we head back to the dock usually around 2:00 pm. Once all the passengers have left it's time to clean the boat, reorganize everything, and head home.

#### What is it about whales that resonates with you? Do you have a favorite sea animal?

Whales have truly stolen my heart. Not only are they beautiful and majestic, but they are also complex and intelligent creatures! he way different populations of whales have unique cultures and how they build relationships and interact with one another and their environment is fascinating!



I've only been working on this boat for about 2 months now but even then, seeing the same group of whales day after day makes you see and discover more and more about them to the point where you start knowing individuals by name and catching on to their little quirks and personalities. It's truly a magical experience. At this time I don't think I can pick a favorite animal, but any cetacean is definitely on the list!

Can you share any heartwarming or inspiring stories from past tours?

'm sure I have a lot more to see as I meet more and more whales, but so far my favorite interaction has been with an 18 year old male Orca named Piglet. We had just watched the family hunt and the pod was now enjoying their meal.

Then Piglet started swimming right at the boat and the suns angle made a rainbow when he exhaled! He came up right to us and looked up as if to maybe say something or just to see what was going on. But for a second it felt like we were the ones being observed and watched which was such a surreal experience!

Adriana Diaz, Whale Tour Crew Member
I graduated with a BS in Marine Biology from
the University of Oregon in 2022. Throughout
my time in school and even now the ocean
never ceases to amaze me. Her beauty,
strength, and power, along with all the
fantastic creatures that call her home fascinate
me. That's why I now hope to not only help
protect this amazing underwater world but
also teach and inspire others to do the same!



## We Are Hiring

#### **GRANT WRITER**

#### **ABOUT US**



Zen4Blue is a passionate advocate for marine careers for everyone! We are dedicated to preserving our ocean's health and biodiversity through innovative research, education, and community engagement initiatives. team comprises dedicated scientists, educators, conservationists working towards a common goal of ensuring a sustainable future for our oceans.

#### **OUALIFICATIONS** & SKILLS:

- Minimum of 3 years of professional grant writing experience.
- Superb writing skills.
- Ability to digest new information quickly and to think critically about what information is needed to craft a compelling case for support.
- Acute attention to detail.
- Excellent project management, follow-through, and time management skills.
- Ability and willingness to learn and support Zen4Blue's mission initiatives
- High reasoning skills and the ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.
- Independent, self-motivated with a desire to provide support to advance Zen4Blue's mission and related campaigns.
- Highly organized, flexible, creative, and able to prioritize multiple tasks.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.

#### Contract Terms & Compensation:

This is a part-time, contract only, 1099 independent contractor position, with the possibility for extension or permanent placement. The rate is \$50 USD per hour, with the expectation of 20-24 hours per month of work resulting in at least 4 completed grant applications per month. The location for this contract position is fully remote in the US.

How To Apply: To apply, send your resume and a brief cover letter detailing your experience and interest in marine conservation to info@zen4blue.org.



# Women In Science Scholarship Lend Blue Fund





Zen4Blue and Strong Girls, Inc partner to create opportunity for women in science.

#### **Empowering aspiring female scientists and trailblazers**

Championed by two woman-founded nonprofits, our STEM scholarship fund empowers aspiring female scientists and trailblazers with the financial support and opportunities they need to excel and lead in these critical fields of innovation. Led by the Zen4Blue team of marine biologists and supported by the female advocacy team of Strong Girls Inc. the debut of our marine field education courses can commence this FALL 2025 with your support and generosity.

With a mission to bridge the gender gap in STEM, our scholarship fund will provide the necessary access to marine science field experience and build the confidence for women to enter the marine science workforce.

Donate Here



To learn more about this program, visit us at zen4blue.org

## UPCOMING EVENTS



TUE

#### **CHARITY BINGO NIGHT**

Join us on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, from 6-8 pm EST at 3 Daughters Brewing for a fun-filled Bingo Night supporting the Zen4Blue Marine Science Center!

♦ \$5 for 1 card | \$20 for 5 cards | Great

? 222 22nd St S, St Petersburg, FL 33712





**WED** 

VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB

Join us on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 7 pm CT | 8 pm EST for a virtual discussion of "How Far the Light Reaches: A Life in Ten Sea Creatures" by Sabrina Imbler (Essay #1: "If you flush a goldfish").

RSVP at: zen4blue.org/events Dive into knowledge, surface with purpose!

**REGISTER NOW** 

**MORE INFORMATION** 

@zen4blue zen4blue.org

# Sponsor Zen4Blue and Make a Difference for the Ocean's Future!

#### Looking For a 2025 Tax Deduction?

In a world where our oceans face unprecedented challenges, we need sponsors who care about making a lasting difference. Zen4Blue is leading the way in marine conservation, and we're inviting you to be a part of this vital mission.

#### **Tax Deduction Opportunity**

Your sponsorship provides an opportunity to not only support a vital cause but also gain financial benefits. As a tax-deductible contribution, it helps you optimize your year-end strategy and reduces your overall tax liability.



#### **Brand Recognition**

Through our events, programs, and campaigns, your brand will be highlighted across various channels, giving you exposure to a community that values sustainability and positive environmental impact.

#### **Empowering the Future**

By supporting Zen4Blue, you're contributing directly to our transformative education initiative, such as the PHME program and contributing to the success of the Zen4Blue Marine Science Center. Your sponsorship helps develop the next generation of marine scientists, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to lead the charge in ocean conservation.

To learn more or get involved, contact <u>ccurtis@zen4blue.org</u> or visit <u>Zen4Blue Business Sponsorships</u>



Thank You for an Amazing 2024!

We are so grateful for the incredible support and enthusiasm from our Zen4Blue community this year. Your participation in our events and programs has helped us inspire curiosity, foster learning, and create meaningful connections.

Thank you for being a part of our journey. We can't wait to continue growing and learning together in 2025!

— The Zen4Blue Team

