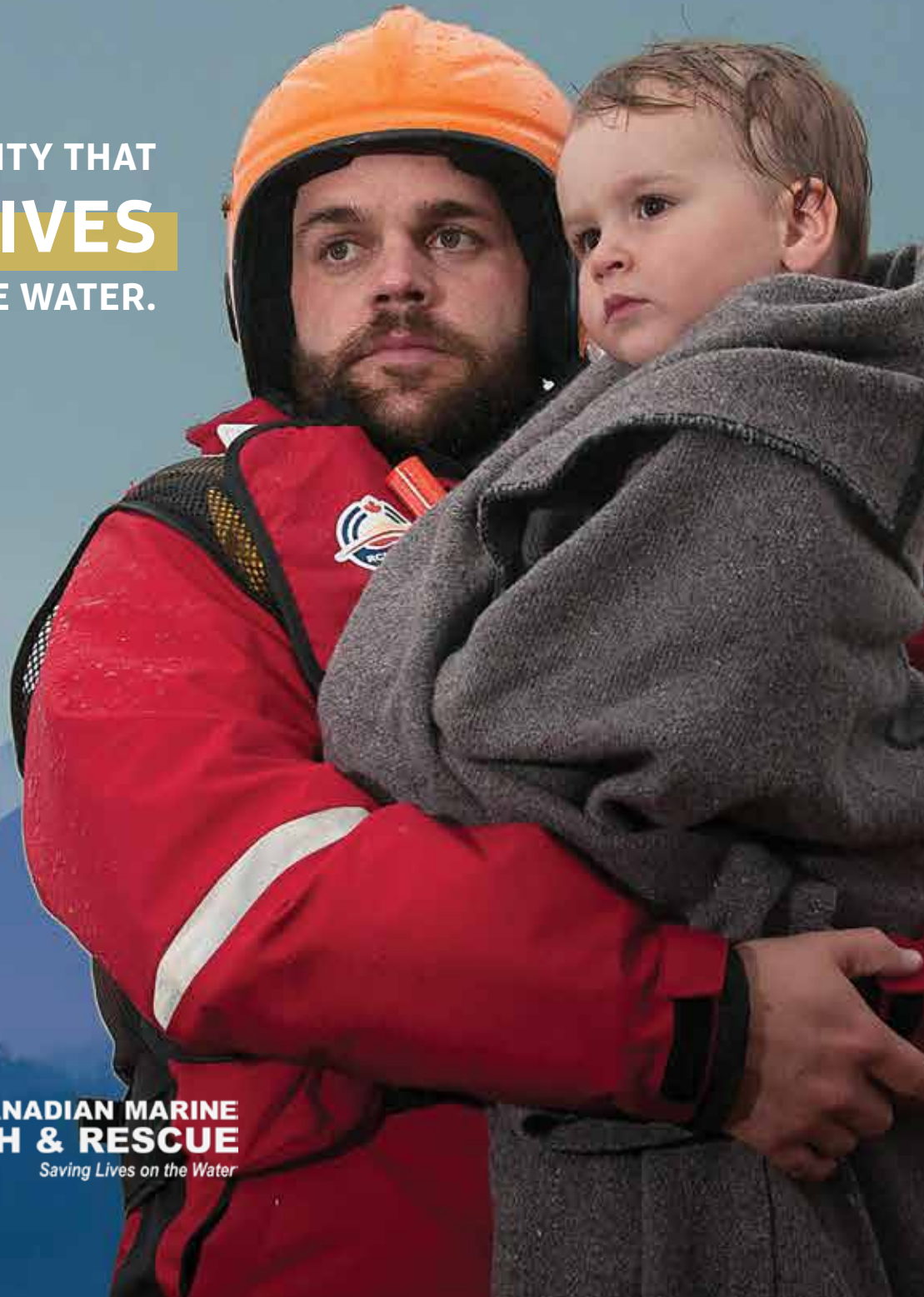


PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024

WE'RE THE CHARITY THAT
SAVES LIVES
ON THE WATER.



**ROYAL CANADIAN MARINE
SEARCH & RESCUE**
Saving Lives on the Water

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As of Sep 2024

Michael Ervin, Board Chair
Chris Badger, Vice Chair
Rona Tepper, Secretary
Cyrus Ameli
Tim Ayres
Linda Blake
Bruce Hayne
Dr. Nelson Jatel
Catherine Lau
Hans Verbeek

Outgoing Directors

Tracy Lakeman, Board Chair
John McCoach, Vice Chair

Every year,

hundreds of people find themselves

in **trouble on the water**. Some face **life-and-death situations**,

while others just need some assistance. **Boats** run aground,

take on water, or capsize. **People** run out of fuel, kayakers and paddleboarders

struggle against unmanageable conditions, and boaters can find themselves

unprepared for sudden changes in weather and sea conditions. Even with the best preparation, **unexpected events can happen.**

That's why we exist.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO



Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue has completed another highly successful year. Our volunteers responded to over 450 missions, rescuing 451 boaters, often in extreme weather conditions and along isolated coastal areas. We have expanded our role to include marine-related environmental reporting missions for the Canadian Coast Guard. We continue to support the Province of BC and various emergency response agencies by assisting in responses to disasters such as wildfires and humanitarian events.

RCMSAR continues to adjust our course to meet the evolving challenges of search and rescue while remaining focused on ensuring our financial stability, preparing for the effects of climate change, and anticipating future needs. RCMSAR has implemented a flexible, responsive strategic plan to shape the course forward. We have developed a risk management and mitigation process to ensure organizational viability and minimize risk to our volunteers.

Significant progress has been made in the last year in supporting our volunteers. Our training program underwent considerable evolution to better meet the needs of both our volunteers and the boating public. A concerted effort resulted in a more volunteer-centric program that recognizes the priorities that volunteers must juggle daily. One of our most significant achievements was the implementation of an internal critical incident stress management program designed to provide mental health support to our volunteers.

Our goals for the coming year build on the progress made so far. We will remain focused on improving our financial stability, maximizing our available funds, and moving forward with our training modernization project. We will launch several initiatives to ensure volunteer recruitment and retention efforts will meet future crewing needs. Finally, we will focus on improving public awareness of the exceptional contribution to protecting boaters and water enthusiasts that our volunteers make every day.

We could not exist without crucial partners such as the Canadian Coast Guard, the Province of BC, and many corporate and individual supporters. We greatly appreciate the tremendous support our stations receive from their communities - through grants, and donations from local businesses and individuals. Without this support, we could not be there for people who are in danger on the water.

RCMSAR's dedicated professional volunteers take immense pride in their ability to respond at a moment's notice to calls for help on the water, and they willingly accept the risks of responding in challenging circumstances. Together, we are "saving lives on the water."

Sincerely,

Tracy Lakeman,
Board Chair

Bill Riggs
Chief Executive Officer

RESCUE STATIONS

Northern Region

(NORTH COAST, HAIDA GWAI)

5

Stations

Central Region

(VANCOUVER ISLAND, GULF ISLANDS)

15

Stations

Southern Region

(LOWER MAINLAND, SHUSWAP)

10+

SAR prevention station

Stations



We cover over 25,000 km of BC's rugged coastline, known for its challenging weather and sea conditions.



RCMSAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2026

Our Vision

Excellence in community-based marine safety



Our Mission

Saving lives on the water



Our Values

Safety | Trust | Teamwork



Focus & Initiatives



Awareness

Branding / Marketing

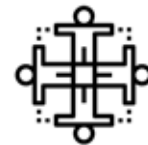
Relationship Building



Financial Stability

Asset Strategy

Diversified Revenue



One Crew Culture

Training

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Volunteer Recognition

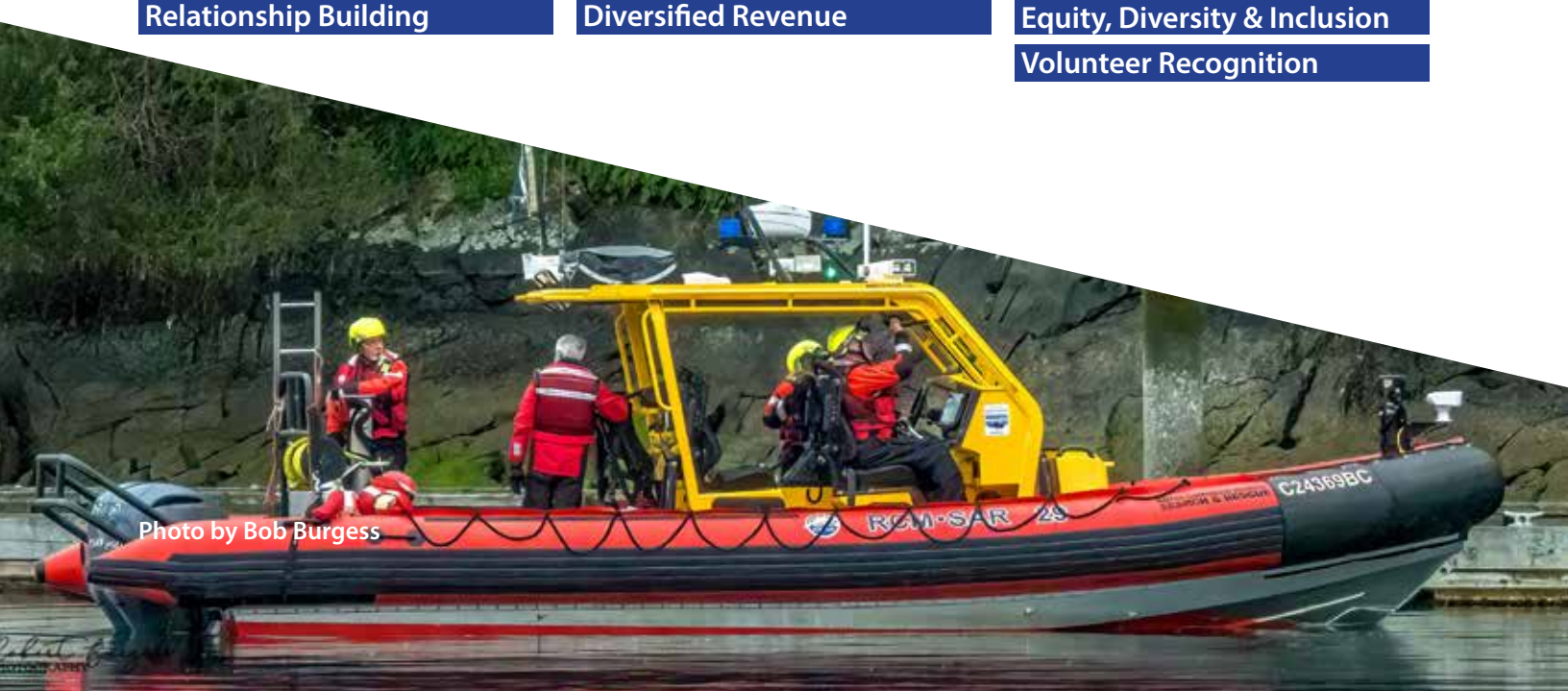


Photo by Bob Burgess

RCMSAR VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

During 2023-2024, more than 900 dedicated volunteers played a crucial role in protecting communities across British Columbia. From rescue missions and training exercises, to participating in boating safety events and fundraisers, their commitment and hard work were all in pursuit of saving lives on the water. Their efforts are a testament to the power of volunteerism and the impact it has on our collective safety.



985 Volunteers



31 Stations



68,000+
Volunteer hours



499 Missions
conducted



78 People saved



17.5 MIN Average
response time



373 People assisted



8,850 Hours of
training on-the-water and in classroom



Nearly **84%** of calls for help
classed as in distress or in danger

BRENTWOOD BAY – STATION 31
COMOX – STATION 60
COWICHAN BAY – STATION 34
DEEP BAY – STATION 59
LADYSMITH – STATION 29

NANAIMO – STATION 27
OAK BAY – STATION 33
PENDER ISLAND – STATION 20
PORT ALBERNI – STATION 39
PORT ALICE – STATION 43

SALT SPRING ISLAND - STATION 25
SIDNEY – STATION 36
SOOKE – STATION 37
UCLUELET – STATION 38
VICTORIA – STATION 35

CENTRAL REGION

Notable Mission

Sailing Vessel in Distress

On June 30th, RCMSAR 33 Oak Bay responded to a Mayday call from a 40-foot sailboat carrying a family of four, taking on water and battling high seas and fierce winds.

The crew departed base at 7:00 pm, heading for the vessel's last known position. The search area was huge, and they were teamed with the Canadian Coast Guard lifeboat, a US Coast Guard helicopter, and a Harbour Authority vessel.

By the time they rounded Discovery Island, the wind had picked up significantly, and they encountered heavy sea conditions.

Initially tasked with conducting an expanding square search pattern, the crew quickly realized this method was impractical in the heavy conditions.

The coxswain contacted the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) and Marine Communications and Traffic Services (MCTS) to propose a parallel search on an east-to-west line, which would allow the crew to run directly into the conditions or away. However, the crew had to maneuver carefully to avoid stuffing the bow and flooding the engines. Despite the challenges, their collective efforts led to the rescue of all onboard, including the family's pet dog.

The helicopter spotted the life raft at 8:05 pm, rescuing the mother and two teenage children. About an hour later, the father was rescued. Tragically, the father, who had been in the water for at least an hour, passed a few days later, underscoring the perilous nature of the mission.

Amidst the sorrow of loss, it is imperative to acknowledge the remarkable courage, teamwork, and selflessness displayed by the crew and their fellow responders. Their dedication to saving lives, even at great personal risk, embodies the highest ideals of service and sacrifice.

For their outstanding efforts during this mission, each crew member was awarded the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Operational Merit Medal.

442



Volunteers

24



People Saved

242



Missions

120



People Assisted

23



Vessels



RCMSAR 25 Salt Spring Island
Photo by Bob Burgess



HARTLEY BAY – STATION 70
KITIMAT – STATION 63
LAX KW'ALAAMS – STATION 65
MASSET – STATION 45
PRINCE RUPERT – STATION 64

NORTHERN REGION

Notable Mission

Diver in Distress

At 1:30 pm on October 15, RCMSAR 65 Lax Kw'alaams received a distress call over VHF radio from a fishing vessel urgently requesting help. A geoduck diver had become trapped beneath the boat after his hose line got caught in the propeller.

The RCMSAR crew immediately contacted the JRCC to report the emergency and then departed base. By the time they arrived at the scene 25 minutes later, another fishing vessel with divers onboard was already there, and were able to free the trapped diver from the propeller and untangle the air hoses. However, the diver had been underwater for a significant amount of time.

Our crew boarded the fishing vessel, and immediately began administering CPR and oxygen. The diver was not breathing on his own and was quickly moved onto the rescue boat. Shortly afterward, the Coast Guard arrived, and two rescue technicians joined our crew to assist with first aid. Together, both RCMSAR and Coast Guard crews performed CPR for over an hour as they raced towards Prince Rupert.

They did everything they could to help him, continuing to administer CPR and maintain his airway until they reached the waiting ambulance.

Tragically, despite their best efforts, not all rescues have happy endings. They later learned that the diver had passed away.

23



People Assisted

2



People Saved

93



Volunteers

9



Vessels

15



Missions



RCMSAR 63 Kitimat
Paula Keech Photography



Photo by Keith Davidson
RCMSAR 14 Gibsons

CRESCENT BEACH – STATION 5
DELTA – STATION 8
GIBSONS – STATION 14
HALFMOON BAY – STATION 12
NORTH VANCOUVER – STATION 2

PENDER HARBOUR – STATION 61
RICHMOND – STATION 10
SHUSWAP – STATION 106
SQUAMISH – STATION 4
WEST VANCOUVER – STATION 1

VANCOUVER SAR PREVENTION –
STATION 103

SOUTHERN REGION

Notable Mission

At Risk in Shipping Lane

Late evening on August 17th, RCMSAR 1 West Vancouver was tasked with assisting a 25-foot pleasure craft with five people on board that had broken down in a shipping lane – a particularly risky location for a disabled vessel.

The crew quickly made their way to the coordinates provided, relying on radar to locate the disabled boat. Upon approach, they informed the occupants that they would tow them to Lions Bay Marina. By this time, the seas were choppy, with 5-6 foot waves impacting both boats. Communicating by cell phone, the passengers assured our crew they were safe, although the rough seas were taking a toll, and they were becoming increasingly seasick.

After an hour of navigating through the rough conditions, all five passengers had become severely seasick, and there was still another hour and a half of rough seas ahead. It became clear that continuing to Lions Bay wasn't a safe option. After talking to the passengers, the decision was made to divert to nearby Fisherman's Cove docks where the passengers could safely recover and their boat could be secured.

The crew was able to dock the vessel alongside the fuel dock, and as the passengers stepped onto solid ground shortly before midnight, their relief was palpable. Thanks to the crew's assistance, they were all extremely grateful to be back on dry land, safe and sound.

230



People
Assisted

242



Missions

18



Vessels

414



Volunteers

52



People
Saved



RECOGNIZING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Every year, RCMSAR proudly honours the remarkable achievements of individual volunteers who have demonstrated exceptional service within their communities, unwavering dedication to their crews, and invaluable contributions to our mission of saving lives on the water. These outstanding individuals have been recognized with this year's Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA) and RCMSAR Awards.

CCGA Administrative Excellence Medal

Kim Bentzon, Station 33 Oak Bay
Doug Dickson, Station 59 Deep Bay
John Maddalozzo, Station 12 Halfmoon Bay
John Robertson, Station 2 North Vancouver

CCGA Exemplary Service Medal

Tracy Lakeman, RCMSAR Board Chair

CCGA Leadership Medal

Duane Gee, Station 60 Comox
Roger Wagstaff, Station 1 West Vancouver
Chris Wickham, Station 34 Cowichan Bay
Stephen Wiles, Station 34 Cowichan Bay
Mark Winfield, Station 34 Cowichan Bay
Dan Wright, Station 2 North Vancouver

CCGA Long Service Medal

40 Years of Service

Alex Muir, Station 33 Oak Bay
Alex also received a King Charles III Coronation Medal for his RCMSAR service.

35 Years of Service

Ron Robson, Station 10 Richmond

30 Years of Service

David Payne, Station 38 Ucluelet
Ryan Woodward, Station 5 Crescent Beach

25 Years of Service

Michael Cupit, Station 1 West Vancouver
Nicolas Fortin, Station 27 Nanaimo
Adrian Lee, Station 103 Vancouver
Jim Lee, Station 27 Nanaimo
Robert McCauley, Station 27 Nanaimo
Simon Pearce, Station 10 Richmond
Jurgen Pokrandt, Station 33 Oak Bay
Phil Storey, Station 103 Vancouver
Randy Strandt, Station 2 North Vancouver

20 Years of Service

Chris Ashurst, Station 45 Masset
Peter Bolton, Station 60 Comox
Bruce Chan, Station 2 North Vancouver
William Chapeskie, Station 36 Sidney
Dennis Cotter, Station 61 Pender Harbour
John Enright, Station 103 Vancouver
Campbell Good, Station 33 Oak Bay
Graham Gueguen, Station 63 Kitimat
Arthur Henry, Station 65 Lax Kw'alaams
Timothy Huntsman, Station 27 Nanaimo
Paul Mottershead, Station 27 Nanaimo
Roger Pilkington, Station 20 Pender Island
Ruth Sharun, Station 27 Nanaimo
Doug Smith, Station 9 Port Alberni
Steve Weckstrom, Station 36 Sidney
Dwayne Wesley, Station 65 Lax Kw'alaams
Ieuan Williamson, Station 27 Nanaimo
Daniel Wright, Station 2 North Vancouver

RCMSAR CEO Commendation

Marie Gray, Station 106 Shuswap
Ryan Matthews, Station 14 Gibsons
Amber Sheasgreen, Station 64 Prince Rupert

Joint Rescue Coordination Centre Outstanding Operations

Station 34 Cowichan Bay

Vessel Taking on Water South of Fernie Island
August 14, 2023

Station 65 Lax Kw'alaams

Diver Stuck Under Fishing Vessel
October 15, 2023

Station 26 Sidney

Person on Top of Overturned Sailing Dinghy
February 25, 2024



Volunteer of the Year Awards

Jenny Weston, Volunteer of the Year

Station 33 Oak Bay member since February 2019.



Jenny is the epitome of what it means to be an RCMSAR volunteer. Her enthusiasm, dedication, and the joyful way she has approached her many roles have had a positive impact and made all volunteers feel more confident and connected as a team on and off the water. Jenny is a crew member, recruitment officer, and past station leader, who possesses a wealth of knowledge of station policies, procedures, and operations. She has over 204 hours of sea time, 753 total volunteer hours, and 13 taskings, exemplifying her dedication and leadership. Jenny is always the first to step up and take on additional roles, which is remarkable as she has achieved all this while working full-time in a demanding job, managing a young family, and welcoming her second child earlier this year.



John de Bruyn, New Member of the Year

Since joining Station 5 Salt Spring Island in 2022, John has become an integral part of the unit. He quickly advanced through the crewing levels and achieved coxswain status in 2024.



John devotes vast amounts of his time to the unit, both on and off the water. As the station's training officer, John's contribution to the training program has yielded positive results. He is heavily involved in Station 25's Juniors' Program in partnership with the local high school. He has been a director of the Gulf Islands Marine Rescue Society since June 2022 and serves as the safety officer.

John Nunn, Supporting Member of the Year

This new award honours volunteers in non-crew roles who have made outstanding contributions to their station and/or society.

Four and a half years ago, out of curiosity, John attended a Juan de Fuca Marine Rescue Society (Sooke) AGM and left as the society's new vice president. He stepped up to the role of society president soon after.

John has enhanced the society's financial planning, record keeping, insurance, community engagement, and relationships with HQ and other agencies. His professionalism and dedication have significantly contributed to the station, allowing the crew to focus on training and saving lives on the water.



MAKING AN EVEN BIGGER IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

We've expanded our role to include marine-related environmental reporting missions for the Canadian Coast Guard, and we continue to support the province of BC and various emergency response agencies by assisting in disasters such as wildfires and humanitarian events.

Working closely with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, we now assist with rescue efforts that occur close to the shores of BC. Our unique ability to access remote areas via shoreline can result in lost or injured people accessing safety or medical support much faster than by land. We are also able to ferry emergency responders and equipment more efficiently to and from sites near the shore.

Many of our stations conduct joint training exercises with local partners including the Canadian Coast Guard, ground search and rescue teams and local emergency response organizations. These collaborative efforts improve coordination and communications while speeding up response times, making emergency operations more effective.

In partnership with the Coast Guard, our volunteers are also playing a crucial role in environmental protection. We actively observe and report hazards like fuel leaks from damaged or abandoned boats, helping to keep our waterways safe from potential environmental disasters.

These projects strengthen our mission and expand our volunteers' abilities to serve their communities. Whether responding to emergencies or protecting our coastal environment, our volunteers are making a lasting difference.





EQUIPPING VOLUNTEERS FOR SUCCESS

Beyond the training they receive at their stations, hundreds of volunteers travel to the RCMSAR Training Centre in East Sooke every year. Here, they master skills in seamanship, navigation, communications, search and rescue, first aid, leadership, and teamwork. They also learn techniques for managing the stress from difficult or traumatic rescue missions.

Recognizing the importance of accommodating our volunteers' diverse schedules and needs, we've developed a more volunteer-centric training program, featuring flexible scheduling and blended learning using a mix of online and in-person sessions.

This allows them to learn the academics and foundational knowledge in the comfort of their own homes while still participating in the intensive, hands-on training at the centre.

Our centre's reputation extends beyond RCMSAR. The Canadian Coast Guard and Coastal Nations Coast Guard Auxiliary have taken specialized training at our centre, as have Members of Coast Guard Auxiliary – Maritimes, Canadian Border Services Agency and US Military units.

NAVIGATING THE EMOTIONAL TOLL OF RESCUE MISSIONS

In marine search and rescue operations, volunteers encounter challenging and sometimes traumatic situations, such as missions involving children, serious injuries, missing persons, and drowning victims.

To support them, we've established a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program led by trained and accredited volunteers. This peer-led program offers education on stress management, post-incident debriefings, one-on-one support, and connections to professional care. This program was developed to help our crews process and manage stress - both before and after a critical incident.

This comprehensive approach ensures that our volunteers receive the emotional support needed to safeguard their personal mental health and well-being.



STAYING SAFE ON THE WATER

Keeping Kids Safe

The Kids Don't Float (KDF) program continues to make a big splash! Families can borrow lifejackets for their kids from KDF stations at over 100 marinas, public docks, and beaches along BC's coast and in the Shuswap.

Lifejackets are a proven life-saving device, significantly reducing the risk of drowning, especially for children and young adults who may not be strong swimmers.

This program is invaluable for families who may not have the ability to buy new lifejackets for their growing children but also for visitors, grandparents wanting to take their grandkids out on the boat, or anyone needing a properly fitting lifejacket.

Thanks to SSA Marine's (formerly known as Western Group) sponsorship, the program has flourished. Last year, 12 new stations were installed, expanding the program's reach and impact. We are immensely grateful for their commitment to enhancing water safety so that more kids can stay safe while having fun on the water.

Safe Boating Starts Here

Small craft operators can enhance their safety through RCMSAR's Pleasure Craft Safety Check program. Trained volunteers are happy to educate boaters and ensure they have the necessary safety equipment onboard to comply with Transport Canada regulations.

Volunteers offer free, quick, and confidential courtesy checks during boating safety days at local marinas and upon request. Whether you're new to boating or a seasoned sailor, RCMSAR's Pleasure Craft Safety Check program is here to promote safer boating for everyone.

Making Boating Safety Fun

Thanks to funding from Transport Canada, we've added two new "boats" to our fleet. **Bobbie the Safety Boat** is a remote-controlled robot that engages both kids and adults in a fun, educational way to teach boating and water safety.

Operated by volunteers, Bobbie communicates with a kid-friendly voice and can move, blink, and even squirt water. Equipped with a siren and flashing lights, Bobbie is a captivating presence at boating safety and community events.



SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

From Bathtub Races to Garden Partnerships

At RCMSAR, our commitment to the community goes well beyond our life-saving missions.

In the past year alone, RCMSAR volunteers have played a crucial role in supporting their communities at various water events. By patrolling the waters, they ensure the safety of participants and spectators during events such as the Nanaimo Bathtub Race, Festival of Lights in Vancouver, sailing regattas, dragon boat races, and polar bear swims, among others. Their dedication not only enhances event safety but also strengthens community bonds and fosters a culture of mutual support.



When evaluating our own emergency preparedness needs, it was logical to include those of East Sooke residents. Limited road access and minimal resources make our community vulnerable during natural disasters or other emergencies.

We identified the need for a fully stocked emergency preparedness container to serve as a vital resource during widespread emergencies or catastrophic events. The container is now stocked with food, water, blankets, first aid supplies and communication aids to support our community during the first 48 hours of an emergency.

We have leased another part of our property to the East Sooke Community Garden Society, a project dedicated to fostering local food security, enhancing well-being, and building connections among neighbours.

The garden has quickly become a vital community space, where members grow their own produce and volunteer to maintain the garden and protect the ecosystem. We are honored to support this initiative, providing not just the land but also encouragement and resources to help it thrive.



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

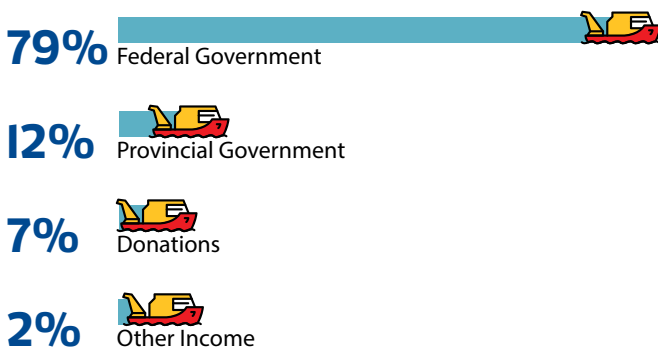
These financial highlights are based on RCMSAR's audited financial statements for the year ending March 31, 2024, and reflect our revenue sources, expenditures, and fund allocation across key programs and operational areas.

It's important to note that this information reflects our headquarters' finances only. This view does not capture the full financial landscape of our organization, which includes the funding required by our 31 RCMSAR rescue stations.

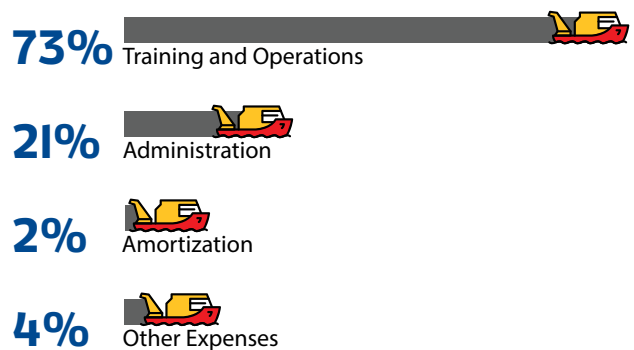
RCMSAR headquarters and our 31 stations receive support from the federal and provincial governments to fund training and missions. However, these funds only partially cover operational costs. To ensure they remain mission-ready, volunteers must independently raise additional funds for their essential training, lifesaving equipment, and capital projects.

This collective effort underscores the vital role of volunteers in sustaining our mission and services and the need for additional funding from individuals, organizations and foundations. You can find our complete audited [financial statements on our website](#).

Revenue \$3,137,679



Expenses \$3,086,997



Paula Keech Photography

RCMSAR 29 Ladysmith & 25 Salt Spring on a joint training exercise
Photo by Bob Burgess



LOOKING TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE?

Come volunteer with us! Whether you're on the water, on the dock, or onshore, you'll face exciting challenges, learn new skills, and meet some amazing people. Plus, you'll be giving back to your community in a meaningful way.

Interested? [Contact your local RCMSAR Rescue Station](#) for information.

YOUR DONATION SAVES LIVES

Your generosity powers RCMSAR - providing volunteers with the training, equipment, and rescue boats they need.


Together, we can save lives on the water.

[Click here to make your donation today.](#)



**ROYAL CANADIAN MARINE
SEARCH & RESCUE**
Saving Lives on the Water

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