

**NEWS EMBARGO: Monday 30th July 2018 00:00 GMT**



**TURNING AWARENESS INTO ACTION: ALL-WOMEN'S CREW COMPLETE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH EXPEDITION IN NORTH PACIFIC STUDYING OCEAN PLASTIC POLLUTION**

Monday 30th July 2018: [eXXpedition North Pacific](#), in collaboration with recycling innovators TOMRA, has concluded in Seattle after a month long scientific research mission led by award winning British skipper and Sky Ocean Rescue Ambassador Emily Penn investigating solutions to the devastating impact of single-use plastic and toxics in the world's oceans.

The expedition crew was made up of a diverse and international group of 24 women from Britain, USA, Canada, Slovenia, Norway and Honduras.

Split over two voyage legs, the crew sailed over 3,000 nautical miles from Hawaii to Vancouver through the densest ocean plastic accumulation zone on the planet, the North Pacific Gyre - better known as the 'Great Pacific Garbage Patch' before surveying remote coastlines of Canada's British Columbia en route to Seattle.

During the voyage contributed to a dozen research projects, conducting daily trawls for plastics and pollutants, and collecting data for a variety of global datasets and scientific research studies. This data is being used to support scientists in the UK, Canada, Switzerland and the USA.

- As much as 800 miles away from land the crew witnessed a constant stream of recognisable items passing by the vessel from toilet seats to plastic bottles.
- Most disturbing was the volume of microplastics (pieces under 5mm diameter) they counted in sea water samples. One trawl sample was analysed on board using a microscope and indicated that over 500,000 pieces of these microplastics existed in the square kilometer of ocean where the sample was taken, and this didn't account for the pieces that are so small they were not captured by the fine trawl net.

- In one instance, the eXXpedition crew sailed upon a 10m<sup>3</sup> floating pile of marine debris which Emily Penn fitted with a GPS tracker. It was the first successful deployment of a large set of 40 trackers that are destined for the "garbage patch" as part of a multi-institutional project to better understand ocean plastic pollution, funded by NASA.
- The crew witnessed wildlife such as dolphins and Albatross feeding in the areas where they had collected some of their densest microplastic seawater samples.

### **Inspiring Change-Makers**

In the four years since the first eXXpedition voyage across the Atlantic, over 100 exceptional women have sailed on an eXXpedition mission creating their own narratives about plastics and toxics, utilising their specific skills and their eXXpedition experience. These Ambassadors have gone on to give inspirational talks, organise plastic-free community projects, implement plastic policies within their organisations, campaign for better legislation, release impactful films and create inspiring ocean plastic artworks.

“Our crew are now heading back to their homes around the world with a new perspective. They’ve seen the issue first hand, formed strong bonds and are deeply empowered to be agents for change across every sphere of influence that they have - through their job, their community, their household” says Mission Director Emily Penn.

“There’s much that needs to be done to address the issues from closing the loop on plastic waste through effective recycling schemes to upstream solutions that are designed to end the use of unnecessary single-use plastics. But ultimately, it’s about individual actions. Every bottle and toothbrush polluting the ocean once belonged to someone. It’s billions of micro-actions that have led us to this situation and it’s billions of micro-actions that will get us out. It’s time to turn awareness into action and for everyone to ask themselves, “What’s my superpower? Where do my skills intersect the issue of marine plastic pollution and what can I do about it?”.

For eXXpedition 2019 crew applications of interest: <http://exxpedition.com/get-involved/apply/>

For practical tips and advice on actions one can take to tackle plastic pollution in everyday life visit the eXXpedition Change Makers microsite: <https://www.oceanchangemakers.com>

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For more information please contact [media@exxpedition.com](mailto:media@exxpedition.com)

[exxpedition.com/northpacific/](http://exxpedition.com/northpacific/)

### Media Updates & Resources

- Access all [press releases](#) related to the expedition here
- Raw and edited film, photos [for media available here](#)
- An overview of the [scientific plan for the voyage](#) is available here.
- The women who make up [The North Pacific Crew](#)
- [Sponsors and Partners](#) of North Pacific 2018
- [Daily blog](#) from the expedition crew at sea

### About eXXpedition

eXXpedition, the British Community Interest Company behind North Pacific 2018, specialises in all-women sailing expeditions. This is the 10th eXXpedition voyage and the first in the North Pacific Gyre. It has the endorsement and support of the UN Environment Clean Seas initiative and Ocean Wise.

**eXXpedition North Pacific** - [exxpedition.com/northpacific/](http://exxpedition.com/northpacific/)

**Title Sponsor:** [TOMRA](#)

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**Bronze Sponsors:** Daedalus Yachts, [Y.CO](#), Gill Marine, Finisterre and Port of Vancouver

**Partnerships** for the expedition include Ocean Wise, UN Environment Clean Seas, Parley for the Oceans, 11th Hour Racing, Pangaea Explorations & Another World Adventures.