



New ocean challenge replaces Route Halifax - St Pierre

- The Pure Ocean Challenge aims to break Eric Tabarly's sailing record
- Transatlantic race will travel from French overseas territory to west coast of France
- Race to act as a catalyst to increase understanding of need to protect ocean health

Following the cancellation of the Route Halifax-St Pierre race, a transatlantic boat race that aims to break a 33 year-old sailing record whilst also highlighting the need for greater ocean research and protection is setting off from St Pierre et Miquelon.

The inaugural Route St Pierre Lorient - Pure Ocean Challenge will set sail from the French overseas territory St Pierre et Miquelon, off the east coast of Canada, finishing around ten days later in Lorient, France.

The ocean race aims to break the crossing of 10 days, 1 hour and 31 minutes, set by French sailing legend Eric Tabarly, in 1987, on the maxi "Côte d'Or", and raise awareness of the importance of the ocean and the threats to its health.

Organised by The Route Saint-Pierre and Miquelon Association, in partnership with the Pure Ocean Foundation, the race follows the cancellation of this year's Route Saint-Pierre Quebec and the 10th edition of the bi-annual Route Halifax-Saint Pierre race, now set to take place in July 2021.

The Pure Ocean Challenge will be contested by the JP 54 of Jean-Pierre Dick and the Class 40 of Morgane Ursault-Poupon in this first edition of what will become an annual event. Depending on weather conditions, the boats are due to set off on the 2,150 nautical mile race in the coming days.

David Sussmann, founder of Pure Ocean, joins Jean-Pierre Dick's boat 'The Kid', where he will be recording scientific data and making videos for their [Facebook page](#) to help increase our understanding of the state of our seas.

He said: "The race and attempt to beat Tabarly's time are being used to highlight how our ocean sustains life on earth by regulating our climate, providing a major food source for millions of people, helps produce the air we breathe and is home to a vast array of biodiversity.

“This extremely valuable resource is under threat from climate change, overfishing, habitat destruction and a staggering amount of pollution, including plastic and other waste, being dumped in our seas. We need increased financial support for ocean research programs to help us understand this vital source of life on our planet.”

After they arrive in Lorient, a week of events, organised by the Pure Ocean Foundation, involving key marine stakeholders and business leaders to talk about its mission and explore new funding streams for its vital work will take place.

Pure Ocean supports innovative research projects that contribute to the protection of fragile marine ecosystems and biodiversity whilst also organising events to raise public understanding of the critical situation our ocean faces. A total of 159 projects from 40 countries, involving 350 scientists, applied for grants from the foundation’s latest call for funding applications.

Pure Ocean is already funding a project led by The Marine Environmental Observation, Prediction and Response Network (MEOPAR) and Dalhousie University, Halifax, involving Inuit students, to monitor changes in seawater linked to climate change.

Offshore sailor Philippe Paturel, founder and president of Route Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, is co-organising the race. He said: “This has realised my ambition of creating a challenge between Saint-Pierre and Miquelon and Brittany. Respect for the ocean and the environment is one of the fundamentals of Route Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, so it is a joy to organize a transatlantic race which carries the strong messages of the Pure Ocean Foundation.”

Morgane Ursault Poupon, whose father, Philippe, won the Route du Rhum in 1986, is racing on her boat ‘Up Sailing’ against four times Transat Jacques-Varbe winner Jean-Pierre Dick, who said he has witnessed changes in the marine environment since he started sailing decades ago.

Jean-Pierre Dick said: “This route is special for me but I’ve noticed higher levels of sea ice and stronger storms in recent years which could be a result of climate change. Combining the sport of sailing with the advancement of ocean research and awareness is something I’m proud to be involved with.”

The Pure Ocean Challenge will be overseen by technical advisor Sylvie Viant who has been involved in a range of the world’s most prestigious competitions including the Vendée Globe, the Transat Jacques Vabre, the Route du Rhum, Quebec Saint-Malo, the Barcelona World Race and the Tour de France à la Voile.

By convening key stakeholders, including businesses and scientists, Pure Ocean develops solutions to the issues the oceans face and supports ambitious and innovative projects to protect fragile marine ecosystems and biodiversity.

Pure Ocean has also started a petition calling on the French Government, European Commission and other funders to finance ocean research projects. The ocean is a precious resource that could provide solutions for human health and future treatments for a range of illnesses. To sign the petition click [here](#).

For more information:

To keep up to date with the progress of the boats follow [@PureOceanFund](#) on [Facebook](#).

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For images please click [HERE](#).

About Pure Ocean

Pure Ocean is an NGO founded in Marseille in 2017 with a mission is to support innovative research projects around the world, contributing to the protection of fragile marine ecosystems and biodiversity. In addition to funding scientific projects, Pure Ocean organizes conferences and promotes races and sporting challenges in order to raise public awareness of the critical situation in our ocean. <https://www.pure-ocean.org/>

About Route Saint-Pierre & Miquelon

Route Saint-Pierre & Miquelon is a non-profit association, created in 2000 by shipowner and passionate sailor Philippe Paturel. With over 60 volunteers, Route Saint-Pierre & Miquelon has been organizing and running sailing racing projects since then.