



Sailing expedition to highlight need to fund ocean research

Governments, the European Commission and philanthropists must provide funding for ocean research projects focussed on biodiversity, climate and health, according to an ocean health NGO.

The Marseille-based Pure Ocean Foundation, founded by French entrepreneur David Sussmann, has called for the funding to help protect the marine environment being impacted by a range of threats including pollution, overfishing and habitat destruction.

It is estimated that 90% of marine species remain undiscovered and these could provide cures for a range of human illnesses. Ocean research has resulted in thirteen Nobel Prize winners from the field of medicine. Scientists have used a sea sponge to develop a treatment for breast cancer whilst an algae protein, with antiviral properties, is used to fight a virus similar to Covid-19.

The call for action comes ahead of the start of the inaugural Route St Pierre Lorient - Pure Ocean Challenge from the French overseas territory St Pierre et Miquelon, off the east coast of Canada, to Lorient. The transatlantic boat race aims to raise awareness of the many issues our seas face and beat a 33 year-old sailing time for the crossing set by Eric Tabarly.

David Sussmann joins professional sailor Jean-Pierre Dick on his boat 'The Kid', where he will be recording scientific data to help increase our understanding of the state of the ocean.

He said: "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 are petitioning the French Government and the recently appointed Minister for the Sea, to increase financial support for ocean research programs to help us understand this vital source of life on our planet.

"The race and attempt to beat Tabarly's time are being used to help us raise funds for our work and 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 could provide cures for medical conditions."

The Pure Ocean Challenge will be contested by the JP 54 of Jean-Pierre Dick, of Nice, and the Class 40 of Morgane Ursault-Poupon, of Nevez, in this first edition of what will become an annual event. The boats are due to set off on the 2,150 nautical mile race from 14th July depending on weather conditions.

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.

After the boats arrive in Lorient, a week of events, organised by the Pure Ocean Foundation, involving key marine stakeholders, will take place. Pure Ocean organises 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.

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."

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

For more information:

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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 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.