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5 Gyres Explores Solutions For Plastic Waste in the Coral Triangle

The ocean expedition will provide a snapshot of what world faces with growing plastic emergency.

Culver City, California (July 5th, 2018) –Ocean conservation non-profit the 5 Gyres Institute is setting sail in one of the world’s most biodiversity rich regions—the Coral Triangle—for their 18th expedition raising awareness around plastic pollution and the most effective mitigation strategies.

The [Coral Triangle](#) is a massive series of interconnected reefs covering six million square kilometers (two-thirds the size of the continental U.S.A.). It’s home to three quarters of all coral species and six of the world’s seven sea turtle species. But like all ocean ecosystems it’s being negatively impacted by plastic waste.

The 5 Gyres expedition will travel along the southern edge of the Coral Triangle between Indonesia’s Komodo National Park and Bali. It’ll be an opportunity for 5 Gyres scientists, partnering local NGOs and researchers to monitor microplastics and explore mitigation solutions.

“Each expedition gives us a regional snapshot of plastic pollution data,” says Dr. Marcus Eriksen, co-founder and Science Director of 5 Gyres. “In keeping with our ‘science to solutions’ model, a better understanding of the global scope and trends related to ocean plastic pollution helps us monitor the efficacy of upstream solutions.”

Eriksen isn’t the only expert who believes prevention is urgently needed. Research published in [Science Advances](#) last month calls for reducing plastic use and redesigning products to make them more recyclable in domestic markets, especially now that China no longer takes the bulk of the world’s recycling – a move that more than doubled the scrap plastic heading to Indonesia.

5 Gyres is already collaborating with NGOs in the Philippines and Indonesia to highlight and scale zero-waste efforts through its [Asia Pacific Action Against Plastic](#)

[Pollution](#) program. This expedition will work with participating groups such as [Bali Fokus](#) and scientists from Universitas Hasanuddin giving them the opportunity to get hands on training with 5 Gyres' latest research methods and citizen science protocols.

"All expedition participants will learn how to monitor plastic pollution using our citizen science protocols both in the ocean and on beaches," says Carolynn Box, 5 Gyres' Science Programs Director. "One of the goals is to have these local groups continue to carry out citizen science in the region."

As part of their [TrawlShare](#) program 5 Gyres will leave some trawls with these partners so this effective plastic monitoring will continue.

The expedition is being run in partnership with the [Oceanic Society](#) which is dedicated to marine conservation and a global leader in nature-based tourism experiences. The 5 Gyres crew will be on board the KLM. Sea Safari VII, Phinisi Buginese Schooner for two week-long voyaging legs that'll be part eco adventure part education. Additional crew consists of concerned citizens, eco-activists and surfers—including renowned Indonesian pro surfer and environmentalist [Rizal Tanjung](#).

All crew members will learn how plastic detritus threatens ocean ecosystems and be recruited as citizen scientists; monitoring plastic pollution and recording data. There'll also opportunities to learn from local experts about how plastic waste affects everyday life in Bali.

Data collected by these citizen scientists and professionals will contribute to the global update on plastic pollution. And become part of B.A.N. List 3.0 identifying the top 20 types of single use plastics in South East Asian waterways—just as [B.A.N. List 2.0](#) provided that trash profile for the U.S.A.

Other key partners whose support has helped make this expedition possible are Rothy's, Everything But Water, Nordic Naturals, and Starboard.

ABOUT 5 GYRES:

For the past 10 years the 5 Gyres Institute has led the fight against plastic pollution. The non-profit organization was the first to conduct research in all five main subtropical gyres. This led to 5 Gyres publishing the first global estimate; which found 5.25 trillion particles weighing 270,000 tons of "plastic smog" (pieces smaller than a grain of rice) are floating at the ocean surface worldwide. 5 Gyres' study on microbead pollution in the Great Lakes inspired a two-year collaborative campaign culminating in the 2015 law which made these plastics illegal nationwide. Through 5 Gyres' 2017 Nix the 6 Action Campaign, thousands of people pledged to refuse single-use polystyrene plastic and shared their actions through the #sneakystyrene hashtag. 5 Gyres is a

science-to-solutions focused non-profit dedicated to a planet free of plastic pollution.
More information is at www.5gyres.org.