

PRESS RELEASE

Human and the oceans: second season of The Arctic Expedition to be launched in Reykjavík

Geneva/ Reykjavík, June 1st, 2021 | The second season of The Arctic Expedition 2020–2024 will be officially launched on June 1st, 2021, from Reykjavík, in presence of Jóhanna Vigdís Hjaltadóttir, Honorary Consul for Switzerland in Iceland. Prof. Daniel F. McGinnis, Head of the Aquatic Physics Group, Faculty of Sciences, University of Geneva, will be presenting a short conference titled: “Sailing for our future: A five-year expedition to map greenhouse gases and temperatures in the Arctic seas.”

Sailing for Science and Sustainability

The Arctic Expedition has embarked on a 5-year journey around the arctic ocean aboard the sailing ship *Mauritius* to better understand marine ecosystem shifts at high latitude and to raise awareness of related issues concerning sustainable development. The expedition carries out three scientific programs.

Developed and conducted in partnership with the University of Geneva, **ARCTIC CHANGE** continuously maps, during the five year of the expedition, methane and carbon dioxide concentrations in air and water. The goal is to reassess the role of the polar oceans as carbon sink or emitter in the context of global warming.

As Prof. Daniel McGinnis, Head of the Aquatic Physics Group, Faculty of Sciences, University of Geneva puts it *“Data on the Arctic is dramatically lacking, so anything we collect there will be of vital value to feed the global databases. We will thus transpose to this region the pilot program we conducted around half the globe during the previous expedition.”*

MICROMEGAS– conducted in partnership with the Oceaneye Association, measures concentrations of plastic pollution in surface arctic waters - far from major urban centres but nonetheless affected by the global problem. During the expedition, regular sampling of surface water are carried out to assess the content of microplastic (between 0.3 and 5 mm in size) and mesoplastic (greater than 5 mm) particles.

EAR TO THE WILD– a program carried out in partnership with Prof. Michel André, director of the Laboratory of Applied Bio-Acoustics (LAB) at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia– consists of mapping the ocean soundscape for the preservation of marine fauna in a context of increased noise pollution.

These programs are operated within the framework of the **Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development (2021–2030)**. <https://www.oceandecade.org/>

Raising awareness with art, educating through experience

Fondation Pacifique regularly invites artists, designers, and illustrators aboard for short to prolonged periods. Their artworks offer great opportunities to document the expeditions, to raise awareness and communicate broadly with the public at large. Fondation Pacifique also organizes socio-educational programs to encourage the social reintegration of young people in difficulty.

Mauritius, an ideal platform for oceanographic research

Mauritius is a 30-metre steel schooner, built in 1963 at Breman shipyards in Zwartsluis, the Netherlands. After entering the service of the Fondation Pacifique in 2015, she later carried out a few initial missions in the Mediterranean and the near Atlantic. Equipped with specific technological equipment, she offers opportunities for continuous field data collection and transmission and to sail at high latitudes.

<https://fondationpacifique.org/en/the-sailboats/>

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Itinerary around the North Pole

Launched in June 2020, The Arctic Expedition should take place according to the following schedule: **First season** (completed in 2020): Navigation along Norway, Spitsbergen, the east coast of Greenland and Iceland. **Second season** (2021): Reykjavik - Qaanaaq - Pond Inlet - Disko Bay - Aasiaat (wintering). **Third Season** (2022): Northwest Passage: Disko bay - Cambridge bay - Anchorage (wintering). **Fourth Saison** (2023): Northeast Passage: Anchorage – Kotelny Island - Dickson (wintering). **Fifth Saison** (2024): Dickson - Mourmansk – Copenhagen. The itinerary of Mauritius can be follow almost in real-time on our website. <https://fondationpacifique.org/en/the-arctic-expedition/itinerary/>

About Fondation Pacifique

Founded in Geneva in 2007, Fondation Pacifique is a Swiss non-profit organisation recognised as a public utility. Driven by humanist principles, Fondation Pacifique embodies the values of solidarity and complementarity through specific, strongly value-added accomplishments to benefit oceans and people all over the world.

The foundation's main missions are: to promote greater understanding of human impact on the oceans and to raise awareness of related issues concerning sustainable development. To this end, the foundation designs, organises and conducts multidisciplinary ocean expeditions on traditional sailboats that give the international scientific community the chance to carry out long-term research programmes or shorter-term missions.

At the same time, Fondation Pacifique organises outreach and communication activities for decision-makers and the general public via a wide range of actions that include events, media and digital presence in Switzerland and abroad.

Past expeditions of Fondation Pacifique include **THE OCEAN MAPPING EXPEDITION 2015–2019**—a 4-year round-the-world sailing expedition aboard *Fleur de Passion* to observe, understand and map the state of the oceans following the course of Magellan's expedition launched in 1519— and **THE CHANGING OCEANS EXPEDITION 2009–2014**,—a long-term expedition in the Mediterranean, Atlantic, North and Baltic Seas, the Red Sea and the Caribbean aboard *Fleur de Passion*, during which it conducted various scientific programs in partnership with academic institutions and international NGOs. <https://fondationpacifique.org/en/the-expeditions/>

Media resources

Additional copyright-free media resources can be found on our website. <https://fondationpacifique.org/en/the-arctic-expedition/media/>

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