

## **Innovative Ocean Plastic Fighter Plastic Odyssey Works to Clean Up the Most Polluted Sanctuary in the World**



**Plastic Odyssey, a team crossing the oceans since November 2022 to help solve the growing crisis of ocean plastic pollution, will set sail February 7 to clean up Henderson Island in the South Pacific -- a UNESCO World Heritage Site designated the most polluted island sanctuary in the world.**

Crew of the 128-foot Plastic Odyssey will remove and recycle an estimated six tons of plastic waste that has accumulated on the island's shores, threatening the area's unique bird and marine populations. The operation is expected to last approximately 20 days.

The Plastic Odyssey is a unique vessel in the world, in that it is capable of treating, recycling and repurposing plastic debris directly on board via low-tech solutions developed in France. However, the biggest challenge is access: the most polluted, exposed beach cannot be reached from sea due to surrounding coral reefs and exposure to waves and wind. A key challenge is to figure out a way to recover the plastic from a precise area. The team intends to bring along other small watercraft to help carry out the mission.

Plastic waste from Henderson Island will be transferred, processed and repurposed onboard the ship and on Pitcairn Island 107 miles away -- where mutineers fled with the H.M.S. Bounty in 1790, and whose 58 residents have developed their own home-grown local recycling program.

Joining to help execute the mission is the Executive Director and Founder of the Atlanta-based Howell Conservation Fund, who led the beach cleanup team as part of a British government-sponsored cleanup project in 2019. Plastic Odyssey is also collaborating with suppliers who are supporting the mission via in-kind donations of materials, gear, food and local flight accommodations.

## EXPEDITION PROGRAM

The crew sets sail on February 7 from Mangareva in French Polynesia to the uninhabited Henderson Island. Mission schedule:

- **Briefing Day/arrival of the crew** : Feb 6
- **Departure from Mangareva**: Feb 7.
- **Arrival to Pitcairn Archipel** : Feb 10
- **Start of the mission on Henderson** : Feb 11
- **End of the Mission on Henderson** : Feb. 20
- **Pitcairn community training and involvement (on Pitcairn Island)** : Feb 20 to Feb 27

## KEY MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION TEAM:



**Simon BERNARD**

Plastic Odyssey co-founder & Chief Executive Officer

2024 Henderson Expedition Leader



**Alexandre DECHELOTTE**

Plastic Odyssey co-founder & Chief Communication Officer

2024 Henderson Expedition Communications Leader



**Morgane KERDONCUFF**

Plastic Odyssey stopovers manager

2024 Henderson Expedition Preparation Leader



**Brett HOWELL**

Howell Conservation Fund (HCF) Executive Director & Founder

2024 Henderson Expedition Conservation and Science Leader

## WHY IMPORTANT:

With an estimated 18 tonnes of plastic debris on its beaches, Henderson Island is a well-documented hotspot for plastic pollution due to its location in the South Pacific Gyre ocean current. Despite recent attempted clean up expeditions on the island, most recently in 2019, tons of plastic debris remain, threatening the area's unique bird and marine populations. According to conservative scientific estimates, thousands of plastic items wash up on the island shores, daily.



## ABOUT HENDERSON ATOLL:

Henderson Island is a remote and uninhabited elevated coral atoll and the largest of the four islands of the British-governed Pitcairn Islands, an area known for having the clearest visibility in the Pacific Ocean. With its remarkable biological diversity, Henderson is one of the last and among the largest near-pristine limestone islands in the world. Access for yachts and fishing vessels is by permit only and extremely difficult due to the surrounding coral reefs.

In addition to their natural beauty, the Pitcairn Islands have had a significant cultural impact. The island chain served as the inspiration for Mutiny on the Bounty and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. The crew's launch spot, Mangareva Island, is where the popular Tom Hanks movie *Castaway* was filmed.

## ABOUT PLASTIC ODYSSEY

Plastic Odyssey is a 3-year, international expedition dedicated to addressing the pressing issue of plastic pollution in our oceans. Its mission is driven by the urgent need to protect marine ecosystems and raise global awareness about the devastating impact of plastic waste. Plastic Odyssey's multifaceted approach involves demonstrating innovative methods to transform collected plastic into valuable materials.

*Plastic Odyssey's corporate partners include L'Occitane en Provence, Après-Demain, Credit Agricole, Clarins and Matmut. A full list of partners and supporters is [here](#).*



## TO FOLLOW THE EXPEDITION

To follow this expedition live, tune in on February 6th on Plastic Odyssey's social media channels and the website [henderson.plasticodyssey.org](http://henderson.plasticodyssey.org).

## CONTACTS

### Press and media partnerships

Photo reports, video content, or interview requests should be addressed to [press@plasticodyssey.org](mailto:press@plasticodyssey.org)

### Partnerships

For partnership inquiries, please write to us at [partnerships@plasticodyssey.org](mailto:partnerships@plasticodyssey.org)



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