



EXPEDITION PROFILE

June 4th Marine Cleanup and Coral Rescue

On June 4th, 2017, twenty volunteer divers set off early Sunday morning from the Republic of Singapore Yacht Club on board the dive boat, *Dolphin Explorer*, to Pulau Subar Laut located within the Sisters' Islands Marine Park of Singapore. Their mission was to undertake *Our Singapore Reefs: Marine Clean Up and Coral Rescue* in conjunction with World Oceans Day 2017.

This is the first time such an event has been conducted in the marine park and the objective was to collect and document the marine debris as well as to rescue corals within the park. Covering an area of 1200 sq. m, the participating volunteer divers successfully removed 424 debris weighing over 72 kgs, which included a car battery, a small anchor and trolley. All the debris was collected and transported back on another vessel the D/Y *Lady Olivia* to Raffles Marina for proper disposal. The data collected is now available online on Project AWARE's Dive Against Debris® citizen-science program and contributes to the global effort to combat marine debris.

For the second dive, under guidance from researchers of the Tropical Marine Science Institute, the volunteer divers collected 43 corals that were found dislodged from the reefs or colonies that were dying. These rescued corals were then relocated to the National Parks Board coral tray located within the Marine Park to safeguard the corals.

An essential outcome of the marine cleanup and coral rescue mission was the compilation of data which has since been made available to relevant and interested parties. The identification and information about the debris found in the area covered will enable our government agencies to develop solutions and measures needed to reduce the amount of debris. In line with the guidelines for recreational diving, the volunteers were only able to collect the smaller debris, and discussions are now underway with the respective agencies to remove the remaining larger debris that the volunteer divers were unable to clear. The information collected about the corals provides a baseline for National Parks to monitor the health of the corals in that area.

Our Singapore Reefs: Marine Clean Up and Coral Rescue mission was organized by members from the Tropical Marine Science Institute of National University of Singapore; International SeaKeepers Society, Asia and The Submersibles. The event is also supported by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA); National Parks Board (NParks); Raffles Marina; Hook Coffee and World Oceans Day.

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Kicking off the event, MPA Chief Executive, Mr. Andrew Tan encouraged the Volunteer Divers and participants acknowledging that conserving Singapore's marine biodiversity and keeping our waters clean and green is a shared responsibility and a multi-prong effort on the part of the community, government and industry.

Mr. Andrew Tan said, "It requires everyone to play their part. As with our efforts on land, we also need to inculcate a strong sense of environmental responsibility at sea."

Participants were informed that in the coming months, MPA will also work with the Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) to reach out to the wider shipping community to keep our waters clean and green.

Ultimately, the volunteer divers ended the day's mission on a high note with a sense of having contributed to conserving Singapore's marine environment and expressing a commitment to regularly do more. *Our Singapore Reefs: Marine Clean Up and Coral Rescue* was indeed a fruitful demonstration of what a successful collaboration of citizen science, NGOs and Government can achieve.

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More about:

About Our Singapore Reefs

Our Singapore Reefs (OSR) is a community initiative that was established in May 2017 by a group of divers who love Singapore's coral reefs. The group aims to promote awareness about Singapore's marine biodiversity and provide a platform for academics, businesses, NGOs and agencies to work together for a common cause. This initiative will empower the public with means to conserve and protect Singapore's reefs and encourage them to be active citizens. For more information visit:

www.facebook.com/oursingaporereefs/

About World Oceans Day

World Oceans Day with this year's theme of "Our Oceans, Our Future" is officially recognized by the United Nations, and has become an annual celebration on 8 June as well as throughout the year of for

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awareness and action for ocean conservation well as throughout the year .World Oceans Day is coordinated by The Ocean Project, which advances ocean conservation in partnership with its network of more than 2,000 aquariums, zoos, museums, youth organizations, and other education and conservation organizations around the world.. For more information visit: www.worldoceansday.org.

About SeaKeepers International Society

The International SeaKeepers Society is a non profit organization focusing on the health of the world's oceans and climate. SeaKeepers works with the boating and yachting community to take advantage of their unique potential in order to further marine research and to raise awareness about the issues our oceans face. The International SeaKeepers Society acts as a global catalyst working with governments, scientists, industry, and other marine organizations to further its mission and to support sensible, achievable marine protection and restoration.

The International SeaKeepers Society established SeaKeepers Asia in 2016. This expansion with a new chapter in Asia is under the leadership of Julian Chang. For more information visit: www.seakeepers.org

About Tropical Marine Science Institute (TMSI)

The Tropical Marine Science Institute is an institution formed within the National University of Singapore. TMSI is a centre of excellence for research, development and consultancy in tropical marine science as well as environmental science. With its multi-disciplinary research laboratories and active international links, it handles projects relevant to Physical Oceanography, Acoustics, Marine Biology, Marine Mammals, Biofuels, Water Resources and Climate Change. TMSI also provides postgraduate research opportunities.

Through active collaboration with academic, government and industrial sectors, TMSI aims to play a strong role in promoting integrated marine science, in R&D, as well as to establish itself as a regional and international education and training centre. For more information visit: www.tmsi.nus.edu.sg

About The Submersibles

The Submersibles was started in 2006 with the aim of providing a one-stop solution for recreational scuba divers. She has since grown into a PADI 5 Star Dive Center, providing high quality Scuba Diving education, offer a wide range of retail items for divers, organize diving at exotic dive sites across the region as well as promote local diving at Pulau Hantu. For more information visit: www.facebook.com/submersibles and www.thesubmersibles.com

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