



## EXPEDITION PROFILE

### March 2021 aboard DISCOVERY Yacht Zephyr

The International SeaKeepers Society teamed up with FIU to collect plastic samples for their joint citizen science program, the S.A.R.A.H. Initiative, aboard D/Y Zephyr.

In March of 2021, D/Y Zephyr deployed a plastic sample collection net along the coast of Barbuda. D/Y Zephyr is a sailboat that joined the S.A.R.A.H. Initiative at the end of 2020 and is currently sailing around the world. After a long passage across the Atlantic from the Mediterranean, we are glad to see this vessel safely in the Caribbean and are excited to see the results of their sample tows throughout their journey.

This is in furtherance of the S.A.R.A.H. Initiative: a citizen science initiative wherein captains and crew tow a net behind their vessel for 15 minutes, collecting anything that is just below the surface of the water. The purpose of these tows is to collect samples of plastic pollution from the water. These samples are then analyzed in a lab in order to assess their chemical composition. Each variety of plastic absorbs different types of chemicals and they have varying degradation rates in the marine environment. Identifying the composition and location of ocean plastics will help us predict their long-term effects and reveal their ultimate fates. Uncovering the prevalence and location of distinctive plastic types can help us pinpoint the major source. The information from this study would be of interest to policymakers interested in cutting down on the most prevalent types of pollution that are ending up in the saltwater fish we eat.

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