

## SEEN & HEARD



# SeaKeepers, Leading the Way Through *International Waters*

Founded in 1998 by a small group of yacht owners, The International SeaKeepers Society is a nonprofit organisation that promotes oceanographic research, conservation, and education through direct involvement with the yachting community. Through its SeaKeepers DISCOVERY Yachts Programme, they enhance marine research potential by making unconventional vessels owned by members available to the scientific community. Privately owned yachts are great mobile research platforms as they tend to frequent remote and ecologically important locations where shipping traffic is minimal.

The DISCOVERY Yachts Programme actively collaborates with numerous organisations, academic institutions, and government agencies through three main components: scientific expeditions, instrument deployments, and educational outreach events. SeaKeepers staff works closely with yacht owners and crew to coordinate research and outreach activities. The degree of participation can vary from an afternoon outreach cruise with children, a ten-minute instrument deployment, to intensive week-long expeditions with expert researchers.

The Programme has participated in many diverse research expeditions such as the University of Miami's Shark Research & Conservation (SRC) Programme. By tagging and collecting biological samples on various shark species, it helps to further our understanding of shark

health, behaviour, and distribution patterns. SeaKeepers works with researchers from the University of Florida to facilitate genome sequencing of planktonic marine organisms, further coral reef research with the Rosenstiel School for Marine & Atmospheric Science, and aid apex predator studies with Global FinPrint. During each expedition, scientists and SeaKeepers staff encourage guests and crew to get involved in all components of field research. This creates opportunities for hands-on education and memorable and unique experiences.

SeaKeepers Asia was established in April 2016 under the leadership of Board Member, Julian Chang; after recent visits to Singapore by SeaKeepers President and CEO, Richard Snow, revealed a real need for marine conservation amongst yacht owners and the general public in Asia. SeaKeepers Asia builds upon established DISCOVERY Yacht programming, seeking to build a sense of appreciation and commitment to protect, conserve, and restore within Asia. An educational outreach event has already taken place onboard a super yacht in Singapore and there are plans for two additional trips this summer.

Renowned for its traditions of honouring and promoting key decision makers and influencers who have made extraordinary commitments to preserving our planet's oceans, SeaKeepers will host its annual Bal de la Mer event on 8 October in Palm Beach, Florida. It will honour



- 1 A group of school children help prepare a drifter for deployment off of DISCOVERY Yacht *Defiance*
- 2 A group of school children in the Bahamas learn about plankton
- 3 Children from the Singapore American School listen to a lecture about marine biology on board DISCOVERY Yacht *Asean Lady*
- 4 Scientists from the University of Florida's Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience prepare plankton samples used for genome sequencing
- 5 Members of the University of Miami's Shark Research and Conservation Program tag and take samples from a hammerhead shark

Alexander W. Dreyfoos, one of its Founding Members and yachting community pioneer, with the 2016 SeaKeeper Award. The SeaKeepers Founders' 2016 event will be held in November to honour the work of the SeaKeepers DISCOVERY Yachts Fleet at the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show. ⚓