



Earthrace eco-boat encounters giant offshore Californian rubbish dump

London/Pacific Ocean, 21 May 2008 – The crew of Earthrace, currently en route to Hawaii in their attempt at the world circumnavigation record for a powerboat, have encountered a massive offshore dumping ground in the middle of the North Pacific.

Earthrace is a 78ft wave-piercing trimaran that runs on biodiesel and is currently in day 24 and the sixth leg of its global challenge. The crew aim to set a new world record for a powerboat to circumnavigate the globe, running renewable biodiesel fuel, and with a net zero carbon footprint.

The boat, under Kiwi captain Pete Bethune, is still ahead in the attempt to beat the 10-year-old speed record of 74 days.

Captain Bethune, speaking from the Earthrace cabin said: “Our weather forecaster had warned us about this area of the Pacific. It’s a giant rubbish dump of plastic and polystyrene the size of Texas, and we’re currently on the southern tip of it.

“Our course on this leg has been more like a drunken student weaving his way home after a bender, rather than a race boat in a straight line - it seems every hundred metres or so there’s another load of rubbish in the water that we need to skirt around.

“The current that passes down the West Coast of America picks up rubbish and debris along the Californian coast, and then drags it all the way out here, some thousand nautical miles away. The current here then drops under the surface, leaving behind all the rubbish.

“It joins the giant Californian rubbish dump that remains here year after year, and it gradually increases in density as more rubbish drifts in.

“The clear-up task would be huge – it would take at least a few hundred boats. But it’s also a case of out of sight, out of mind. Few in California would know that their state has a giant rubbish tip in the middle of the Pacific, let alone be inclined to do anything about it.”

Earthrace continues its journey to Hawaii, where it is scheduled to arrive at 1100hrs HST on Wednesday 21 May.

Day 23

Last 24 hours: 535nm

Total Distance covered: 9428nm

Ahead of world record: 1608nm

PRESS RELEASE



Ave speed last 24 hours: 22.3kn
GPS Location: 25 53.012N, 145 32.813W
ETA Honolulu: Wed 11am (21st May)

100% biodiesel - 100% carbon neutral

- ends -

Notes to editors:

High resolution, copyright-free photographs and video footage are available to download from our FTP site: <ftp://assets.earthrace.net>

Please contact news@earthrace.net for login details.

About Earthrace

Earthrace is a 24m (78ft) tri-hull wavepiercer that has been designed and built specifically to get the record for a powerboat to circumnavigate the globe. She is an advanced endurance vessel, capable of submarining up to 7m (23ft) underwater as she powers across oceans.

The goal of Earthrace is to set a new world record for a powerboat to circumnavigate the globe, running 100% renewable biodiesel fuel, and with a net zero carbon footprint.

From the start in Sagunto, the boat will cross the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans and travel through the Panama and Suez Canals as it thunders around the planet's circumference at a maximum speed of 40 knots, attempting to break the round-the-world speed record. The full record route is as follows:

Sagunto (Spain) – Horta (Azores) – San Juan (Puerto Rico) – Colon (Panama Canal, Panama) – Manzanillo (Mexico) – San Diego (USA) – Maalaea Harbor, Maui (Hawaii) – Majuro (Marshall Islands) – Koror (Palau) – Singapore – Kochi/Cochin (India) – Salalah (Oman) – Port Said (Suez Canal, Egypt) – Sagunto (Spain)

Earthrace is run as a not-for-profit venture, with a boat, ground and London HQ crew made up of international volunteers.

You can find out in real time exactly where Earthrace is now by going to www.earthrace.net and clicking on the 'Where is Earthrace' globe.

International press contacts

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