

“One Earth – One Ocean” supported by the Röchling Foundation

The family-run Röchling group has grown to become one of the leading suppliers of innovative products made from high-performance plastics. Due to this, the Röchling Foundation has access to a great deal of expertise in the field of plastics and can effectively contribute to protecting the environment, for example by supporting the association “One Earth – One Ocean” in its mission to eradicate marine pollution and rid the waters of our planet from contamination by plastic waste, chemicals and oil.

Earth from space still looks like a wonderful blue planet. But zooming in, a shocking picture reveals. Oceans, rivers and lakes are heavily polluted with plastic waste. Combating this floating carpet of debris represents one of the major challenges of our time. According to the latest estimates by scientists, there are already as much as 150 million tons of plastics drifting in the oceans and this number increases by a further 8 million tons each year. In 2050, the world’s waters are anticipated to contain more plastics than fish. Marine pollution represents a major threat to sea birds and animals that may get tangled up in it or mistake it for food and swallow it. Once the plastic breaks down into micro-particles, fish mistake it for plankton. In this way, the tiny, sometimes carcinogenic plastic particles ultimately end up in the human food chain, too.

*“‘Seekuh’ fights ‘Marine Littering’: Launch of the world’s first maritime rubbish collector” –
Recyclingportal, September 26, 2016*

The catamaran “Seekuh” (sea cow) has been specifically built for this purpose. It is deployed as a “maritime rubbish collector”, removing floating plastic particles from the surface of the water. But “One Earth – One Ocean” founder Günther Bonin and his team delve even deeper into the matter. They analyze water samples taken from around the globe by means of a spectrometer. The Röchling Foundation has financed the infrared spectrometer including accessories urgently needed for this mission.

*“To me, it is a great pleasure to be sponsor of the ‘Seekuh’, Countess Hoensbroech said. As Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees of the Röchling Foundation she has been supporting the construction and development of the maritime rubbish collector for many years. ‘I share the values of ‘One Earth – One Ocean’, therefore the launch of the ‘Seekuh’ is an affair of the heart to me.’” –
Kieler Nachrichten, September 26, 2016*

The “Seekuh” enables “One Earth – One Ocean” to analyze and identify all kinds of plastics much faster as findings are now identified on-site. In doing so, a lasting contribution to research the problem and provide valuable data to the planned international pollution database for recording maritime pollution will be made. The “Seekuh” is demountable and can be transported anywhere around the world via shipping container.

“At a draft of 60 centimeters, the catamaran form enables a net construction to be dropped 2 meters to collect plastic waste. In order to avoid animals being caught in the net, the ‘Seekuh’ moves at walking pace. At places with huge waste, it can collect 2 to 3 tons with its nets on a daily basis or even transport all the waste to land if there is a high degree of pollution.” – Ecopressblog, September 28, 2016

The Röchling Foundation's support enables "One Earth – One Ocean" to take targeted action to combat the threat head-on. Following the enormous ecological value Bonin has created with the "Seekuh", the association has further great plans for the future:

*"Bonin plans to build another ship in the future. Its name 'Seeelefant' ('Elephant Seal') is already agreed on. The ship shall not only collect plastic waste but will also recycle plastics by means of an oil production unit. 'The launch should be in 5 years, the environmental activist outlined his schedule.'" –
Süddeutsche Zeitung, April 21, 2017*



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