



EXPEDITION PROFILE

January 21st, 2020 aboard DISCOVERY Yacht Julia

On January 12th, 2020, SeaKeepers partnered with Debris Free Oceans to host a floating classroom and island cleanup onboard Fleet Miami's Julia. 22 Campbell's Snacks employees joined us to learn about our local marine environment, highlighting why it is important to remove plastics from the ocean. Debris Free Oceans is a Miami-based organization that inspires local communities to responsibly manage the lifecycle of plastics and waste as part of a global initiative to eradicate marine debris from our beaches, reefs, and oceans. Their Outreach Coordinator Maddy gave an interactive presentation about marine debris' impacts on south Florida's ecosystems, economy, and health of its residents; the history of plastics and marine debris; and actions each person can take to limit the amount of waste they create.

At Monument Island, we removed a total of 448 pounds of trash! The garbage found was comprised mostly of cigarette butts, foam pieces, plastic bottle caps, food wrappers, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans. We found a number of weird items, including a skateboard, a 5' x 5' x 1' piece of Styrofoam insulation, boat buoys, beach balls, clothing hangers, and boat lines. Although every item of trash that we remove from the island is important to the health of the ocean, the large piece of Styrofoam insulation seemed to be the most potentially dangerous item. This large piece was composed of billions of smaller foam pieces, which could have been blown away and consumed by aquatic and marine creatures. Styrofoam is the trademarked name for expanded polystyrene, and polystyrene is a type of plastic. It is notoriously hard to recycle, to remove from the environment, and is not accepted by most municipal recycling programs. Styrofoam does not biodegrade and it has been estimated that it takes at least 500 years for the plastic foam to break down. There are countless Styrofoam alternatives now available in 2020 that are made from renewable & sustainable resources, so there isn't an excuse to use this environmentally harmful product.

With this cleanup, SeaKeepers has officially removed 1,873 pounds of trash from our local beaches and 708 pounds of trash from this island! We look forward to expanding our partnerships with local schools and businesses to conserve our local beaches and waters. Thank you to all of our volunteers and to Debris Free Oceans for teaching SeaKeeper HQ's first ever floating classroom!

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