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Prince Charles praises Sky Ocean Rescue bid to tackle 'global plastics plague'

The Prince of Wales singles out the "decisive" Sky Ocean Rescue campaign as he opens a major environment summit in Cardiff.

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Charles: 'We must turn the tide on plastics'



Prince Charles has praised heightened efforts to tackle a "global plastics plague" at a major environment summit in Cardiff.

In a pre-recorded message, the Prince of Wales singled out the Sky Ocean Rescue campaign - which has a large presence at the summit - for its work in raising awareness of plastic pollution in our seas, which he said had reached "a crisis point".

While pleased to have witnessed some recent "decisive action" by the likes of Team Sky - [who will wear special jerseys to raise awareness at the Tour de France](#) - and the Premier League - [which has teamed up with Sky to urge clubs and fans to stop using single-use plastic](#) - the royal said there was much still to do.

"We simply must maintain that level of pressure if we are going to turn the tide on plastic," said Charles, [who earlier this year met Sky Ocean Rescue mascot Plasticus the whale](#).

"It is not just those of us who have an affinity with the sea, but all of us who inhabit this planet who must surely share your concerns over how we have reached this crisis point.

"We simply cannot allow the current rate of degradation of our oceans to continue."

The phrase "turn the tide on plastic" was in reference to a boat taking part in the Volvo Ocean Race, which has stopped off in Cardiff ahead of the penultimate leg of the 45,000 nautical mile route.

Skipped by Dee Caffari, the first woman to have sailed single-handedly and non-stop around the world in both directions, Turn The Tide On Plastic has also been collecting water samples along the way, which have been analysed for microplastic content.

Anne-Cecile Turner, Volvo Ocean Race sustainability programme leader, told Sky News the findings were "shocking".

She said: "We only found two plastic-free spots out of 53. That was in the deep Southern Ocean near Australia and south of Cape Town.

"The Ocean Summit plays a vital role in helping to solve this crisis and announcements such as the Welsh government's only help to amplify that message and the need for urgent action."

The announcements include a plan for walkers along Wales' 870-mile coast path to be able to access free drinking water in what would be the first part of a "national refill scheme".

Walkers taking in the sights along the rugged coastline will be able to refill their water bottles at stores, cafes and pubs in villages and towns that have signed up to the initiative.

Businesses which have signed up to the scheme will display stickers in their windows, and they will also be listed in a bilingual refill app.

Additionally, a fund of £6.5m has been set aside to help local businesses which manufacture plastic products to increase the recycling-led content of their items.

Environment minister Hannah Blythyn said: "This is just the first step in our ambition to become the world's first 'refill nation'.

"More refill points along our coast will help reduce the number of plastic bottles ending up in the sea, which can have a devastating effect on our marine environment."

The summit - which falls on World Environment Day - coincided with a move by Sky to begin phasing out the use of disposable cups across its operations.

Sky is committed to removing single-use plastic from across the business by 2020 and all staff have already been invited to claim a free reusable coffee cup.

:: Sky's Ocean Rescue campaign encourages people to reduce their single-use plastics. You can find out more about the campaign and how to get involved at [skyoceanrescue.com](https://www.skyoceanrescue.com).

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