



VOLVO OCEAN RACE BUOYS TO PROVIDE OCEAN DATA

05 Mar 2018
By: Sport Industry Group



Volvo Ocean Race boats deployed drifter buoys in the ocean when they were en route to Auckland to provide valuable ocean science data.

As the boats headed from Hong Kong to Auckland the buoys were deployed three degrees north of the equator to capture a range of data to help scientists understand how oceans function.

The information is being used by the US-based National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) so scientists have a better understanding of weather patterns and also the impacts of climate change.

The deployment forms part of the Volvo Ocean Race Science Programme, which is being financed by Volvo Cars via a contribution from sales of their V90 Cross Country Volvo Ocean Race vehicle.

Drifting buoys are the primary source of information on surface temperature and provide the best coverage, compared to other systems, to help understand more about the oceans. The data is transmitted in near-real time, via iridium satellite, to improve marine forecasts and is valuable in predicting rapidly intensifying storms. The raw data, collected by the Volvo Ocean Race drifter buoys, is made available, open source, online through the operations centre of the Global Drifter Programme, housed at NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory in Miami.

During four of the Volvo Ocean Race legs, a total of 28 drifter buoys from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration drifter program are being deployed by each of the vessels, at crucial oceanic regions to measure sea surface temperature and ocean current velocities.

Following Turn the Tide on Plastic's deployment of the buoy, skipper Dee Caffari said: "Deploying these drifter buoys forms an important part of the scientific programme.

"The probe activates once it hits the water transmitting data on swell, wind strength, currents and sea temperature and contributes to our better understanding of how our blue planet impacts upon weather patterns."

Anne-Cecile Turner, Sustainability Programme leader for the Volvo Ocean Race, said: "If you've ever checked the weather forecast then you're one of millions of people who benefits from drifter buoys and the information they gather.

"Our boats are passing through parts of our Oceans about which we have very little data so through our Science Programme, the Volvo Ocean Race is contributing to an expansion of that data knowledge.

"Globally, our seas are being affected by a range of impacts from ocean acidification, temperature rise and plastic pollution. Through the Race we are raising awareness about the issues and exploring the solutions to these problems with a focus on plastic pollution."

Rick Lumpkin, director of the Global Drifter Programme at NOAA, said: "The Volvo Ocean Race is providing NOAA with invaluable data from some of the world's most isolated places which is helping improve our oceanographic knowledge.

"This will be used by a range of experts around the world to better understand the oceans and any changes to weather patterns."