

Virtual Ocean Speaker Line-up



10:00am Sonia Rowley

Sonia is a research scientist at the University of Hawaii at Manoa School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology, and Applied Research Laboratory. She's using cutting-edge rebreather diving technology to shed light on the biodiversity of the little explored mesophotic zone of the ocean. In 2016, Sonia received the prestigious Sir David Attenborough Award for her field and exploratory research to depths of 500 feet. She sees that the most powerful tool for change is sharing the knowledge and experience gained in the pursuit of scientific understanding and discovery—and to have as much fun as possible doing it while diving.



10:30am Andi Cross

Over 24 months, Andi, along with the team from the Edges of Earth Expedition took their love of scuba & free diving on an expedition to the most exotic and remote edges of earth. Their goal: meet the incredible people that have dedicated their lives to our planet. Andi is an international leader fiercely dedicated to redefining how businesses coexist with the natural world and the communities they directly and indirectly affect. With 15 years of experience helping major corporations scale and nearly a decade in marine and terrestrial conservation, she bridges the gap between corporate ambition and environmental responsibility, vying for a future where people and planet both win.



11:00am Nathan Robinson

Nathan is a marine biologist and science communicator from the UK. He conducts groundbreaking science that answers important ecological questions about endangered species while also connecting global audiences in the fight for ocean health. Nathan does this by creating numerous viral videos including one of him removing a plastic straw from a sea turtle's nose, filming the secret lives of sea turtles through shell-mounted cameras, and filming the first footage of a live giant squid in US waters. Nathan has also dedicated over 15 years of his life to establishing and coordinating sea turtle conservation projects in Costa Rica, Greece, South Africa, The Bahamas, and the USA.

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1:00pm Gabriela Ochoa

Gabriela is a Honduran marine biologist and conservationist with over thirteen years of experience working across marine conservation organizations in Central America and the Caribbean. She founded ilili, the first Honduran-led non-profit dedicated to the research and conservation of marine megafauna, particularly sharks and rays. Her work bridges science, policy, and community engagement. From tracking shark movements using acoustic telemetry to co-designing conservation strategies with fishers and indigenous leaders, Gabriela has learned that real change comes from inclusive, community-driven solutions.



1:30pm Shelby Thomas

Shelby is the Chief Executive Officer & Director of Research at Ocean Rescue Alliance International. She is an environmentalist and marine conservation leader who hopes to inspire others to protect our environments. She has worked with various restoration projects including coral, sea grass, oyster, sea-urchin, and scallop restoration. Shelby is passionate about preserving our natural ecosystems and creating a foundation for their appreciation. She now has worked with over 40 different restoration projects around the world and continues to expand her scientific breadth.



2:00pm Around the Americas Team

The team will join us live from their sailboat off the coast of Argentina. The Around the Americas Expedition is a 14-month voyage, that just launched in May. They will circumnavigate North and South America aboard the 48-foot sailboat, One Ocean. The mission focuses on scientific research, education, and community outreach to raise awareness about ocean health. Building on Captain Mark Schrader's original 2009–2010 journey, the expedition will compare oceanic changes over the past 15 years.

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2:30pm Damian Lidgard

Sable Island is a rugged and remote scrap of land off the coast of Nova Scotia. It is a stronghold for seals and wild horses. Damian is an Aquatic Biologist with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. He works with the Maritimes seal research team on Sable Island — home to one of the world's largest grey seal colonies! Damian has been studying marine mammals for over 25 years and has visited Sable Island every year since 1996 as both a seal scientist and a wildlife photographer. He's even been using special video cameras attached to the seals to discover what seals do beneath the waves.



3:00pm Kate Wawatai

Kate is a pioneering deep-sea submersible pilot, maritime professional, and cultural ambassador from Aotearoa New Zealand. A member of The Explorers Club and the only woman to pilot a submersible beyond 10,000 meters, she operates at the edge of human exploration, helping scientists uncover the mysteries of the deep ocean. With a background that spans military service, commercial maritime operations, and technical diving, Kate brings a uniquely interdisciplinary perspective to every expedition. Her expertise lies not only in submersible operations, but also in fostering strong safety cultures, developing operational training systems, and mentoring the next generation of explorers.



3:30pm Paul Rose

Paul is at the front line of exploration and one of the world's most experienced divers, field science and polar experts, he helps scientists unlock and communicate global mysteries in the most remote and challenging regions of the planet. Paul is currently Expedition Leader for the National Geographic Pristine Seas Expeditions. He was the Base Commander of Rothera Research Station in Antarctica, for the British Antarctic Survey for 10 years and was awarded HM The Queen's Polar Medal. For his work with NASA and the Mars Lander project on Mt Erebus, Antarctica, he received the US Polar Medal.

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4:00pm Andy Casagrande

Andy is an Emmy Award winning cinematographer and television presenter whose filming adventures have taken him around the world. He uses the newest camera technology and innovative filming techniques to show a different side of the planet's most feared and misunderstood predators. Andy specializes in filming sharks, but his projects have included king cobras, killer whales and polar bears. He has more than 100 film credits to his name for the world's top networks, including National Geographic, BBC, Discovery, Animal Planet and more. His life-long mission is to inspire people to care about our planet and its vanishing wildlife.



4:30pm Erika Woolsey

Erika is a marine biologist, ocean educator, and National Geographic Explorer. She conducted most of her research on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia where she investigated how warming oceans are impacting coral reefs, specifically how rising temperatures hinder survival and development in young corals following mass spawning events. Amidst the rapid degradation of ocean ecosystems like coral reefs, Erika is dedicated to translating scientific discovery into public understanding. Most recently, she's been the CEO of The Hydrous, a nonprofit that combines science, design, and technologies such as virtual reality and photogrammetry for ocean education.