

**APRIL 4, 2009**

## **SENDING OUT AN S.O.S.**

JUNKride 2009 to raise awareness of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch

Vancouver, BC – Today the Vancouver Aquarium was the starting point for **JUNKride 2009**, a bicycle trek from Vancouver, BC to Tijuana, Mexico staged by members of the Algalita Marine Research Foundation.

The mission of JUNKride 2009 is to raise awareness of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a dire gyre of plastic soup in the North Pacific Ocean. JUNKride 2009 brings public and political attention to deep concern regarding this complex problem at sea.

Members of the media and visitors to the Vancouver Aquarium met the riders before they began their journey from the Vancouver Aquarium. The riders displayed a gyre sample from the Pacific and an albatross bolus, proof that wildlife fatally mistake marine debris for food.

The kick-off for JUNKride 2009 showed Metro Vancouverites and all Canadians how to help reduce aquatic litter by participating in the upcoming **TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup** in September 2009.

"We understand that much more needs to be done if we are to stop polluting our oceans," explains Angela Griffiths, Director of Conservation, Vancouver Aquarium, "and the TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup is a starting point for so many people to become aware of the issue. Each year the number of participants grows and so too does the amount of trash collected. In 2008, more than 60,000 concerned citizens registered to take part in the TD GCSC and prevented 135,467 kilograms of waste from threatening wildlife."

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a swirling vortex of plastic soup in the central North Pacific Ocean. Size estimates of the patch put it somewhere in the range of two or three times the size of Quebec. Up to 80% of this aquatic litter originates from land-based sources. Aquatic wildlife often mistakes the litter for food. The TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup is working with JUNKride 2009 to bring urgent attention to this critical issue affecting our global waterways. Metro Vancouverites and all Canadians can become a part of the solution by joining the TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup September 19-27, 2009.

Learn more at [www.tdgcsc.ca](http://www.tdgcsc.ca)

### **About the TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup**

The TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup is a Vancouver Aquarium conservation initiative begun in 1994 as a small beach cleanup with a handful of employees. Sixteen years later, it's now a national conservation initiative that spans from coast to coast sponsored by TD Friends of the Environment Foundation. As part of the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup, the TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup collects data on litter collected wherever land meets water. This data is then analyzed to provide information on which activities produce shoreline litter in Canada. In 2008, over 63,000 registrants signed up to clean over 1,500 cleanup sites across Canada. A record breaking 135,467 kg of litter was removed from a collective distance of 2,152 km; the driving distance between Vancouver

and Winnipeg. The 2008 TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup Final Report can be found at: [www.tdgcsc.ca](http://www.tdgcsc.ca).

### **About the Vancouver Aquarium**

The Vancouver Aquarium is a self-supporting, non-profit association dedicated to effecting the conservation of aquatic life through display and interpretation, conservation practices, education, research, and direct action.

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