

Reaching out for Oceans at the biggest nautical spectacle in Europe

Once every five years tall ships from all over the world come to the Dutch capital for the five-day international nautical spectacle; SAIL Amsterdam. Attracting over 600 ships and an expected 1.8 million visitors it is the largest admission free nautical event in Europe.

Highlight of SAIL Amsterdam 2010 is the SAIL-IN parade on the first day, an impressive fleet of tall ships and a large fleet accompanying them crossing the North Sea Canal to Amsterdam on 19 August.

This year the 'Fleur de Passion', the flagship of IUCN member Antinea Foundation, is one of them. Moored in the heart of the SAIL event, the Fleur de Passion will act as the centre of a varied outreach program supported by the Dutch Coalition for Biodiversity. During three days the vessel and the nearby theatre Panama will serve as a centre where the public will be overwhelmed with the wonders and mysteries of Oceans in a joined outreach program from several IUCN members and the municipality of Amsterdam.

Highlights of the program are the multimedia show 'Ocean Experience', a drawing contest for children, an evening event as part of the National Postcode Lottery Project Oceans, and a meeting organized by IUCN NLs 'Leaders for Nature' aimed to discuss the interdependencies of businesses and oceans with business leaders, politicians and NGOs. This IUCN NL's Leaders for Nature event starts with a visit to 'Fleur de Passion', the 33 m sailing ship used by Antinea Foundation for the Changing Oceans Expedition on a mission to validate and improve 'A global map of cumulative Human impact on Marine ecosystems' (B. Halpern et al. Science 2008).

Twice a day Sail visitors can experience Antinea's multimedia show for free in Panama. The show underlines the beauty and treasures of the underwater world and human impacts that pose a threat to future generations of mankind. The show is adapted for the occasion and contains footage of the rich biodiversity in the Dutch Caribbean, the North Sea, the Wadden Sea and water-rich Amsterdam. It includes footage and contributions from the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance, the local organisations of the Coastal and Marine Union EUCC, WWF, the municipality of Amsterdam and the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands.

Currently, the 'Fleur de Passion' sails across the Wadden Sea, the latest marine site that was added to the UNESCO World Heritage list. This unique ecosystem is the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world. Together with Dutch and German scientists from IMARES, DEEPWAVE and EUCC they will further explore and document this region.. In collaboration with IUCN and UNESCO a best practice program will be run in order to highlight the innovative management solutions that have been put in place in different Marine Protected Areas.

'Ocean Experience' at Sail Amsterdam is part of the 10-year Changing Oceans expedition of the Fleur de Passion around the planet.

<http://www.changingoceans.org/en/home.php>

More information about SAIL Amsterdam 2010 can be found here:

<http://english.sail2010.nl/>