

LANGANES CLEAN UP: A CALL OF ACTION TO PROTECT THE ARCTIC EDGE



“JOIN THE BLUE MISSION AT THE END OF THE WORLD”

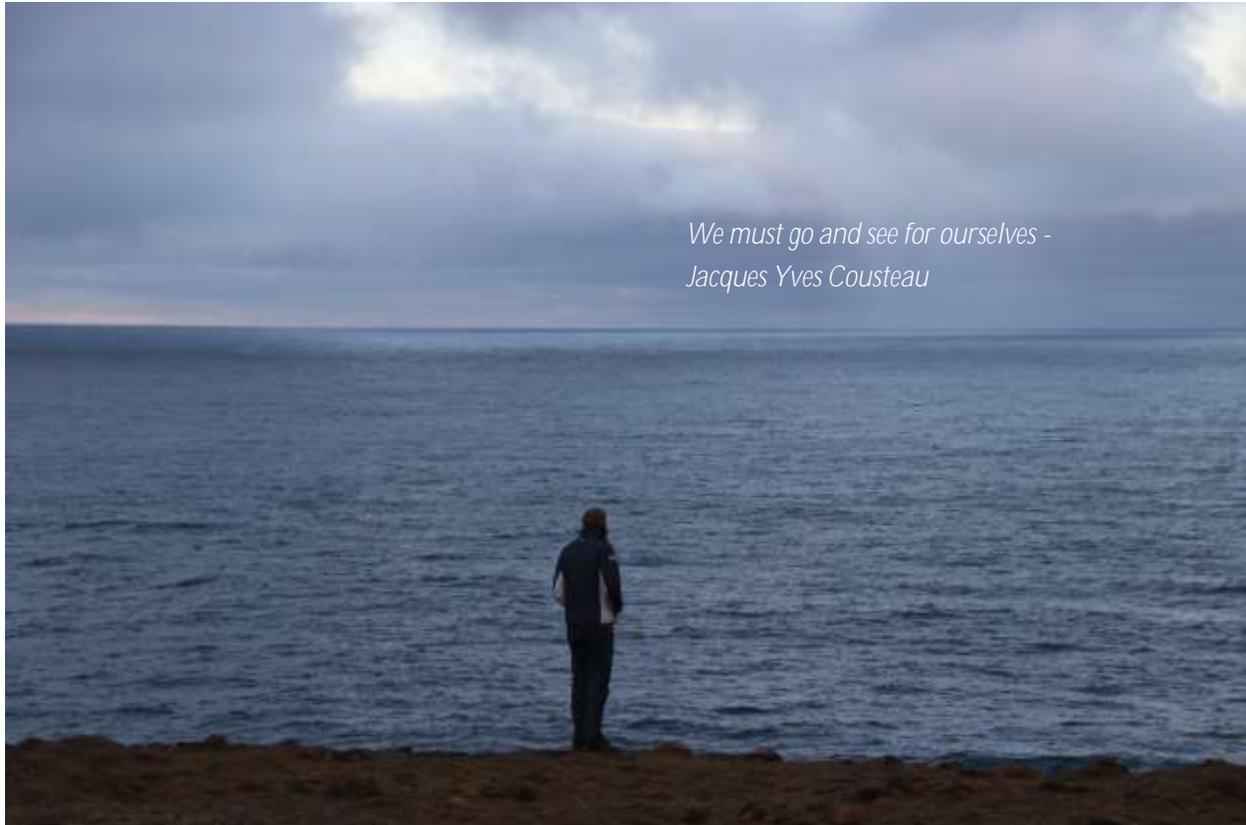


This year, we want to invite you for a unique adventure in one of the most septentrional and isolated places in Iceland! We are planning an extraordinary trip to make a big effort on cleaning the coasts of Langanes peninsula, the so called “End of the World”



It's not my trash, but it's my planet

Few months ago, in November 2020, Heimir and Belén undertook a short road trip to Langanes. Completely alone at the edge of the arctic, we encountered huge cliffs, an abandon settlement, shorelines covered with Siberian drift wood and vast landscapes... We definitely felt something very special; a mix of freedom, isolation and excitement. Once we arrived to the tip of the peninsula, where the land meets the wild ocean, we felt enchanted by the power of the rough seas from the sharp cliffs! The feeling was like suddenly being trapped in space and time, in a one-to-one conversation (you and the infinite ocean), listening to the screams of the waves and feeling so insignificant but empowered at the same time.



*We must go and see for ourselves -
Jacques Yves Cousteau*

But unfortunately, soon reality hit our faces! What we saw next really turned down our excitement. The large beautiful coastline of Langanes has been largely polluted by stranded trash. One more time, big hard plastics, nets and other old laying garbage remind us the fragility of these “untouched” places in Iceland. Due to the natural patterns of the Icelandic current circulation, Langanes is a vulnerable place and here trash is stranded in big amounts, just like in the Westfjords that we visited in some of the expeditions.



We soon felt the big responsibility to interfere and do something, give back to nature. This is why we are sharing our story and we want you to be part of creating a happy ending.

“The objective of this call of action is to create movements and revolutions. It is to protect the arctic coasts from large pollution, to empower individuals to be the change we need for the planet and more importantly to send a message of hope for the Arctic!” – Belén G. Ovide

Langanes

Langanes is 40 km semi-remote peninsula, located in northeast Iceland that emerges like a tongue into the ocean. With abandoned farms and stunning nature Langanes is one of the wildest places in Iceland and is where the Arctic Ocean finally meets land. It is a marvelous place to feel the power of the ocean and where thousands of birds come to nest during the summer time! Some small and charming towns are located near this delightful part of Iceland.



Mission

A dedicated three days of organized beach clean-up activities in the coastal area to collect as much as we can! We will also have time to explore the area discover amazing places and learn from biologists, scientists and locals about the biodiversity landscapes and history. Apparently, whales visit the surrounding waters in summer time but sighting efforts have been rather poor until the date. We would like to register whale presence from these stunning cliffs if weather and time allows.

Why beach clean ups?

By joining a beach clean-up, you help to remove large amount of trash from the coasts preventing it to reach the oceans again or to be part of the natural coastal landscapes, causing major problems on the fragile fauna. Therefore, beach clean ups are important to reduce risks of entanglements and/or plastic ingestion that otherwise could drive many animals to suffer from serious injuries or even death. These events are more likely to



occur in the summer time when thousands of birds come to nest and the whales come to feed!

This is not just a regular beach clean-up; this is an act of protest and a claim to healthy oceans! On top of that, each beach clean-up is also a great opportunity to gather fresh scientific data about the state of our coasts and the types of trash that pollutes them. Having solid evidences is important to reach a broader impact in order to spread a strong and effective message worldwide.

For this purpose, we are planning to make a short video-documentary about this adventure. We want to show to the world what is happening here at the edge of the Arctic and ask for action!

OCEAN ACTIVISTS WANTED

We are looking for people that feel the same way that we do to join this blue mission. There are no restrictions on ages or previous experience. We can host up to 15 people that are committed to stay during the whole project.

All help is more than welcome!

Everyone else is welcome to join at any time during the mission, however Ocean Missions is not responsible of transportation accommodation etc, so they would have to arrange that themselves.

Dates: 13th, 14th and 15th of August

Base Camp: Þórsver, Langanesvegur 16, Þórshöfn

Transportation, accommodation and food: included and provided by the municipality

Bring: bed sheets or sleeping bag

What can we see in Langanes?



Surrounded by birdlife

The Langanes peninsula is known for its rich birdlife, and excellent birdwatching spots where it is possible to see several species of sea birds that come for nesting including puffins, guillemots, eider ducks and gannets.



Discover Þórshöfn town

Today, Þórshöfn with a population of 388 inhabitants operates a productive fishmeal factory and a freezing plant, boasts of several charming guest houses, the beautiful Bárán Restaurant, a gym, an indoor pool and hot tubs, which are perfect for relaxing after a long day.



The ruins of Skálar

What remains of the village of Skálar are remnants of a life that used to be: a thriving community whose livelihood depended on the sea. Changing conditions in the fishing industry and transportation, the explosions of maritime mines, and other factors led to the abandonment of the settlement in the 1950s. Intertwined with the village's history are the factors that made Skálar an appealing place to live, its role in World War II, changes in transportation, the lives of individual families, and much more.



Fontur

Where lands meet ocean, the end of the world gets close to the cliffs and feel the ocean in its pure essence from the Arctic Circle. Have a look at lighthouse from 1950.





Discover the truth about this famous Gannet colony

With a wing span of up to 2m, gannets are the biggest seabird of the North Atlantic. Every year hundreds of gannets come to a small island very close to the cliffs in the coast of Langesnes peninsula. These majestic birds are also known as “the queen of the sea” because of their elegance and beauty when they glide in to the sea, fast as a dart, to catch their prey.



Figure 1: Gannets nesting in the island. Picture taken during the breeding season.

Unfortunately, these animals are currently choosing the wrong material to build their nests, and instead of mud they are starting to use remains of fishing nets that they catch in the open ocean; another sign of unhealthy oceans in these remote areas... We wonder for how long this has been happening and if this is affecting the life of the youngers. We would like to report and investigate this problem, talking to experts and the locals, in order to find out if there is a way that we could help on this matter.



Figure 2: Current gannet colony statues. Picture taken in November 2020 during the non-breeding season

Spot whales from land

Every summer a natural spectacle occurs in Iceland as migratory whales approach to the coasts to feed on krill and small fish! Yet, we don't know so much about the abundance of whales in this remote tip of north-east Iceland. Therefore, this could be a unique opportunity and an excellent place to observe these giants from the cliffs.



EXPLORE, CHALLENGE YOURSELF, AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

To save your place for this blue mission join us at: info@oceanmissions.org



This project is an initiative of Ocean Missions and it is sponsored by the municipality of Þórshöfn.



Supported by:

