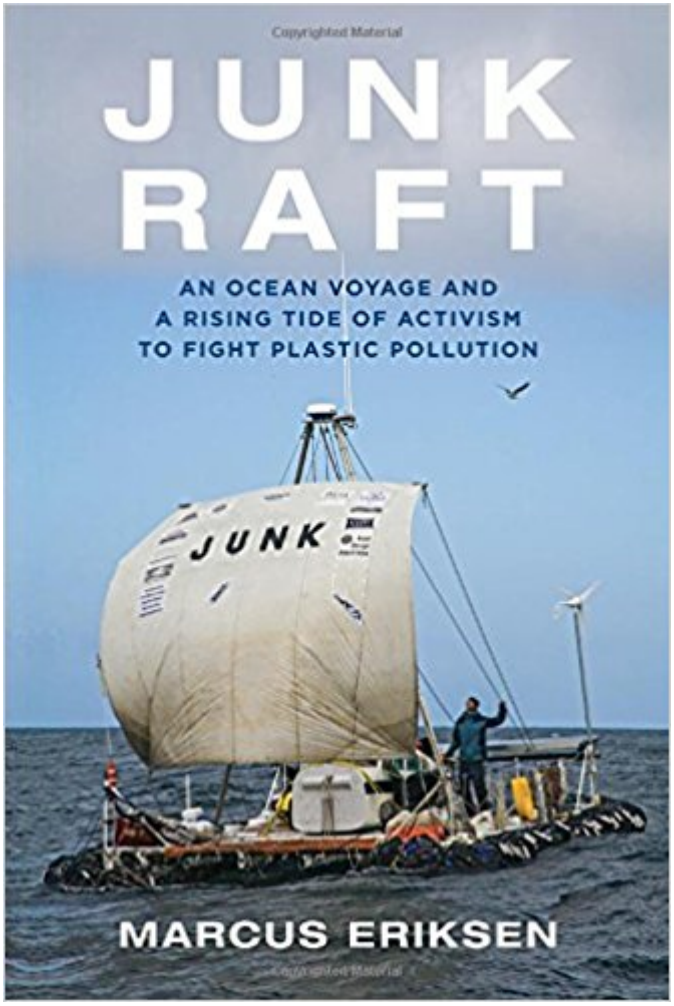
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Junk Raft: An Ocean Voyage And A Rising Tide Of Activism To Fight Plastic Pollution



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Synopsis

An exciting account of an activist scientistÃ¢ ¬â„¢s unorthodox fight in the growing movement against plastic marine pollution and of his expedition across the Pacific on a home-made Ã¢ ¬Å“junk raftÃ¢ ¬Â•News media brought the Ã¢ ¬Å“Great Pacific Garbage PatchÃ¢ ¬Â•Ã¢ ¬â •the famous swirling gyre of plastic pollution in the oceanÃ¢ ¬â •into the public consciousness. But when Marcus Eriksen cofounded the 5 Gyres Institute with his wife, Anna Cummins, and set out to study the worldÃ¢ ¬â„¢s oceans with hundreds of volunteers, they discovered a Ã¢ ¬Å“plastic smogÃ¢ ¬Â• of microscopic debris that permeates our oceans globally, defying simple clean-up efforts. WhatÃ¢ ¬â„¢s more, these microplastics and their toxic chemistry have seeped into the food chain, threatening marine life and humans alike.Far from being a gloomy treatise on an environmental catastrophe, though, Junk Raft tells the exciting story of Eriksen and his teamÃ¢ ¬â„¢s fight to solve the problem of plastic pollution. A scientist, activist, and inveterate adventurer, Eriksen is drawn to the sea by a desire to right an environmental injustice. Against long odds and common sense, he and his co-navigator, Joel Paschal, construct a Ã¢ ¬Å“junk raftÃ¢ ¬Â• made of plastic trash and set themselves adrift from Los Angeles to Hawaii, with no motor or support vessel, confronting perilous cyclones, food shortages, and a fast decaying raft.As Eriksen recounts his struggles to keep afloat, he immerses readers in the deep history of the plastic pollution crisis and the movement that has arisen to combat it. The proliferation of cheap plastic products during the twentieth century has left the world awash in trash. Meanwhile, the plastics industry, with its lobbying muscle, fights tooth and nail against any changes that would affect its lucrative status quo, instead defending poorly designed products and deflecting responsibility for the harm they cause.But, as Eriksen shows, the tide is turning in the battle to save the worldÃ¢ ¬â„¢s oceans. He recounts the successful efforts that he and many other activists are waging to fight corporate influence and demand that plastics producers be held accountable. Junk Raft provides concrete, actionable solutions and an empowering message: itÃ¢ ¬â„¢s within our power to change the throw-away culture for the sake of our planet.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Eriksen succeeds in dramatizing a significant problem and enlisting popular support, noting some immediate steps that can be taken to create recyclable products...The thrills and chills of rafting packaged with a compelling call to action.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Kirkus ReviewsÃ¢â ¬Å“EriksenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s work is a much-needed wake-up call for the public to pressure politicians to finally tackle an often-overlooked but deadly form of pollution.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •BooklistÃ¢â ¬Å“Junk Raft is a stimulating, thought-provoking and factually grounded read.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •NatureÃ¢â ¬Å“This book combines many of my favorite thingsÃ¢â ¬â •adventure far from shore, the spirit of exploration, and the fight to save our oceansÃ¢â ¬â •all in a gripping narrative thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s also a parable for our time. In the battle for the future of our living world, Marcus Eriksen is a true warrior.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •James Cameron, filmmaker and deep-ocean explorerÃ¢â ¬Å“Navigating between an epic seafaring adventure and an activistÃ¢â ¬â„¢s environmental distress call, Junk Raft serves as a reflection of the choices and journeys that each of us makes and helps us understand how plastic in the oceans is deeply intertwined with the future of human life. Eriksen gets at the heart of what it means to respond to environmental catastrophe on our imperiled planet. As MarcusÃ¢â ¬â„¢s wife, Anna, puts it so memorably, Ã¢â ¬ËœLove creates justice.Ã¢â ¬â„¢Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •CÃƒÂ©line Cousteau, documentary filmmaker, artist, and environmental activistÃ¢â ¬Å“Marcus Eriksen and I share the same struggle, namely, to draw back the plastic curtain in order to subdue the monster that the plastics industry created. Junk Raft is filled with adventure, romance, and important truths that will be needed by the thousands of groups who will eventually overcome the beast. This book heralds the beginning of a new field of scientific research, adding fuel to movements dedicated to the survival and liberation of the natural and human worlds.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Captain Charles Moore, author of Plastic Ocean and founder of Algalita Marine Research and EducationÃ¢â ¬Å“When the junk raft was originally making its crossing from California to Hawaii, it was big news for ocean

lovers around the world. ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s exciting to now be able to read such a personal account of these adventures, exploring the thoughts that were going through MarcusÃ¢â ¬â„¢s mind, and the daily challenges that arise when taking a journey as monumental as this one.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Jack Johnson, musician and clean-ocean activistÃ¢â ¬Å“Junk Raft takes us on an exciting and quixotic voyage of exploration, adventure, and activism, and along the way, Marcus Eriksen somehow manages to turn his cutting-edge research into an engaging love story. DonÃ¢â ¬â„¢t be fooled by the titleÃ¢â ¬â •EriksenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Junk Raft carries a treasure chest full of adventurous stories, wise insights, and valuable lessons on how to protect our oceans.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Stuart H. Coleman, author of Eddie Would Go and Hawaii manager of the Surfrider Foundation

Marcus Eriksen is the cofounder and director of research for the 5 Gyres Institute, with firsthand experience from more than twenty ocean-crossing expeditions, and he has written and published research on the impact of plastic pollution in the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s oceans. He is the author of My River Home: A Journey from the Gulf War to the Gulf of Mexico.

A thrilling combination of adventure and romance as the author details a personal journey that carries the reader along as we explore the rise of ocean plastic pollution.

At the outset, author Marcus Eriksen exposes the truth behind the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, supposedly floating in the Pacific that is twice the size of Texas. In 1997, Captain Charles MooreÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s actual discovery was billions upon billions of tiny, colored plastic particles -- from micro to macro -- floating on the flat sea surface and encompassing an area about twice the size of Texas. But the floating garbage island meme was a better sell with the media and focused public attention on plastics and other pollutants in our oceans.Eriksen is a veteran and environmental researcher and activist. Prior to establishing the 5 Gyres Institute (dedicated to fighting plastic pollution) with his wife Anna, Eriksen sailed across the Pacific on ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Junk Raft,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• constructed with plastic bottles, plus 30 old sailboat masts for a deck and a Cessna 310 airplane as a cabin. Eriksen and his comrade in environmental advocacy Joel Pachal (an accomplished sailor) embarked on June 1, 2008, on a course set to imitate the route that trash follows when dumped into the ocean. What they observed was neither a garbage patch nor a trail of plastics. Instead they found micro and macro plastic particles so pervasive in the ocean environment they had become part of the food chain, ingested by and in most cases killing all species of marine life. In one instance the fish they caught for dinner were so

polluted with microplastics they were inedible.Their journey was not without incident and harrowing close encounters with death, as well as days on end of boredom adrift on the flat sea. The most astonishing event was a meet-up in the middle of nowhere for a food and water swap with ocean rower Roz Savage. Eriksen infuses his Robinson Crusoe narrative with an exposition of the ongoing battle to fight plastic pollution in our oceans and waterways. Though Eriksen supports public awareness campaigns, better waste management, and bag bans, he places the ultimate responsibility at the feet of the plastics producers to produce less, recycle more, and foot the bill for reclaiming the tsunami of toxic junk that saturates our environment. You will never look at plastic the same way. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Junk RaftÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• is an unforgettable expedition through the sea of microplastics that charts our course out of this morass.

Marcus Eriksen, an environmental researcher and activist, sets sail with a friend on a raft made of soda bottles, airplane parts and other flotsam and jetsam. He is both researching and publicizing the problem of plastic pollution in our seas. The book follows the journey from California to Hawaii and exhaustively studies the ill effects on the planet of plastic packaging, toys, fishing gear -- plastic everything.The book is dense with information and somewhat lighter on the story of the sea voyage. I would have liked the emphasis reversed. But I did take away some surprising and alarming information. No.1: Did you know that the infamous "Texas-sized garbage heap" in the middle of the ocean doesn’t exist? That’s good news, but the bad news is that infinitesimally small particles of plastic are choking the oceans, where they are ingested by fish and sea creatures, which then become nutritionally starved or, when served up on a plate, become part of our bodies. No. 2: You might want to stop eating fish. No. 3: Water from a tap is safer than bottled water, because bottled water probably contains these microscopic particles of plastic. No. 4: We, the evil consumers, are not entirely to blame for all the pollution! We dutifully recycle, but the bigger problem lies in the fact that manufacturers just keep making plastic stuff, because the cost of recycling isn’t theirs -- it’s passed on to municipalities and consumers through local recycling and reuse programs.Eriksen frequently circles around the central problem that modern industry promotes a linear economy, where plastic just keeps getting produced rather than recycled (again, because it’s cost-effective for producers), when it would be healthier for the planet (and us) to create a circular economy in which products would be designed for reuse. It’s all very depressing until the end of the book, when he discusses some efforts that are being made to recognize and address the problem.The sea journey has its perils and keeps the narrative going. He sketches some lovely scenes, especially the ocean at night with starry skies and the bioluminescent flash of fish decorating the blackness of the sea.

(I’ve seen that phenomenon in Puerto Rico and it’s breathtaking.) Without the story of the raft, the book would be a tough slog. But Eriksen does a good job of tying the lessons he learns while on the seas to the problem he addresses in the book. The earth -- like his raft -- is a closed system, in which every part must be carefully considered and tended in order to stay viable.

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