

RESPONSIBLE CRUISING PRACTISES

ISLAND CRUISING 2026





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A FAMILY SAILING AND CITIZEN SCIENCE
ADVENTURE TO INSPIRE AND ENABLE
ACTION FOR A HEALTHY OCEAN

www.freerangeocean.org

Introducing Free Range Ocean



- 1. A Journey with Purpose** - Contributing to and enabling other boaters and sea-going folk to discover and participate in important ocean citizen science and community research projects around the world. To this end we have created the first global citizen science [Directory](#) dedicated to ocean projects.
- 2. Adventure Science & Storytelling** - Advancing knowledge and understanding of our global ocean by hosting and connecting local conservation initiatives, marine researchers and storytellers on board FREERANGER in and from the countries we visit.
- 3. Outreach, Innovation & Responsible Practice** - Using FREERANGER as a demonstration platform showcasing environmentally responsible boating practices and as a real-world testbed for research-driven and low-impact maritime technologies.



Why Responsible Cruising Matters



The number of cruising boats is increasing everywhere, particularly in the South Pacific. As a community, our impacts are growing, and they are cumulative.

Responsible cruising can be viewed through three lenses:

- Environmental care
- Social and cultural respect
- Leading by example

Minimising our footprint not only has an environmental benefit; it also protects:

- Access
- Reputation
- Future cruising freedoms



What we normalise today defines whether we're welcome tomorrow.

Wildlife Interactions and Disturbance

Why it matters

- Boats disrupt feeding, resting, and breeding behaviours.
- “Friendly” interactions can create short and long-term disruptions.

What we can do

- Maintain safe distances from wildlife.
- Minimise impact on habitats and behaviours.
- Reduce speed near wildlife and shorelines.
- Respect local regulations
- Conversely you take approaches that can be stricter than local regulations – not everything that is locally common practise is necessarily good practise!



Anchoring, Moorings, and Seabed Protection



Why it matters

- Anchors and chains damage seagrass, coral, and benthic habitats.
- Damage is often invisible to cruisers but cumulative over time.

What we can do

- Where possible anchor on sand and mud; try to avoid seagrass and coral
- Use modern anchoring techniques: shorter scope where appropriate, controlled setting, minimal re-anchoring.
- A key anchoring technique is buoying your anchor chain; good to get your set up ready and practise it ahead of time!
- Some anchorages are culturally protected as well as ecologically sensitive.



Fuel, Oil, and Chemical Pollution



Why it matters

- Small spills have outsized impacts in confined anchorages and fragile ecosystems.
- Diesel and petrol sheen and bilge discharge linger and can cause local damage long after they enter the water.
- Damage trust with locals.

Key messages

- Preventative approaches beats clean-up.
- Use drip trays, absorbent pads, and sealed containers.
- Never pump oily or chemical spill bilge water overboard.
- Be aware of wind spread when using aerosol solvents
- Refuel carefully and away from sensitive areas.
- Reduce engine and generator use through solar and wind power generation



Waste and Plastics

Why it matters

- Small islands and remote communities often lack waste infrastructure.
- Visiting yachts can overwhelm local systems.
- Plastics are persistent pollutants

What we can do

- Reduce waste *before* departure.
- Use efficient waste management practises.
- Know what can and can't go overboard, and where this is, and isn't, okay.
- Don't offload waste where disposal systems can't cope.
- Separate recyclables only where systems exist, rather than 'wish-cycling'.
- Secure onboard waste to prevent accidental loss overboard.



Feeling Flush - Sewage

Why it matters

- Nutrient loading damages reefs and lagoons.
- Health impacts on local swimming and fishing areas.

What we can do

- Use holding tanks where fitted; pump out responsibly.
- Don't discharge blackwater in enclosed bays, lagoons, or near communities.
- Don't use your head for anything it's not intended for.
- Avoid chemical additives in your holding tanks.



Swabbing the decks (and the dishes) – Reducing Greywater Discharges



Why it matters

- Many boat cleaning products contain substances toxic to marine life
- Equally dish and other household products
- 'Biodegradable' means products break down, but this can be into harmful components

What we can do

- Look for phosphate and chlorine free products
- Minimise use of soaps and detergents
- Stock up on vinegar, baking soda, and baby shampoo
- After cleaning cool off with 1 part rum to 2 parts juice – mix with ice.



Keeping Your Bottom Clean

Why it matters

- Most bottom paints by their nature are highly toxic.
- These toxins are persistent pollutants.
- Recreational yachts can be a pathway for invasive marine species.

What we can do

- Choose hard anti-fouling or non-fouling paints
- Regularly clean hulls, props, intakes, anchors, chains, and dive gear, particularly before moving regions. Keep a record of this!
- Avoid in-water hull cleaning in sensitive areas and be aware of local regulations.
- Use soft brush or cloth to clean the bottom in the water
 - if the water is being discoloured from the paint, toxins are being released.
- When hauling out use yards with recirculation systems or use drop cloths to collect spills and sanding revenue



We are putting on Finsulate, an anti-fouling wrap, in the coming weeks

Boat Work

Why it matters

- Any foreign substance entering the water can hurt marine life.

What we can do

- Aim to not let anything fall into the water, including sanding dust, solvents, strippers etc.
- Contain mess
- Do what you can onshore



The food we take – considerations on fishing and other food harvesting



Why it matters

- Fish and many other seafood are currently being overharvested.
- Food onshore may look 'wild' but is often owned locally.

What we can do

- Ensure that you know local regulations around seafood harvesting.
- Respect marine protected areas.
- Talk to locals and find out what is ok and if something belongs to someone before you take – generally the result is astonishing generosity.
- Share your catch.



Sunscreen and Personal Care Products

Why it matters

- Many sunscreens and personal care products can contribute to coral stress and reef degradation
- Certain chemical UV filters persist in marine environments, especially in lagoons and high-use swim areas
- Impacts are concentrated where people swim regularly
- Increasing regulations

What we can do

- Use mineral-based sunscreens (zinc oxide or titanium dioxide), preferably non-nano.
- Avoid products containing oxybenzone, octinoxate, octocrylene, homosalate, and avobenzone where possible
- Avoid products with micro-beads
- Apply sunscreen well before entering the water
- Physical sun protection: rash vests, long sleeves, hats.



*“Reef-safe” is not a regulated term
— ingredient awareness matters*

Noise, Light, and Visual Pollution



Why it matters

- Affects wildlife behaviour and local quality of life.
- Often cited by coastal communities 'One of the most annoying things yachts do.'

What we can do

- Limit generator and engine use, especially at night.
- Minimise deck lighting; avoid lighting up shorelines.
- Never use underwater lighting.
- Be conscious of noise carrying across water.



Be a Citizen Scientist!



Why it matters

- The future of our Ocean depends on understanding it.
- Citizen Science is regular people contributing to real science
- Cruisers are often in places that scientists only dream of reaching!
- There are an estimated 30 million recreational vessels around the world – some serious people power!

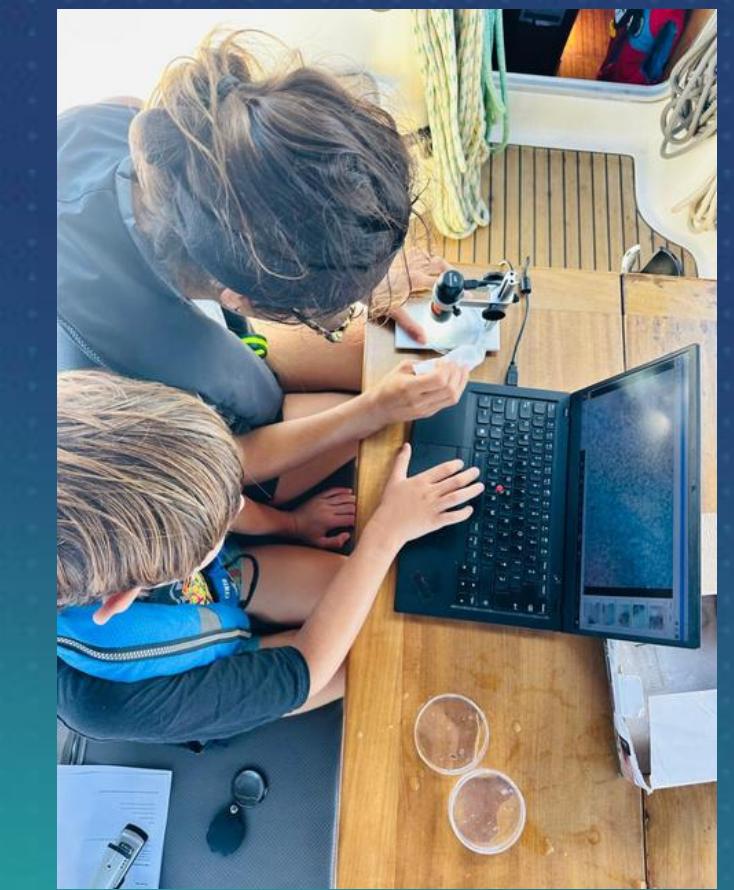
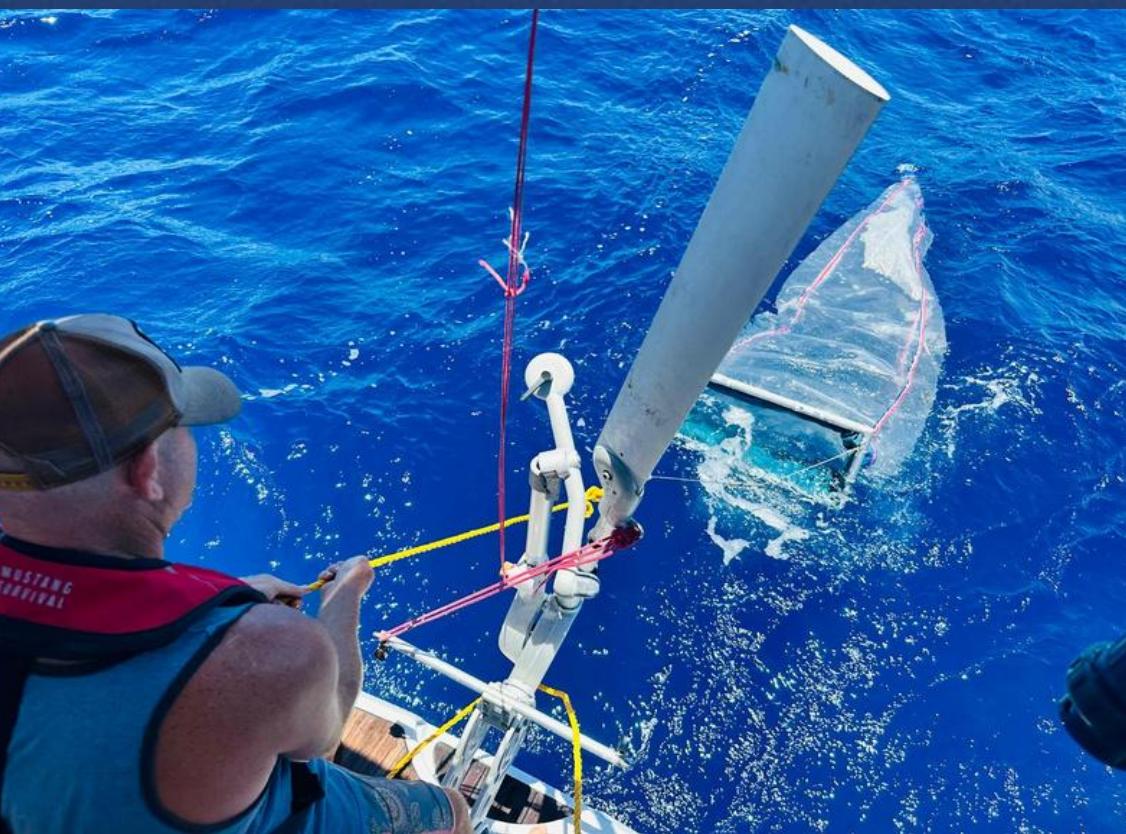


What we can do

- Get involved! Measuring, sampling, logging, photographing, submitting and analysing data – helping researchers build scientific knowledge.
- There are many projects to participate in, and to assist we've set up the first Ocean Citizen Science Project Directory at www.freerangeocean.org/citizen-science-ocean-project-finder

Scientific knowledge illuminates the way to reversing the decline in ocean health, conserving marine life, addressing ocean aspects of climate change and using the ocean sustainably to improve people's lives.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) State of the Ocean Report 2022



Last Thoughts

Most impacts aren't malicious – they're accidental, habitual, or copied from others.

Responsible cruising isn't about restriction. It's about respect, awareness, and humility.

Responsible cruisers...

- Are observant, not entitled
- Ask questions
- Adapt behaviour
- Accept inconvenience
- Contribute

Let's aim to be the kind of cruiser we'd want arriving in our own home waters!

**We're guests. Our wake lasts longer than we think.
The Pacific is generous – but not infinite.**



Be aware of the potential impact of over sharing online. Online exposure accelerates overcrowding, which in turn can accelerate environmental impact and cultural tension.