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**DR. MARCUS ERIKSEN**  
*Co-Founder and Research Director*

Dr. Marcus Eriksen has led expeditions around the world to research plastic marine pollution. Just after receiving his Ph.D from USC, he experienced first-hand the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre, a massive current-fueled vortex that sweeps plastic from land and out of sight, shredding and concentrating it in the middle of the ocean. On that voyage, he also met Anna Cummins, with whom he would go on to found The 5 Gyres Institute.

Their goal was to put plastic pollution on the international agenda. To draw attention to the problem, Eriksen rode the currents 2,600 miles for 88 days from California to Hawaii on the Junk Raft, a vessel built from 15,000 plastic bottles. One year later, he and Cummins set off on a bicycle-powered speaking tour from Vancouver to Mexico—stopping in Big Sur to marry wearing recycled plastic attire.

Since then, Eriksen has devoted his life to the problem. Beginning in 2010, 5 Gyres spearheaded a series of scientific firsts by researching plastic in all five subtropical gyres, as well as the Great Lakes and Antarctica—sailing a total of 50,000 miles in the process. In 2014, under Eriksen’s direction, 5 Gyres convened eight scientists around the world to publish the first global estimate of plastic pollution in our ocean: 5.25 trillion particles weighing in at 269,000 tons of “plastic smog” worldwide.

Eriksen’s co-authored paper on plastic microbead pollution in the Great Lakes inspired a two-year collaborative campaign that culminated in a federal ban on microbeads, which President Obama signed into law in 2015. In August 2016, Eriksen led 5 Gyres’ 17<sup>th</sup> expedition—this time to research microplastics and nanoplastics above the Arctic Circle.

While Eriksen’s peer-reviewed studies have been published in scientific journals, stories of his expeditions have appeared in *Men’s Journal*, *National Geographic*, and *Newsweek*, among others. He hosted the Weather Channel’s series, “Commando Weather,” once chasing a plastic bottle through Los Angeles sewers to the sea. He also created “Mississippi River Quest,” a 35-day river adventure, for the National Geographic Channel, then appeared as an expert on “CNN” and “CBS News,” as well as on the TEDx stage.

A Gulf War veteran, Marcus wrote about in the experience book *My River Home* (Beacon 2008). Next year, his second book *Junk Raft: An ocean voyage and a rising tide of activism to fight plastic pollution* (Beacon 2017), will hit shelves.

More information is at [www.5gyres.org](http://www.5gyres.org).