

Superyachts and the Environment: What has Covid-19 Taught Us?

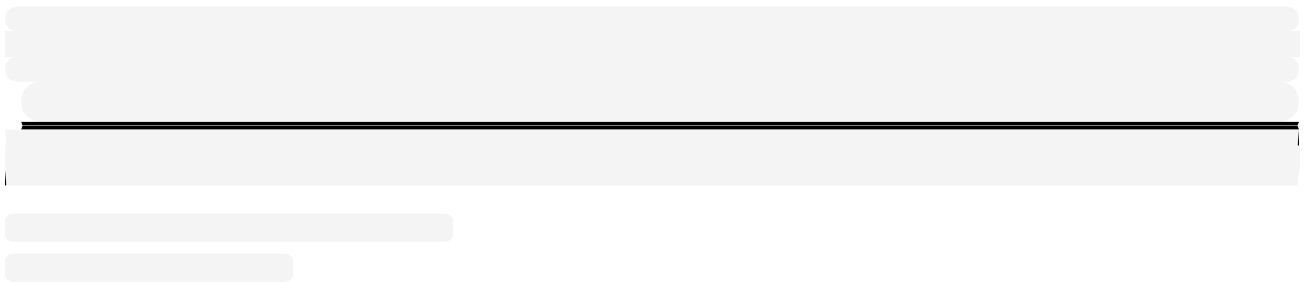
Since the emergence of Covid-19 and the resultant travel restrictions, the natural environment has made a remarkable recovery. Wildlife has returned to previously heavily polluted areas; dolphins and jellyfish have returned to Venice; orca whales have been witnessed in their masses in areas previously filled with noise pollution, and air pollution has decreased tremendously worldwide.

The superyacht industry relies on the planet's magnificent oceans and beautiful scenery to make sailing worthwhile – after all, what would be the point in sailing if everything became so heavily polluted that all wildlife and scenery is destroyed?

The [West Nautical](#) team reflect on the impact of the global pandemic we find ourselves in.



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A post shared by West Nautical (@westnautical) on Aug 2, 2020 at 2:00am PDT

Despite this positive turn of events, scientists are warning that if humans do not act now and stop disrupting the natural environment, we can expect more pandemics and natural disasters in the future.

The marine industry as a whole must continue to protect the environment and everyone can play a part, whether the change is a sweeping industry-wide move or smaller actions taken by individuals.

What can guests and crew do to reduce their impact on the environment?

Every individual, whether aboard a yacht or not, can help improve the marine environment by making a few simple lifestyle changes, but these are even more poignant for those who enjoy spending days at sea:

Food – Shop locally for seasonal produce and when choosing seafood, consider sustainability. Reducing food waste where

possible is a must.

Cleaning – Look to use eco-friendly products, reducing chemicals released into the air or into the ocean.

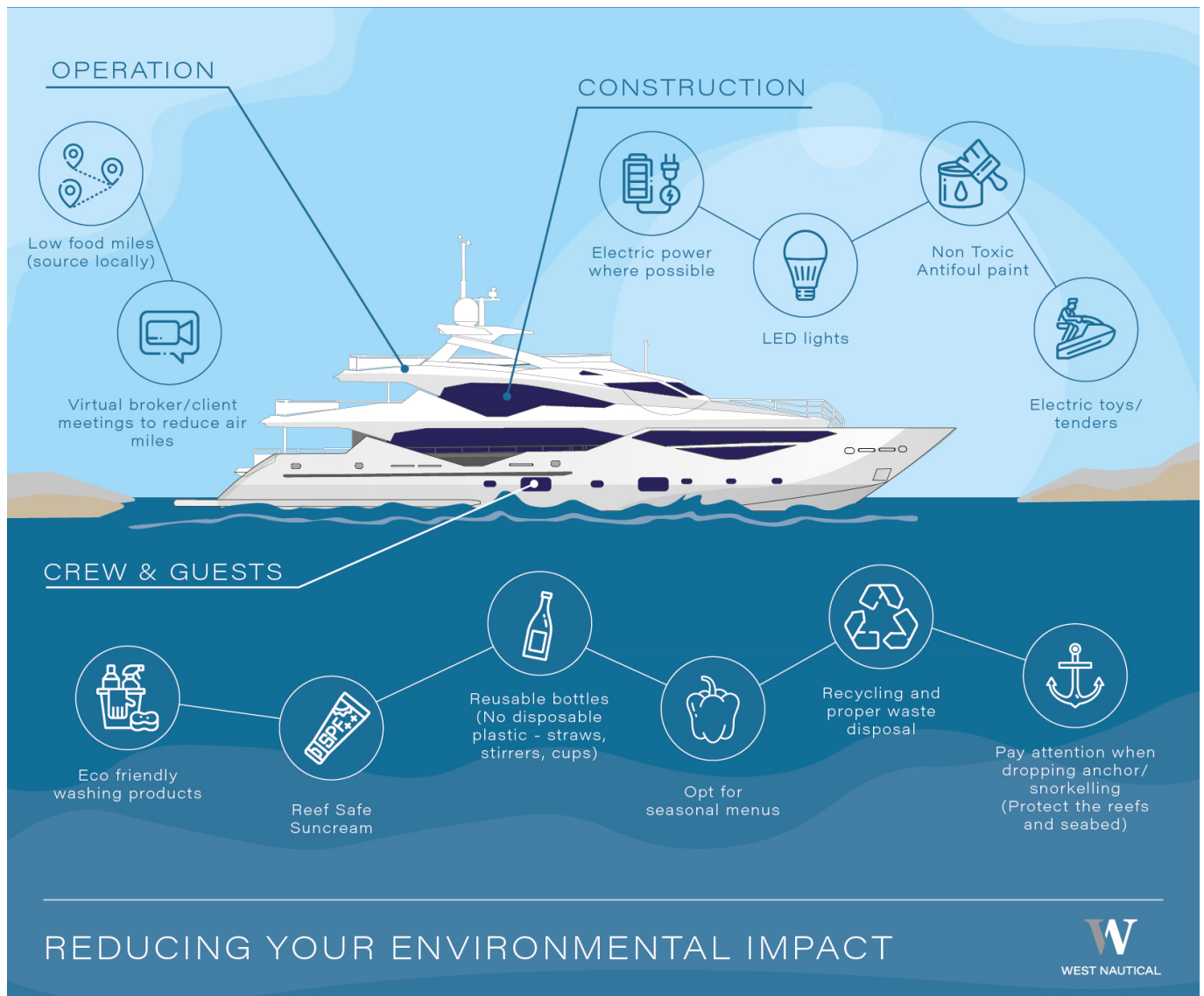
Plastic – Quit with the single use plastics! Water bottles are often the main culprit – look to offer reusable bottles (these can be branded!) and install water filter systems onboard. When shopping bags are needed, look at reusable options. Replacing plastic straws with reusable metal is also a change worth making, metal and bamboo straws make great alternatives.

Toiletries – These often contain or are sold in, single use plastics – look for more eco-friendly alternatives such as soap/shampoo bars. Marine-friendly sun creams are another great choice, and opt for reef-safe brands where possible.

Waste – Reduce the amount of waste by making simple changes and recycling wherever possible.

Suppliers – How do your suppliers provide their services? Could they be more environmentally friendly? Ask your suppliers if they can reduce packaging in advance of it being received on board.

Personal responsibility – Crew have a personal responsibility to ensure they are doing their best to be considerate of their surroundings, after all, their career relies on the health of the ocean!



West Nautical's Yacht Manager, Tony Hildrew, spent last year working as part of the crew aboard M/Y Mimi La Sardine as Chief Engineer:

"Last year on Mimi we tried to run as eco-friendly as possible – we didn't use single-use plastics, instead we had reusable water bottles for both crew and guests and the guests loved it; the stewardesses just kept them stocked in the fridges and put one by the bed during turndown service. The yacht also had specially made soaps, shampoos and lotions by Gaia Natural Mallorca."

Construction and operation

Sustainability within the construction and design of superyachts is integral to ensuring the future of the industry. Collectively the biggest change the industry can

make is improving fuel efficiency.

Commercial Yachts of 400GT and above currently in operation should be reviewing their Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plans on an annual basis. This is a great opportunity for Captains and Engineers to review the way in which their own yacht is operated. There are many areas in which vessel construction and operations can be optimised to increase efficiency and reduce their impact on the environment, it can be broken down into the following sections:

Main Engine fuel curves and efficiency

Optimum ballast

Auto pilot and steering

Hull maintenance

Fuel quality

Noise and Vibration

Weather Routing

Weather routing for yachts sailing globally is a method by which to improve efficiency, with companies specifically employed to provide passage plan guidance that will provide options giving the most fuel efficient, quickest, comfortable and safest passage, often between continents.



Main Engine fuel curves and efficiency

Each engine installed into a yacht is provided with fuel curves and form part of sea trials prior to delivery. These curves not only provide the fuel consumed at maximum speed but also provide information of the most fuel-efficient speed the yacht can operate at. This is often known as the 'sweet spot', and whilst it is not always possible to operate within this range due to charter requirements, operating at efficient powers should always be factored in wherever possible – such as for overnight cruising or repositioning voyages between charters.

For more details on eco-efficient measures, check out West Nautical's advice [here](#).

Toys

Superyacht toys are an undoubtable highlight of many a yacht charter. Guests revel in spending hours exploring the ocean with SeaBobs, catching waves with wakeboards and defying

gravity on Flyboards, but can these toys be improved to reduce the impacts they have on the environment?

On superyacht toys, West Nautical's Yacht Manager Tony Hildrew said:

"The yachting season isn't all about cruising on the water, it's also about having fun and enjoying the open space that the oceans have to offer. With an ever increasing range of battery-powered water toys, there are more and more ways to have environmentally-friendly fun without the air-polluting fumes that conventional jet-powered toys produce.

There are a number of companies now taking an environmentally friendly outlook on water sports, companies like Cayago Luxury Toys who produce the battery-powered SeaBob, which propels users through the water and also has the capability to dive beneath the surface – great for diving and snorkelling secluded reefs, and Jetsurf – who have begun production of a fully electric version of their jet-powered surfboards for the adrenaline junkies who enjoy speed."



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A post shared by SEABOB® (@seabob_official) on Jul 22, 2020 at 9:00am PDT

Industry-wide Change

The superyacht industry relies on a healthy ocean to explore and enjoy, in order for this to continue shipyards and industry bodies need to come together to effect change and preserve the marine environment. Lürssen is leading by example, working with the [Blue Marine Foundation](#) to fund Marine Protected Areas and holding fundraisers at the Monaco Yacht Show, while Boat International host their annual 'Ocean Awards' – recognising those pioneering change and moving toward a more sustainable future.

The [Water Revolution Foundation](#) has also been established from within the superyacht industry on the basis that *"The superyacht industry is in a unique strategic position and is blessed with extraordinarily influential clients who have the ability to drive sustainability and make a truly positive impact,"* with the aim of *"neutralising the footprint of the yachting industry and preserving the world's precious oceans."*

Throughout the global pandemic, what has become apparent is the way in which the entire industry has come together to

share information with one another in a way never seen before. Industry-wide webinars have been held by numerous maritime bodies to share information on charter destinations, port restrictions, the implications of the virus and much more in a way that proves the industry can successfully work together in the face of adversity.

West Nautical's Managing Director Geoff Moore said on the matter:

"COVID-19 is a unique situation and something that has affected the entire industry globally, including the superyacht sector, with many owners suffering dramatically and there are many knock-on effects to the supply chain due to this. Charters stopped overnight and sales have slowed down significantly, and whilst the industry is hopeful that things will pick up by late summer, it will be a poor year financially for the majority of companies.

However, what has happened is a solidarity between the industry partners and companies throughout the supply network. Information has been shared openly and freely through social media, webinars and email circulars. We are all in the same boat, pardon the pun, and we have responded as a community to work together on all levels, from yacht owners and management companies, to captains, crew, brokers, chandlers and flag registries – the industry has been working collectively as a unified body, which many hope will continue after the world returns to some form of normality."

Collective lifestyle changes

Ultimately it is the lifestyle changes adopted by every individual when combined that will have the greatest impact on our oceans. Avoiding single use plastics, getting involved in beach clean-ups, using reef-safe sun cream and supporting marine charities are all ways in which each and every one of us can make a difference on a daily basis.

Every second breath we take is generated by the ocean, and if we want to keep enjoying life on the waves, we must all continue to protect and preserve it.