

From Superyachts to Sea Shepherd – why this captain is fighting for our oceans

A Captain on superyachts for the last 18 years, David Evans has long been a familiar face in the sailing superyacht industry running several significant vessels throughout his career, including the 45m Clan Viii (Perini) and 45m Salperton (Dubois).

Last month, Evans confirmed he was leaving the superyacht world behind him to join motor vessel Sharpie for a three-month stint in San Felipe, Mexico. Sharpie is one of the five-strong Sea Shepherd fleet, battling with illegal fishing practices and pollution in the hope of helping conserve and protect our oceans.

“When my beautiful young daughter began to comment on how dirty the sea was on one of the regular beach cleans we attend in Palma de Mallorca, it got me thinking about my love of the sea and reminded me of how and why my life has taken the path it has. When I was younger, my original intention had been to volunteer for conservation projects and try and make a difference, even in just a small way. That admirable notion became lost however when I found my career progressing to larger yachts but, with the tickets I now hold as a superyacht Captain and the experience I am lucky to have gained, I hoped I might find myself returning to this original purpose with the Sea Shepherd volunteer programme.”

Sharpie is currently located in the Upper Gulf of California (north of the Sea of Cortez), active on Operation Milagro (Operation Miracle) – a campaign to protect the world’s most endangered marine mammal, the Vaquita Porpoise.

On board with Evans are a volunteer team serving as deck crew, engineers, scientists and biologists. “We are not rigid in our departments or stations on board, pulling in the numerous illegal fishing nets is hard work and we all want to help in every way we can. It’s an incredibly strong team from varied backgrounds, but all have the aims of Sea Shepherd in common and everyone is totally committed to the task in hand.”



Captain David Evans | Image credit: Tamara Arenovich / Sea Shepherd

Sharpie is in action alongside motor vessel Farley Mowat, another Sea Shepherd ship, and this is the fourth season of their important operation. The Vaquita Porpoise is threatened with extinction due to the illegal gillnet fishing which happens in the Sea of Cortez. These nets hang like a curtain, invisible to fish and marine life, entrapping all that swim into their path. The team work to remove these nets from the protected area and free any sea life they find trapped, particularly the Totoaba fish which is trawled for relentlessly by the local cartels for the acquisition of its swim bladder, which is worth a small fortune on the black market due to its falsely believed properties for Asian medicine.

It’s not only the illegal fishing that endangers the remaining and extremely small population of Vaquita in the area but loss of habitat too. [The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society](#) is in action around the world protecting marine wildlife, restoring habitat and educating local communities on the delicate balance required to preserve their food sources and ecosystem.



Image credit: Tamara Arenovich / Sea Shepherd

Evans encourages any who can to get involved, in whatever way

possible, “The wide skill set of the yachting fraternity would be an incredible asset to the teams aboard the Sea Shepherd vessels – these volunteers could teach you a thing or two about seamanship too! It really is a fantastic programme to be involved with. If you can spare the time, join us. If you can’t join us, you can donate. If you can’t donate, support us in sharing our news, our aims and our achievements.”

Donations can be made on the Seasheperd website [here](#) and willing volunteers can also apply to put their name forward for Neptune’s Navy!

Featured image credit: Tamara Arenovich / Sea Shepherd