What is the #OURSEA campaign about?

The year 2020 marks 75 years since Tove Jansson wrote her first story about the Moomins. To celebrate this anniversary, Moomin Characters Ltd together with its partners is launching a one-year campaign to help the Baltic Sea. The goal is to collect one million euros for John Nurminen Foundation's work to save the Baltic Sea and its cultural heritage for future generations.

Who is behind this campaign?

Oy Moomin Characters Ltd is the owner, originator and company responsible for managing the Moomins' brand, copyright and registrations. The company was started in 1958 by Tove Jansson and her brother Lars Jansson and is still run by family members.

Rights & Brands is the global licensing agent for Moomin Characters, bringing Nordic rights and brands to a global arena.

John Nurminen Foundation is a private Finnish Foundation founded in 1992, whose mission is to save the Baltic Sea and its heritage for future generations. As a result of the foundation's projects, the eutrophying phosphorus load to the Baltic Sea has been reduced by thousands of tonnes, significantly reducing the amount of blue-green algae in the sea.

In what ways can I participate in the campaign?

There are many ways to take part in the campaign. You can make a direct donation via the website <www.oursea.fi> or buy a Moomin product marked with the campaign tag. You can also participate by learning more about the Baltic Sea and the challenges it faces, as well as the solutions needed to help improve the condition of the Baltic Sea. You can be an active citizen and take part in the public debate around the issue and work to influence your friends, family and politicians to take action. Also, we've put together 10 easy tips you can use in your daily life. Keep up with the campaign to find out more!

My company/organization wants to participate – how should I go about it?

If you want to donate, you can do so on the campaign site<www.oursea.fi>. You can also contact one of our agents to discuss a larger cooperation. Our agents can also help you if your company wants to create Moomin products as part of the #OURSEA campaign.

Companies in Finland: Ilkka Lind: ilkka@rightsandbrands.com, Maarit Pyötsiä: maarit@rightsandbrands.com

Companies in Sweden and other countries: Patrick Ullman: patrick.ullman@rightsandbrands.com, Kristin Tjulander: kristin.tjulander@rightsandbrands.com

How is the donated money used?

The donated money will be used for the John Nurminen Foundation's Clean Baltic Sea projects and cultural work to preserve maritime heritage. The Foundation's projects aim to reduce the nutrient load to the Sea. This is done for example through gypsum treatment of fields, sustainable fishing of roach and bream, improving wastewater treatment in cities across the Baltic Sea, reducing nutrient run-off from biogas production, piloting measures to reduce internal loading of the Sea, and other efficient ways to help the Baltic Sea.

The Foundation always evaluates its Clean Baltic Sea projects and works on a basis of measurable positive environmental impact and assigns the donated money for work that puts it into most effective use.

In just 15 years, the Foundation has started over 30 Clean Baltic Sea projects, of which well over 20 have been completed. Through successful cooperation, the nutrient load of the Baltic Sea has been significantly reduced. Through treating the wastewaters of St. Petersburg and reducing the discharges from the fertilizer factory by the river Luga alone, the annual eutrophying phosphorus load of the Gulf of Finland has been reduced by as much as 75%. In terms of environmental impact, these are the two most significant water protection efforts ever carried out in the Baltic Sea.

The Foundation is also an active conveyor of marine culture, and wants to give a voice to people for whom the Baltic Sea is a vocation, a way of life, or a passion. By the end of 2019, the Foundation had published over 40 award-winning books in multiple languages. The Foundation also organizes events and exhibitions, and has created a maritime online service lokistories.fi for sharing stories of the sea. Through these channels, the Foundation reaches thousands of people. For engaging and activating audiences across the Baltic Sea, the Foundation launched the Baltic Sea Day, and invites everyone to join in www.balticseaday.fi.

For full portfolio of the Foundation's activities, see www.johnnurmisensaatio.fi.

What are your administrative costs?

In 2018, circa 72% of the donations were directed at John Nurminen Foundation's Baltic Sea protection and maritime culture project costs, with circa 28 percent going to administrative and fundraising costs. More information and the Foundation's full financial statement can be found in the Foundation's annual report https://johnnurmisensaatio.fi/en/annual-reports/. (The Foundation's financial statement for the year 2019 will be published in April 2020).

Why is the focus blue-green algae – is this the main cause for concern in the Baltic Sea today?

The focus of the campaign is on blue-green algae, because it is the most visible symptom of eutrophication. According to Baltic Sea researchers and experts, eutrophication is the most significant environmental problem affecting the Baltic Sea. Even though nutrient discharges that cause eutrophication have decreased significantly over the years, the visible signs of

eutrophication, such as blue-green algae blooms, murky waters, slimy shores and anoxic seabeds continue to afflict the Baltic Sea. Eutrophication is also one of the main threats to the biodiversity of the Baltic Sea: nutrient over-enrichment causes elevated levels of algal and plant growth, increased turbidity, oxygen depletion, changes in species composition and blooms of algae. What's more, climate change further accelerates eutrophication in the Baltic Sea.

What does 40 kg blue-green algae mean in concrete terms?

In the sea, nutrients grow algae. So what amount of nutrients does 40 kg algae equal? One example is urine: taking a leak grows 600 grams of algae, so peeing into the water 70 times means 40 kg of algae.

The bigger the amount of phosphorus in the sea, the more there's blue-green algae. The Foundation has calculated how much phosphorus will be removed from the sea with its current projects and how much blue-green algae this amount of phosphorus would produce. We have calculated the nutrient reduction for projects based on research. The amount of nutrient reduction in projects is always affected by weather conditions, variations in nutrient load, and uncertainties related to the conditions and internal process of the sea. This varies slightly according to a number of factors, and therefore it's impossible to give an exact figure.

If I donate, how is the 40 kilos of blue-green algae removed and can I see it when it is done?

There are different ways to reduce algae by decreasing the algae-growing nutrient load. One can reduce nutrient load by more efficient wastewater treatment, by reducing load from agriculture or by fishing. For instance, enhanced wastewater treatment in St. Petersburg and curbing the phosphorus load from the fertilizer factory in Kingisepp together visibly improved the condition of the Gulf of Finland. When you improve wastewater treatment in coastal cities, effects can usually be seen in the nearby coastal areas quite soon. When you reduce nutrient runoff from agricultural fields for example by gypsum application, water clarity in areas close to the coastline increase and symptoms of eutrophication decrease.

You can follow the progress of our projects at our website https://johnnurmisensaatio.fi/en/projects/. There we have also photographs and videos in which you can see how the nutrient removal is being done in practice.

How can fishing help the Baltic Sea?

The Sea can be cleaned with sustainable fishing by removing nutrients and thereby balancing the ecosystem. Not all fishing is sustainable – for example some cod and pikeperch fishing is harming the fish stocks as the fish are being caught too young and in excessive amounts. Some fish stocks such as the Baltic Sea trout have become endangered and have to be protected. However, when fishing is done sustainably according to the carrying and reproduction capacity of the sea ecosystem, eating fish is one of the easiest – and tastiest! – methods to remove eutrophying nutrients from the Sea.

The roach, bream and related fish stocks in the Baltic Sea, unfairly often called “trash fish”, have grown due to eutrophication and now compete for nutrition and living space with other, economically more valuable fish species. Efficient fishing of these species can balance out the structure of the fish stock. Approximately 700 tonnes of eutrophying phosphorus is annually recycled from the Finnish waterways to land by fishing. So by eating these fish – which are truly not trash but the most healthy and tasty local food – everyone can contribute to the well-being of the sea by circulating nutrients on land!

Food production is one of the major sources of nutrients in the sea. By eating sustainably caught local fish, we can replace meat and farmed fish products in our diet, reducing nutrient loading. Moreover, a lot of the fish we eat today travels from far away, which increases climate emissions and brings additional nutrients to the Baltic Sea region. Locally produced and sustainably caught fish is an ethical and ecological alternative.

Is it safe to eat bream, roach and related species?

Since these species have low fat content, toxic substances such as dioxins don’t accumulate in these fish. Thus, it is completely safe to eat these fish and there are no limits to their consumption.

Where does the Baltic Sea’s nutrient load come from?

Nutrient load to the Baltic Sea originates in its catchment area, with the majority of the load originating in its nine coastal states – Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark, Germany and Poland – and, in addition to these countries, via rivers from inland countries like Belarus.

Cities, centres of population, and the industry are point load sources, while agriculture, forestry, and wastewaters from sparsely populated areas comprise non-point sources of the load. Discharges, such as those generated by energy production and traffic, can also be transferred by air. In addition to the load caused by humans, the sea is also the recipient of background load from nature.

Moreover, the load increases because of the so-called internal load from the seabed, when nutrients retained in the bottom of the sea are released to the water. The runoff from land has accumulated in the sea during decades and interferes with the natural balance. In recent years, the internal load from the bottom sediments has become a significant problem, slowing down the recovery of the Baltic Sea.

Is there hope for the Baltic Sea?

The situation in the Baltic Sea is grave, but a lot of important work has been done in the last decades to change course, and we’re already seeing positive results. The phosphorus load to the Gulf of Finland has been reduced by as much as 75% in just 10 years, which can be considered to be a world record in marine protection! This is the result of international efforts and cooperation between states, cities and the private sector. The main part of these load

reductions were achieved thanks to projects of the John Nurminen Foundation. In many sea areas, the sea is already becoming visibly clearer. This shows that we can turn the tide, but to succeed, we have to jack up the tempo. We know what needs to be done, we just need to act faster. Joy and courage are underlying themes in many of the Moomin stories, and that's the Moominous spirit we want to underline in the quest to help the Baltic Sea. Nothing is impossible - we can still save our beloved Baltic Sea!

More information: www.oursea.fi

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