



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
2014 SPRING LECTURE SERIES

For more information, contact:

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SEA faculty lecture series to cover topics from SEA Voyages on the Global Ocean

January 19 - May, 2014 | 1pm

Sea Education Association

James L. Madden Center Lecture Hall

171 Woods Hole Road, Falmouth, MA

508-540-3954

Free and open to the public

January 19 | Dr. Kara Lavender Law, *Plastics in the Ocean*

February 16 | Dr. Jeff Schell, *Caribbean Sketchbook: a journey through history, culture and conservation*

March 16 | Dr. Amy NS Siuda, *The Importance of Sargassum Species Distribution*

April 13 | Dr. Chuck Lea, *Deep Sea Fish and Squid & the Open Ocean Environment*

May 18 | Captain Elliot Rappaport, *Leadership Training in the Marine Environment*

Lecture #1

Plastics at SEA:

The science of ocean “garbage patches”

Dr. Kara Lavender Law

WHEN:

January 19, 2014 at 1pm

WHERE:

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Presentation Summary

Ocean pollution by plastic and other man-made debris is a pressing environmental problem that has captured the attention of marine conservationists, anti-plastic activists, the media and the general public. Though first described in the 1970s,

scientific attention to the topic has increased only recently and misconceptions about the problem are common. SEA has been at the forefront of plastics research, with data collection on floating plastic debris beginning in the 1980s. Since then, SEA has collected nearly 10,000 measurements of plastic debris in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and research efforts have expanded to include dedicated research expeditions to the North Atlantic and North Pacific "garbage patches", as well as federally-funded research programs to study the behavior of plastic in the marine environment and its ecological impacts. Dr. Law will discuss the state of scientific research on marine debris in the world's oceans, with an in-depth look at the research carried out for more than 25 years by undergraduate students and faculty scientists on sailing oceanographic research vessels at SEA.

About the lecturer

Dr. Kara Lavender Law is a research professor at Sea Education Association with a PhD in physical oceanography from Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and a BS in mathematics from Duke University. With more than 12 months of sea time on oceanographic and sailing research vessels, Dr. Law's research interests include large-scale and meso-scale ocean circulation, intermediate and deep water formation in the North Atlantic and its role in the meridional overturning circulation, and more recently the distribution and behavior of plastic marine debris.

Formerly on the teaching faculty at SEA, Dr. Law has taught oceanography to more than 200 students in 10 SEA Semester classes onshore in Woods Hole, MA and at sea in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and the Caribbean Sea. For the past several years Dr. Law has been researching plastic marine debris using SEA's 25-year data set consisting of plastic counts from nearly 10,000 plankton net tows that were carried out by more than 7000 SEA students and scientists. Her interests include understanding how ocean physics determines the distribution of plastic and other marine debris, and the degradation and ultimate fate of different plastic materials in the marine environment.

For more information on the lecture series and specific lectures/lecturers, please contact Jennica Deely, Marketing Coordinator with SEA

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