

# A Mission Taking Flight — Across the Pacific Ocean

by Mary Rose



**S**o what do you do when you have an obsession with birds – in particular their conservation

– and nothing

you do seems like it is enough?

Well, naturally you decide to row across an ocean, right? Seems like a logical link – especially when you have never

rowed a boat before in your life. You just have to learn how to row, learn about boats, learn how to navigate using electronics and the stars, take sea survival classes, train...and the list goes on. Is it possible, though? Absolutely.

Sometimes a passion takes you places you never dreamed you would go and that is the case for me, Mary Rose of Chirping Central. Helping birds through funding for avian conservation projects to rowing the Pacific Ocean seems like a huge leap, but really it was not a difficult link to make given the right circumstances. And that little

perfect storm happened on February 8th, 2012 at about 9 p.m. On February 8th I was at the Mesa Arts Center

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to see a National Geographic Live presentation called Solo Across the Oceans. Presenting at this event was Roz Savage who had rowed the Atlantic Ocean as part of the Atlantic Rowing Race. Her presentation was amazing, but I was still not even thinking that I would like to row an ocean. Inspiring - yes. Was I thinking that I wanted to spend about three months on an ocean by myself battling the elements? No, not at all. The perfect storm happened at the end

of her presentation, though, when she mentioned that she rowed the Atlantic in part to raise awareness about trash floating around in the ocean. Then she mentioned that she was part of a group called New Ocean Wave and they were organizing the first ever Pacific Rowing Race in 2014. Applications were now being accepted.

And so it hit me. Would it be possible to row the Pacific as part of the Pacific Rowing Race and do it to raise awareness and funding for the birds? The seed had been planted and I could not get it out of my head. Could I do this? How would I do this? What would I hope to achieve? Can I even row a boat? It did not take me long to decide that ‘yes’ this was all possible, and so I signed up to participate in the race. Here we go.

The Pacific Rowing Race starts June 7, 2014. I will be rowing to raise funds for avian conservation projects. The race is not just a fundraiser, however. Raising awareness about the issues faced by all manner of birds is also a very important aspect of the race. Education is key, and part of the plan is to educate while I am actually out there rowing in the race. With the opportunity to produce





video while on the boat and the ability to get small pieces of video back from the middle of the ocean, this will truly be an educational event. All I have to do out there is eat, row, and sleep so there will be plenty of time to be talking about the birds. I hope you will log in to see the updates and offer words of encouragement (and maybe be inspired to pledge a few dollars too!).

For me, the Pacific Rowing Race really is about the birds and the opportunity to raise awareness, educate, and raise essential funds to support avian conservation projects. We all know that conservation takes money and it is a tragic situation when the survival of a species is determined by funding. Zoos and many conservation organizations face this fact every day; to think that our ability to help these amazing animals is limited by financial restrictions in just something I cannot accept. So, with all this in mind, Project FlightPlan was born. Our motto – “Extinction is Optional™” and it truly is for many of these species if we can just start work now.

For information about Project FlightPlan and to follow the process through blog and video updates, please visit

[www.chirpingcentral.com](http://www.chirpingcentral.com). It is my aim for everyone to be able to live the experience with me. I am taking on the manual labor for this project, but it is you who will make this project a success and truly do something meaningful for the birds. I cannot do this alone so, I hope that you will follow along on the journey. Maricopa Audubon has already shown amazing support for this project by becoming a sponsor of my race and I am incredibly proud that MAS will be crossing the Pacific Ocean with me. Thank you for your support so far.

June 7, 2014 marks the start of the race to show that Extinction is Optional™. Through the Pacific Rowing Race, Mary Rose will be rowing almost 3000 miles from California to Hawaii to raise funds to benefit avian conservation. A 90 day journey across the Pacific Ocean, powered only by oars. Don't let another species become another Carolina Parakeet or Passenger Pigeon. Let's do something now to help the birds. For more information visit

[www.chirpingcentral.com](http://www.chirpingcentral.com). 🐦

