

# Over 100,000 Visit the Volvo Ocean Race Newport

**NEWPORT, RI (May 23, 2018)** – A robust footfall of over 100,000 people took in the Volvo Ocean Race Newport Stopover between May 8 and May 20. The 13-day event was kicked off with an exciting arrival of the seven VO65 race boats in the early morning hours of May 8 in dense fog. After 16 days of racing on the leg from Brazil, the top two boats, Mapfre and Brunel, stunned spectators when they dramatically crossed the finish line only 61 seconds apart. Mapfre stole the win within yards of Fort Adams State Park thrilling spectators along the shoreline. Nearly 8,000 visited that day alone which turned into a brilliant afternoon for the opening of the event.

"All of us at Sail Newport were delighted at the turnout in less than perfect weather conditions throughout the 13 days. As the Volvo Ocean Race team has said over and over again... Newport is the premier stopover, and it is the knowledgeable, engaged and enthusiastic fans in the U.S. that makes Newport, RI such a great destination for the race," says Brad Read, executive director, Sail Newport and Volvo Ocean Race Newport Stopover.

Over the following 12 days, another **92,000+** spectators enjoyed the event. The overall attendance figures include guests who streamed through the entrance, arrived by water taxi, visited on school field trips, watched from spectator boats and crowded the shoreline of Fort Adams, Brenton Point, Beavertail and Fort Wetherill State Parks.

"We were thrilled to see the crowds — clearly sailing fans were coming rain or shine, and the racing did not disappoint," says Susan Maffei Plowden, stopover director.

The final weekend of the event was surely the most popular with a stunning 36,121 visitors counted on Saturday, May 19 and Sunday, May 20. Those days included the Gurney's Resorts In-Port Race and the spectacular start from Newport for the 3,300 nautical mile trans-Atlantic race leg to Cardiff, Wales.

"On Sunday, the fog lifted to provide a stunning race start for spectators when the fleet took a lap around Narragansett Bay, before departing for Cardiff," Maffei Plowden says.

In addition to spectators, a group of 885 volunteers attended the event to assist with the attractions, provide hospitality support, ensure sustainability on the Green Team, and even don the albatross suit of the race's mascot, Wisdom. Volunteers ranged in age from 14 to 86 with an average age of 55. They hailed from 31 states and 11 countries. They're CEO's, accountants, lawyers, nurses, business owners, moms and dads, students, retirees, vacationers, sailing fanatics and more.

"Currently, the race fleet is on its way to Cardiff, Wales for the next stopover. The VO65s will then race to Gothenburg, Sweden and in late June, the fleet will make the final

sprint of the eight-month race to the finish in The Hague, Netherlands," adds Maffei Plowden.