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On June 5, 2012, a massive dock made landfall on Oregon's Agate Beach, just north of Newport. The dock carried with it a host of castaways, including as many as a hundred species of mollusks, anemones, sponges, oysters, crabs, barnacles, worms, sea stars, mussels and sea urchins. A placard on the side written in Japanese revealed that the dock had been unmoored from the Japanese coastal city of Misawa during the catastrophic tsunami on March 11, 2011, bringing with it an essentially intact subtidal community of Asian species to the Pacific Northwest. Although natural rafts have likely been ferrying organisms around the planet since the very beginning of life of Earth, the geologically recent advent of human settlement, culture and infrastructure is fundamentally changing the rafting game, as EARTH explores in our March issue.

Press Release PDF:



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