

### 'Eco mermaid' breaks own world record

by Ben Hooper



- 1 Merle Liivand, a swimmer and conservationist known as the 'eco mermaid' broke a Guinness World Record by taking a 26.22-mile swim in the ocean. She spent 11 hours and 54 minutes swimming off the coast of Miami Beach, Fla., to break her previous record for farthest swim with a monofin.
- 2 Liivand, who is originally from Estonia and relocated to Florida 11 years ago, said she felt her previous Guinness World Record in April 2021 was hampered by less-than-ideal marine conditions, leading her to break her own record of 18.6 miles on May 7 of this year.
- 3 "I was born with auto-immune health problems, and I started swimming because my lungs collapsed," Liivand told Guinness World Records. "Today, my intention is to fight for Mother Earth's lungs."
- 4 She said her latest monofin swim was not without its difficulties. "I got stung by jellyfish and kept telling myself that it was not the time to cry," Liivand said. "The moments when I was feeling down, I had to remind myself that I'm a tool between the ocean and humans and I want my message to be heard." Liivand said she also had some positive wildlife interactions during her swim, including some dolphins and a mother manatee with a baby.

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