



Marine
Biological
Association

annual report

2024 - 2025



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overview

INSPIRING, ENGAGING & VISIONARY

 **87**
PAPERS
PUBLISHED

 **114,349**
CPR NAUTICAL MILES

96 RESEARCH
EVENTS
ATTENDED
& HOSTED

337 
FIELDTRIPS

GRANT
SUCCESS
RATE **52%**

 **51**
MEMBERSHIP
COUNTRIES

 **5**
AWARDS

 **68** NEWS UPDATES
COVERING MBA
ACTIVITIES

26% SOCIAL MEDIA
GROWTH ACROSS
ALL PLATFORMS

 **£10,547**
IN DONATIONS

 **1,339**
INTERNATIONAL
MEDIA MENTIONS

TOTAL INCOME
£6,056,981



welcome



It is with great pride that I present our 2024–2025 Annual Report. This is particularly special as we celebrate the 140th anniversary of our founding.

This milestone is not only a moment to honour our past, but a powerful reminder of our enduring purpose, our continued progress and to recognise the people who make our mission thrive.

In this landmark year, we were deeply honoured to welcome His Majesty The King as our new Patron. His longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship and ocean conservation makes his support especially meaningful. As an organisation rooted in marine biology, we are proud that our research aligns so closely with His Majesty's vision for a sustainable future. His patronage reinforces the vital role our scientists play in understanding and protecting the marine ecosystems that underpin life on Earth.

We are also proud to celebrate the exceptional achievements and leadership within our Board of Trustees. Professor Ros Rickaby FRS was recently awarded an OBE in recognition of her outstanding contributions to marine conservation and research; a testament to the calibre of expertise and influence that shapes our organisation. Her honour reflects the broader impact our Trustees have beyond our walls. We are equally delighted to welcome three new Trustees: Matthew Longman, Yonela Ndila and Professor Steven Wilhelm FRSC. Together, they bring a rich blend of cultural and geographic diversity, academic distinction and a deep commitment to civic responsibility. Their varied perspectives and experiences further strengthen our governance and reinforce our mission.

Our scientists continue to play a vital role on the global stage, contributing to the success of landmark initiatives such as the 2025 UN Ocean Conference in Nice. Their expertise, spanning climate science, biodiversity and ocean health, is helping shape international policy, drive innovation and protect our planet's future. This work is more urgent and inspiring than ever.

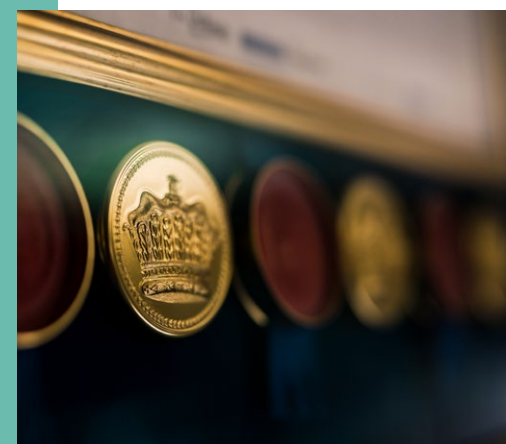
As we mark 140 years of discovery, impact and stewardship, we do so with deep gratitude for our community of supporters, partners and staff. Your belief in our mission fuels everything we do. Together, we are not only advancing knowledge, we are building a legacy for the next 140 years and beyond.



Dr Gill Rider CB,
President



about us



This year marks our 140th anniversary, celebrating over a century of globally significant research into our ocean and the life it supports. As one of the world's longest running Learned Societies, we are dedicated to promoting our research to drive change.

Our Royal Charter, granted in 2013, is evidence of our commitment to maintaining professional standards and establishing our status as the representative body for the discipline of marine biology.

OUR VALUES

We value **integrity** and provide expert academic knowledge and evidence that is credible, honest and true.

From access to our world-leading facilities to sharing our expertise, we want to **inspire** everyone by giving them the power to learn about marine biology.

We are **visionary** and look to the future, using our discoveries to support and invest in the global marine biological community.

OUR MISSION

Focused on marine biology, our mission is to understand and disseminate the causes and consequences of environmental change in the ocean through research and discovery.

OUR VISION

Pioneering science for the health of our ocean.

membership

✉ membership@mba.ac.uk

Our Members are a dynamic, global community of marine biologists from over 50 countries who together are shaping the future and the health of our ocean.

51
Countries

1,781
Members

9
Student travel
bursaries awarded

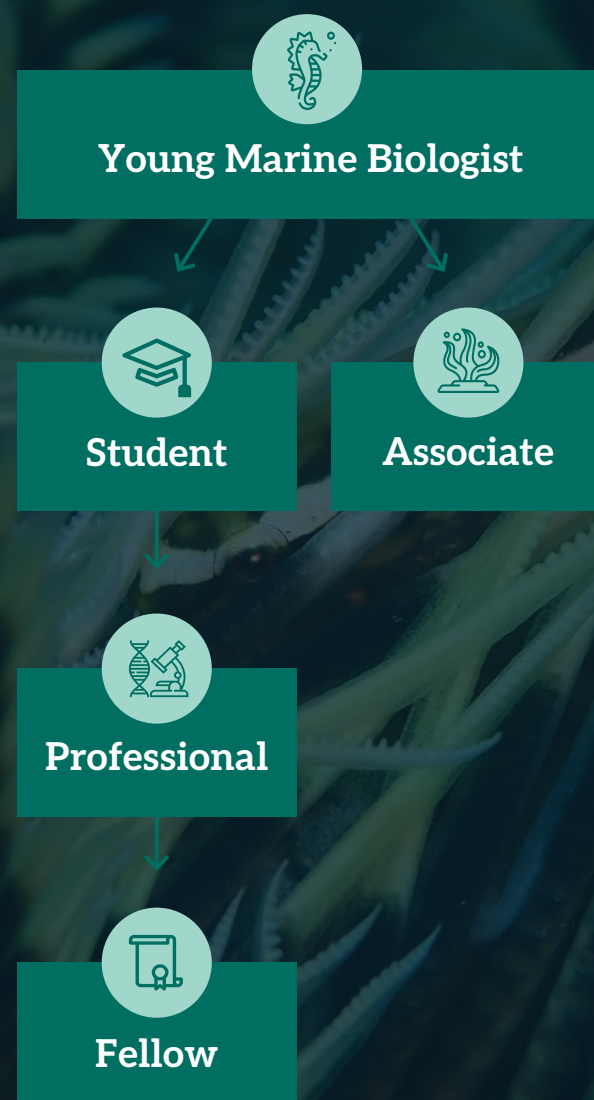


MBA MENTORS

Through its collaboration with the Field Studies Council, the MBA offers Members opportunity to represent the Association as a Student Mentor for youths at marine science and snorkelling camps across the country. Student Member Kym Yarwood attended the Field Studies Council Camp at Dale Fort, Wales. Kym gained valuable experience engaging with attendees.

This was a great week, and I would highly recommend being an MBA Student Mentor
- Kym

MEMBERSHIP JOURNEY



CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Photo Competition: "Ocean is Life"

We received an overwhelming number of submissions from Members for our "Ocean is Life" photo competition. These contributors showcased their creativity and skill, truly capturing the essence of the themes whilst embodying the spirit of the MBA community.

Travel Bursaries

The MBA Student Bursary Programme aims to provide financial support to individuals pursuing higher education or research opportunities in marine biology. With a strong belief in the importance of empowering the next generation of marine scientists and educators, the MBA seeks to support aspiring marine biologists to achieve their academic and professional goals.

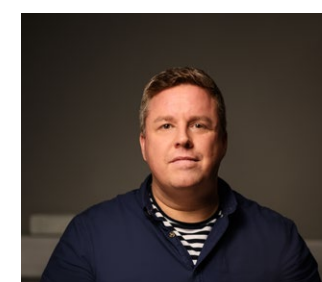
Royal Recognition

We were delighted to announce that HM King Charles III became our fifth Royal Patron.

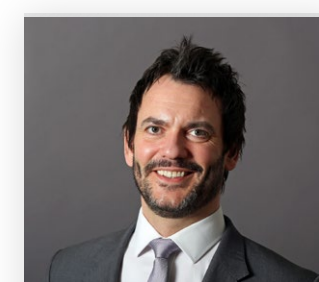
MBA Trustee, Professor Rosalind Rickaby FRS was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in recognition of her outstanding contributions to marine conservation and research.

NEW MBA FELLOWS

Fellows honour those shaping marine science worldwide – we congratulate our newly appointed MBA Fellows Professor Michael Cunliffe FMBA, Alex Hunt FMBA, Professor Sandra Shumway FMBA, and John Spencer FMBA.



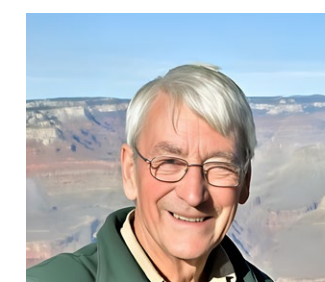
Professor Michael
Cunliffe FMBA



Alex Hunt
FMBA



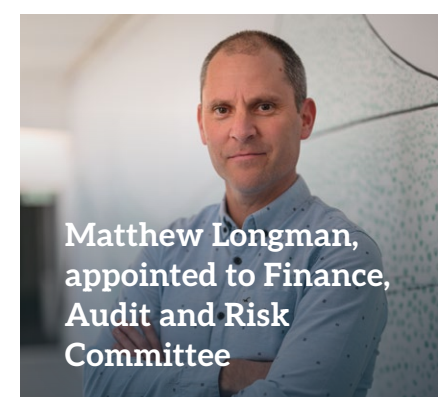
Professor Sandra
Shumway FMBA



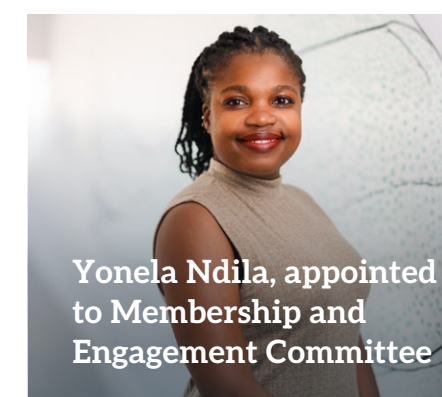
John Spencer
FMBA

MBA TRUSTEES

We're pleased to welcome three new MBA Trustees to our Board, each bringing a fresh perspective to the MBA's strategic direction and governance.



Matthew Longman,
appointed to Finance,
Audit and Risk
Committee



Yonela Ndila, appointed
to Membership and
Engagement Committee



Professor Steven
Wilhelm FRSC,
appointed to Research
Committee

learn with us

✉ events@mba.ac.uk

From ocean enthusiasts to professionals we engage, inspire and increase skills through our range of courses and events.

ANNUAL SCIENCE TALK

In 2024 we welcomed Ali Hood, Director of Conservation for the Shark Trust, who shared her first-hand experiences of the challenges associated with securing and implementing shark and ray management through high seas fisheries management bodies.

With over 20 years' experience at the Shark Trust, Ali advises the UK Government with respect to Regional Fishery Management Organization negotiations, Wildlife Treaties and domestic policy. She is an invited member of several expert working groups at UK and international levels, and regularly engages with the European Commission, the UK Devolved Administrations and International Non-Governmental Organisation working groups. Recently her work has focussed on Shortfin Mako, Blue Shark and Oceanic Whitetips in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and angel shark and Guitarfishes in the Mediterranean.

MBA POSTGRADUATE CONFERENCE

The 20th Annual Postgraduate Conference was hosted by postgraduate researchers across the three Marine Research Plymouth Alliance institutes in Plymouth: University of Plymouth, the Marine Biological Association and Plymouth Marine Laboratory. The conference was also combined with the annual Plymouth Marine Science and Education Foundation (PlyMSEF) conference. PlyMSEF is a charitable organisation aiming to promote and support postgraduate students across Plymouth.

70 participants, of whom 6 attended online benefitted from a total of 22 poster and oral presentations, 4 keynote speakers and one workshop event.

1 MBA Postgraduate Conference

5 University Field Courses hosted

6 Field Studies Council camp collaborations

400 Bioblitz Battle participants



ROCKPOOL PROJECT

Starting from October 2024, the Marine Biological Association has been in partnership with the hugely successful Rock Pool Project, which aims to engage local communities and promote scientific exploration through rock pooling. The project fosters a sense of community belonging among the 400 participants across the UK that have been involved up until March 2025. This is amplified by an exclusive online networking portal, the Community space, managed by MBA membership where documents can be shared and networking take place. UK hub leaders at different locations act as membership ambassadors and help drive awareness of marine biology as a discipline, and of MBA activities and opportunities. The hub leaders are supported with dedicated handbooks and tailored training.

R COURSE

In May 2025, the MBA hosted a three-part R training series with Dr Ben Holt, helping Members analyse iNaturalist data from The Big Rock Pool Challenge: National BioBlitz UK. The course attracted 64 participants. Designed to turn raw citizen science data into impactful reports, the training strengthened engagement and boosted the visibility of the Rock Pool Project. The success led to two attendees becoming active volunteers, and glowing feedback was received from participants.

“ I loved my experience learning data analysis in R with the MBA! The course was extremely clear and informative, and it was exciting to be a part of analysing live Bioblitz data – Jess

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Over £500K was invested to support 42 PhD students through the last round of Doctoral Training Partnerships and Centres for Doctoral Training, with students registered at 11 UK and European universities. MBA Research Fellows supported 17 MRes students to develop their research projects as part of the Advanced Marine Biology joint MRes programme with the University of Plymouth.

MBA Prize for Outstanding Performance on a Marine Biology Programme awarded to graduating student Leila Scheltema BSc (Hons).



the marine biologist

✉ editor@mba.ac.uk

The Marine Biologist is for curious minds and passionate professionals alike. The exclusive Members' magazine is your essential companion for marine news and global insights, in print and online 4 times per year.

Over its 12-year history, The Marine Biologist has published over 450 original feature articles in 35 editions and been viewed nearly 86,000 times online.



HIGHLIGHTS

The fierce urgency of now



A journey with Professor Carlos Duarte about blue carbon and our place in nature.

Why are orcas attacking yachts?

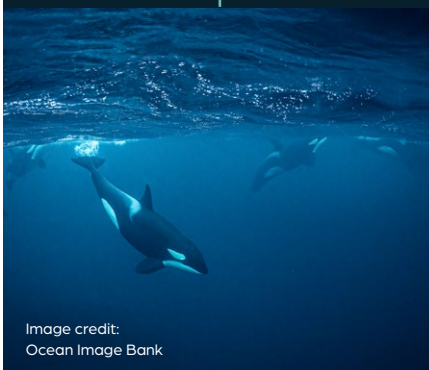


Image credit:
Ocean Image Bank

Student Member Leila Moore explores the recent spates of orca interactions with yachts.

140 years and counting



Image credit:
Michael Aw

Dr Sylvia Earle reflects on the MBA's scientific advances.



DIVE DEEPER

Hear from world-leading experts on The Marine Biologist podcast.

The Marine Biologist



podcast



Available
on Spotify

4,636 downloads

JMBA

journal of the marine biological association

The Journal of the Marine Biological Association publishes peer-reviewed global research in all areas of marine biology. Led by Editor in Chief Professor Chris Hutton, JMBA supports the MBA's mission with a strong strategic vision.

119
Articles

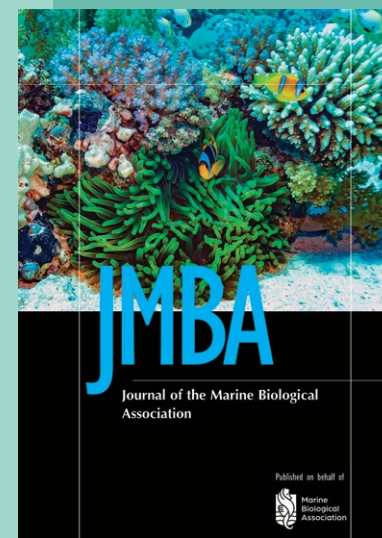
Authors from
53
countries

Articles
downloaded
237,551
28.5% increase

Readers from
203
territories

JMBA COVERS

- Marine ecology, behaviour and fisheries
- Biodiversity and population studies of marine ecosystems,
- Physiology, biochemistry, genetics and molecular biology of marine organisms
- Taxonomic syntheses
- Morphology, life history and developmental biology of marine organisms
- Chemical and physical oceanography
- Marine environmental health



OUR TOP PAPERS

The longest documented travel by a West Indian manatee



Image credit:
Mika Holanda

A synthesis of the current state of marine biodiversity knowledge in the Isles of Scilly, UK



Unveiling a new species of *Trapania* from the South-eastern Pacific using anatomical and molecular tools



Image credit:
Roberto Uribe

5 year highlights

Highlights from our 5 year horizon strategy, April 2020 – March 2025

FACILITIES

Over £7 million investment in new research laboratory infrastructure with major funding from NERC, Garfield Weston Foundation and The Wolfson Foundation

- Launch of Smart Experimental Aquarium facility with 12 x 1,000 litre tanks for replicating marine environments.
- MBA awarded Silver and Bronze LEAF accreditation for lab efficiency and waste reduction.
- Sustainable bike shed with green roof and insect houses installed for staff.
- Major upgrades to research facilities, including the Marine Microbiome Centre of Excellence, Mary Parke Bioimaging Centre, and Ecology Laboratory.
- Relocation and opening of Continuous Plankton Recorder (CPR) Taxonomy Laboratory.
- Installation of award-winning seawater intake pipe with biodiversity-enhancing, carbon-neutral underwater tiles.

ENGAGEMENT

- Full website redevelopment and organisational rebrand launched to boost visibility and global engagement.
- Membership Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system introduced, strengthening support for our growing Member community.
- Professional Membership grew by 60%.
- Social media audience grew fivefold, to over 75,000 followers.
- Press platform launched, increasing media mentions and extending the reach of our research.
- Global impact expanded:
 - *JMBA authors from 53 countries; readers in 203 territories.*
 - *The Marine Biologist magazine recorded 71,000 online views and was shortlisted for Best Magazine Relaunch at the Memcom Excellence Awards.*
- DASSH data requests doubled, demonstrating rising demand for marine data.
- Over 137 MRes students graduated and 42 PhD students trained, contributing new talent to marine science.



RESEARCH IMPACT

The MBA's scientific output gained global recognition and expanded influence through awards, citations and data contributions.

- **581 papers published.**
- **Guinness World Record** awarded for the greatest distance sampled by a marine survey (CPR Survey): over **7 million nautical miles** over 90 years.
- **Dr Trupti Gaikwad** won the **Asian Women of Achievement Science Award.**
- **Dr K. Helliwell** finalist for **Society of Biology President's Medal** (plant biology) and awarded the **Society of Experimental Biology President's Medal** for cell biology.
- **Dr Dan Smale** was named a Clarivate Highly Cited Researcher and received both the **2025 Hutchinson Award** and the **ICES Prix d'Excellence** for his groundbreaking work on marine heatwaves, biodiversity, and leadership in climate science and policy.
- **Professor David Sims** received the **ZSL Marsh Award** for marine conservation and climate change impact research on fish; also awarded a **DSc by University of Southampton** for outstanding research in movement ecology and conservation of threatened marine predators.
- **Royal Honours** were awarded to Professor Mark Bailey **OBE**, Dr Keith Hiscock **MBE**, Professor Rosalind Rickaby **OBE**, Professor Stuart Rogers **OBE**.
- **Dr Freya Womersley (MBA INSPIRE PhD)** won the **University of Southampton Ocean & Earth Science Research Award** and **Best in Faculty** for her PNAS cover paper on whale sharks and marine traffic.
- **MBA Site Engineer Kevin Atkins** was awarded the Hidden Ref Award, celebrating hidden talent in research organisations, featured in *Nature*.
- **DASSH** (UK marine data archive) achieved **CoreTrustSeal accreditation**, reinforcing data integrity and global access.



EXCELLENCE & GROWTH

- £26.7M in grant and contract income from 166 awards across 69 funders.
- Consistently strong grant success rates, averaging over 50% from 2020–2025. The European Research Council (ERC), Europe's premier frontier science funder, has continuously supported MBA-led Life Sciences research since 2014, placing MBA alongside top universities and institutes.

ERC Grants:

Professor Colin Brownlee FMBA
SeaCells (phytoplankton physiology)

Professor Michael Cunliffe FMBA
MYCO-CARB (marine fungi)

Dr Katherine Helliwell
DIACIDAL (diatom–bacteria interactions)

Professor David Sims
DEOXYfish (biologging and oxygen sensing in top marine predators)

research highlights

✉ micnli@mba.ac.uk

5

Awards

87

Peer-reviewed papers

96

Conferences, workshops and invited talks

“

This year, we welcomed six new PhD students, supporting the next generation of marine biologists. Top publications in leading journals revealed climate threats to ocean giants, diatom stress responses and marine heatwave impacts – underscoring our commitment to excellence in science to better understand our ocean.

Professor Michael Cunliffe
FMBA, Director of Science

SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION AT THE MBA

In October 2024, the MBA welcomed the following PhD students:



Stephanie Day
Marine Microbiome



Caitlin Dye
Marine Microbiome



Jamie Haddon
Marine Microbiome



Tayla Leathers
Coastal Ecology



Diego Morales Torres
Coastal Ecology



Frieda Schlegel
Marine Microbiome

96
INTERNATIONAL
EVENTS

WORLDWIDE REPRESENTATION

Our scientists have been taking their research to every corner of our blue planet at 96 international events.

OUR TOP PAPERS

Climate-driven global redistribution of an ocean giant predicts increased threat from shipping

Nature Climate Change



Diatoms exhibit dynamic chloroplast calcium signals in response to high light and oxidative stress

Plant Physiology



Global impacts of marine heatwaves on coastal foundation species

Nature Communications



PROTECTING WHALE SHARKS

Research on whale shark global collision-risk hotspots led directly to a Convention for Migratory Species Resolution to regulate ship speeds and routes in high-risk collision areas to reduced lethal ship strikes on whale shark aggregations.



marine microbiome

24

Peer-reviewed papers

25

Conferences, workshops and invited talks

Marine microbes are essential for life above and below the waves. They form and sustain biogeochemical cycles and underpin food webs.

Our diverse research programme explores the biology, ecology and evolution of different microbial groups including viruses, bacteria, phytoplankton and fungi.

RESEARCH THEMES

- Microbiology and Molecular Ecology
- Algal Signalling and Stress Physiology
- Algal Microbiome and Ecophysiology
- Algal Cell Biology
- Evolution of Early Branching metazoans

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Cell morphological plasticity in response to substrate availability of a cosmopolitan polymorphic yeast from the open ocean

• Mycologia



Plant-like heliotropism in a photosymbiotic animal
Journal of Experimental Biology



A critical trade-off between nitrogen quota and growth allows *Coccolithus braarudii* life cycle phases to exploit varying environment

• Biogeosciences



HIGHLIGHTS



ERC Award for Dr Katherine Helliwell

Research Fellow and Associate Professor at University of Exeter Dr Katherine Helliwell has received a significant funding boost from the European Research Council (ERC) for the project DIACIDAL, which examines interactions between phytoplankton and bacteria that can kill them.

“Interactions between phytoplankton and bacteria are crucial in mediating carbon cycling in the oceans, yet because they are invisible to the naked eye, we know little about how they work and their roles in the environment. I’m thrilled and honoured to have been awarded this ERC funding for my project DIACIDAL that will use new technologies to overcome these challenges.”



Soap Box Science

MBA Research Fellow Dr Katherine Helliwell with assistance from Dr Susie Wharam delivered an insightful presentation on the topic of algae and algal blooms at the popular Soapbox Science series, Exeter, showcasing the science of female researchers.

Soapbox Science is a public outreach event aiming to showcase the research of women and non-binary scientists who are making significant contributions to the scientific community.

Marine Research Plymouth Alliance

The dialogue series conferences aim to build a culture of communication and collaboration across the marine research community in Plymouth. In May 2024, the MBA held the 6th Research dialogues, “Marine microbes, microbiomes and holobionts.”

This research dialogue was open to all researchers in Plymouth engaged in research on marine microbes, microbiomes and holobionts. The ambition of this dialogue was to raise awareness of Plymouth marine scientists’ work and facilitate new synergies between researchers.



coastal ecology

Coastal marine ecosystems are highly diverse, productive environments, providing natural resources to billions of people worldwide. Climate change and human activities impact coastal habitats, sometimes changing entire ecosystems. Our research supports management and conservation of these vital ecosystems

36 Peer-reviewed papers

17 Conferences, workshops and invited talks



RESEARCH THEMES

- Benthic Ecosystems and Environmental Change
- Marine Biodiversity and Climate Change
- Biology and Invasions of Sessile Animals
- Deep-water Benthic Ecology and Crinoid Biology

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Quantifying growth, erosion and dislodgement rates of farmed kelp

Journal of Applied Phycology



Lethal and sub-lethal responses of rocky shore gastropods to extreme temperatures

Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology



Ocean extremes as a stress test for marine ecosystems and society

Nature Climate Change



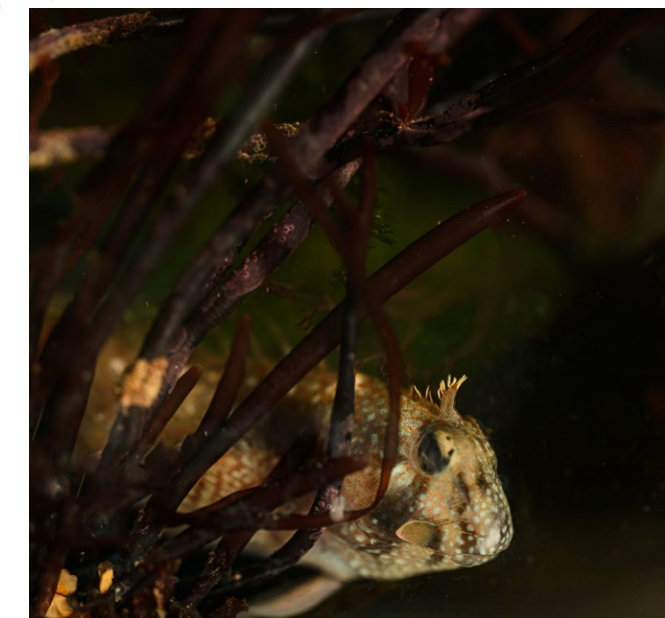
Image credit: Dan Smale

1,000TH MARINE GENOME SEQUENCED

MBA researchers successfully sampled the **1,000th species** for the Darwin Tree of Life project. This remarkable achievement marked a major step toward sequencing the DNA of all **70,000 species** across Britain and Ireland.

The 1,000th species – Montagu's blenny – was collected at Mountbatten Beach in Plymouth, celebrating both scientific progress and the UK's rich marine biodiversity.

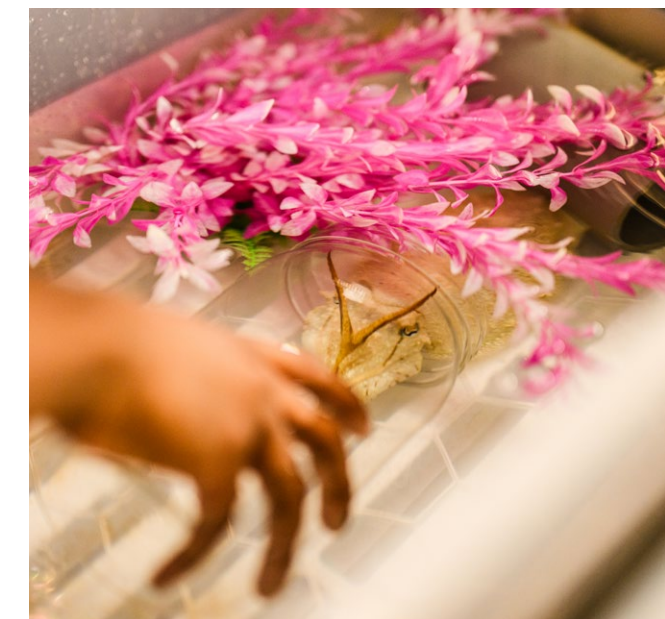
This blenny, a small fish found on rocky shores in the south and west of Britain, is named after Devon-based naturalist George Montagu.



POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF AQUACULTURE

A new collaborative project involving the MBA, Newcastle University and the Fishmongers' Company's Fisheries Charitable Trust aims to develop and test novel approaches to kelp restoration. The research will work towards futureproofing native kelp habitats by refining the 'green gravel' restoration technique, which involves seeding kelp plants in the laboratory before out-planting into the marine environment.

The project will also develop and test other restoration methods, benchmark the health of natural kelp populations and engage local fishing communities to facilitate kelp restoration and conservation. The project has been generously funded by the Marine Management Organisation, Fishmongers' Company's Fisheries Charitable Trust, Newcastle University, Seafarers Charity, Marshall Wace, Devon Environment Foundation and the Dixon Foundation.



PRIX D'EXCELLENCE AWARD

MBA Senior Research Fellow Dr Dan Smale has received the prestigious Prix d'Excellence ICES award for his groundbreaking work on climate change impacts in marine ecosystems, particularly marine heatwaves and kelp forest ecology. He was recognised for both his scientific contributions and his mentorship of early career researchers, as well as his collaboration with government, industry and Non-Governmental Organisations. Dr Smale also received the 2025 Hutchinson Award for his pioneering research on marine heatwaves and their effects on marine biodiversity.



ocean biology

From tracking ocean predators, to monitoring plankton, our Ocean Biology researchers explore how climate change and human activity impact marine life, supporting effective management of the ocean.

OUR TOP PAPERS

The vulnerability of sharks, skates, and rays to ocean deoxygenation: Physiological mechanisms, behavioural responses, and ecological impacts

Journal of Fish Biology



Latitudinal gradients and ocean fronts strongly influence protist communities in the southern Pacific Ocean

FEMS Microbiology Ecology



Do whale sharks select for specific environments to give birth?

Ecology and Evolution



RESEARCH THEMES

- Movement ecology and conservation of ocean predators
- Biophysics of a changing ocean: from plankton to predators
- Balancing the needs of fisheries and marine conservation
- Continuous Plankton Recorder (CPR) Survey

15 Peer-reviewed papers

39 Conferences, workshops and invited talks

114,349

CPR nautical miles

7.5M miles since 1931

HIGHLIGHTS

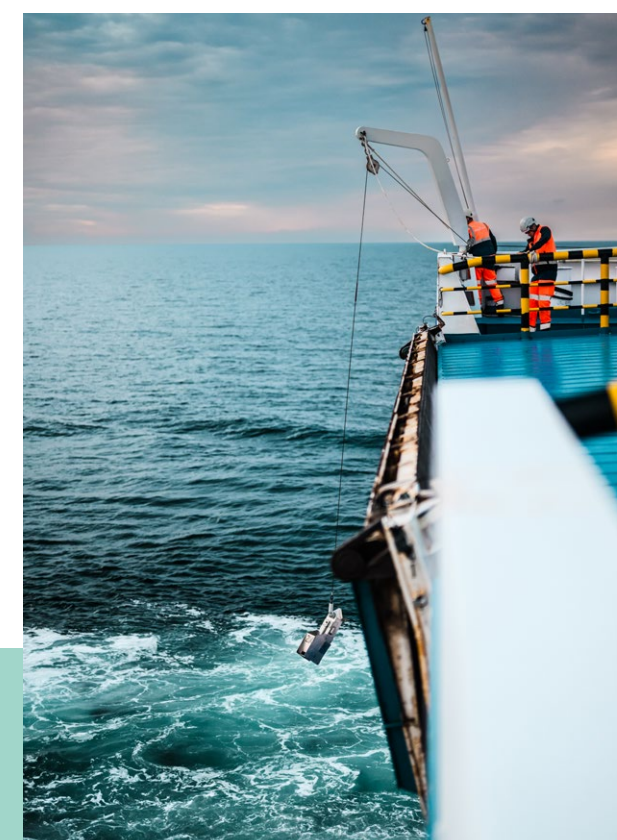
Shark science workshop

The MBA hosted a shark science workshop as part of an international collaboration to study the movement ecology of blue sharks in the eastern North Atlantic. This initiative leverages the existing citizen science partnerships between NOAA's Cooperative Shark Tagging Program and the UK recreational sea angling community. It aims to expand the tagging effort by recruiting additional support from the recreational angling sector to help deploy up to 2,000 conventional tags on mature blue sharks off the coast of the UK.



The Continuous Plankton Recorder (CPR)

The Continuous Plankton Recorder (CPR) Survey was represented at the Royal Society's Summer of Science exhibition. The exhibition stand focused on sustained observing systems in a changing ocean as part of the Atlantic Climate and Environment Strategic Science (AtlantiS) project. More than 10,000 people visited the exhibition during the week.



Next generation ocean innovators

Students from Darite Primary Academy worked with Professor David Sims and Dr Freya Womersley on The First Lego League competition. Inspired by MBA shark tracking studies, the pupils designed a creative solution to extend battery life in tracking tags using miniature hydroelectric turbines. Their project helped them win the Robot Performance trophy, securing a spot at the national finals, demonstrating how cutting-edge marine research can inspire the next generation of ocean innovators.

facilities

✉ info@mba.ac.uk

Situated overlooking the UK's first National Marine Park, the MBA's iconic location and world-class facilities with access to a multitude of marine habitats provides a destination for marine biology discovery.

Research Vessel MBA Sepia

A comprehensive digital overhaul has taken place to ensure that we can power research and education for our scientists, collaborators and clients. We are continuing to embrace digital and non-invasive techniques for surveys with developments including AUV, Drone, BRUVS, Side-scan Sonar and dropdown Camera/ROV.

Research Aquarium

Our Research Aquarium offers cutting-edge facilities and direct seawater access from Plymouth Sound, supporting diverse aquatic research. We host the UK's only 850 litre swim tunnel flume, advanced mesocosms, climate labs and a smart experimental facility. In 2024, we upgraded our seawater infrastructure with carbon neutral, biodiversity enhancing reef cubes. The 'Rays of Hope' project, in partnership with Plymouth Sound National Marine Park, engaged the public in ray conservation tracking development from egg to pup and releasing them back to sea.

Laboratories

Thanks to a generous and transformational grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation, we are advancing vital plankton research with the opening of our new Plankton Taxonomy Laboratory. Home to the global monitoring Continuous Plankton Recorder Survey, we have increased workstation capacity for sample processing and training the next wave of analysts.

NMBL

national marine
biological library

✉ nmbi@mba.ac.uk

The National Marine Biological Library is your gateway to centuries of cutting-edge marine science. Our library has been driving innovation since 1887 through its journals, rare books and archival objects.

USING OUR ARCHIVES



The Marie Lebour Marine Biology Research Facility

The School of Biological & Marine Sciences at the University of Plymouth has recently opened the Marie Lebour Marine Biology Research Facility. The research space utilises Dr Lebour's original illustrations, held in the MBA Archive, to highlight her pioneering work in plankton research.

Mussel Beds Uncovered

The *Mussel beds*: Historic charts of Lyme Bay were donated to local artist Hannah Wisdom and have revealed that mussel farming in the area is restoring previously unknown shellfish habitats. Research undertaken by the University of Plymouth discovered the map through Hannah's work, increasing their understanding of local habitat structure and regeneration.



Kelp Research

MBA researchers have recently published results of a study into the response of kelp forests to climate change. Using historic seaweed survey data (held in the MBA Archive) carried out by Dr Mary Parke FRS in the 1940s, they have been able to understand long-term effects and trends on *Laminaria hyperborea* forests.

Planet Ocean at The Box

Dr Marie Lebour's scientific illustrations were also used as part of The Box's year-long exhibition 'Planet Ocean', an immersive view at Plymouth's rich connection to the ocean.

data & information

✉ dassh.enquiries@mba.ac.uk

From participating in global knowledge exchanges to supporting national and global policy, the MBA has long been a pioneer in gathering and managing environmental data and information.

MARCO-BOLO

The MBA has significantly contributed to the EU Horizons Europe MARCO-BOLO project, co-leading and enhancing standards-driven data management and stakeholder engagement. It helped shape the project's data infrastructure to ensure marine biodiversity data meets rigorous standards for long-term usability. The MBA played a key role in science communication, developing a Community of Practice linking data producers with users like policymakers and conservationists. Its work extended to producing validated technical reports and policy briefs across multiple work packages.

DATA CAPACITY BUILDING

The MBA data team worked with the Ascension Island Government (AIG) on the development of an audit and set of recommendations related to their biodiversity data holdings. Following a series of online meetings and a site visit to this key UK Overseas Territory by MBA data team staff, they worked alongside the AIG to provide a data management strategy aligned with global data standards and the Findable Accessible Interoperable Reusable (FAIR) data principles.

BIG ROCKPOOL CHALLENGE

The MBA data team have continued to build on our partnership with the Big Rock Pool Project, providing Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN) training to staff and volunteers, supporting data collection at monthly BioBlitz events and streamlining and developing new data pathways between iNaturalist and Natural England to monitor the distribution of non-native species. To date, 36 occurrences of 10 different invasive non-native species were identified and reported to Natural England through our new reporting system.

16

Conferences
& Events

8

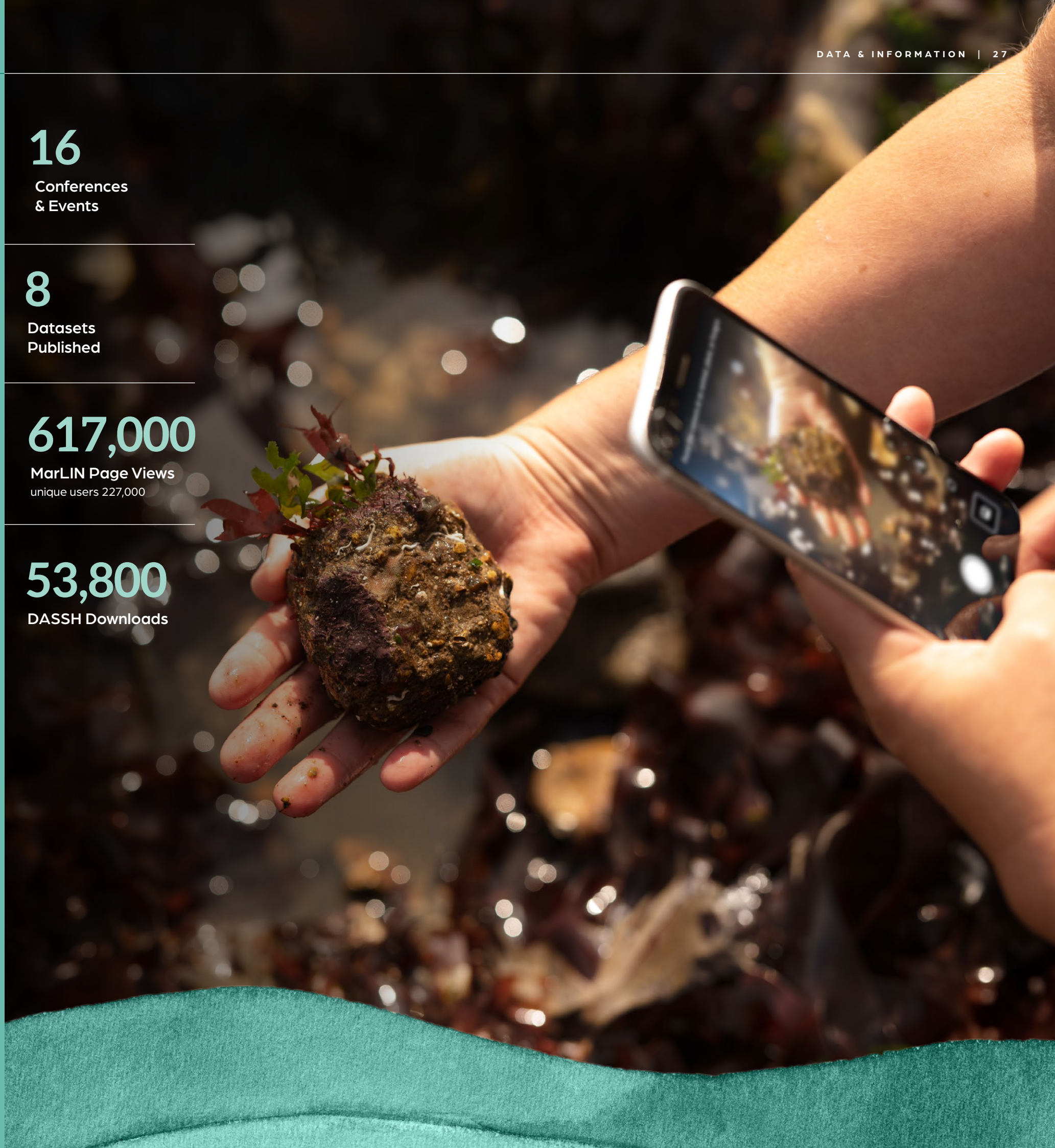
Datasets
Published

617,000

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unique users 227,000

53,800

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finance

Operating as a charity, the MBA's income for the financial year 2024/2025 was £6,056,981.

Primarily generated by and reinvested into our research, this helped us to expand our world-class knowledge and expertise within the marine biological community.

“

Thank you to each and every one of you for your unwavering support; whether you've made a donation, become a Member, have funded our work, or have donated your time, you've made a real difference! Everyone has a part to play in protecting our ocean, and we simply couldn't achieve this vital work without you.

Sherelle Puertas
Fundraising Manager

your support matters

✉ fundraising@mba.ac.uk

The generosity of our supporters helps to tackle urgent ocean issues through world-leading marine science.

Your donation isn't just a gift – it's an investment, bringing us one step closer to our mission: **pioneering science for a healthy ocean.**

TOTAL INCOME

£6,056,981

GRANT SUCCESS RATE

52%

DONATIONS

£10,547

STUDENT BURSARIES AWARDED

9

STUDENT BURSARY

Student Member Helen Hiley attended the 25th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals in Perth, Australia.

“Attending the conference was a powerful reminder of the value of in-person engagement in science and a meaningful step in my journey as a researcher. I am immensely grateful to the MBA for their support.”



ANNE WARNER
RESEARCH FELLOW

Between 2018 and 2025, Dr Vengamanaidu Modepalli held the Anne Warner Research Fellowship, leading groundbreaking research into the origins of early animal life.

“I have had the opportunity to explore some of the fundamental questions surrounding the evolution of animals. Working alongside inspiring colleagues in state-of-the-art facilities has equipped me to tackle complex challenges. This has energised my passion for ocean conservation, helping to shape a sustainable future for our planet.”

This fellowship was made possible through the late Professor Anne Warner FRS legacy, which will inspire future marine scientists for years to come.

Together, we can power the science that protects our ocean.

EVERY CONTRIBUTION HELPS TO:

- Drive cutting-edge research into the life in our ocean
- Discover science-based solutions that anchor action
- Fuel the next wave of ocean minds

donate today



looking ahead

“

I am excited with our new Strategy 150. It is more than a roadmap, it is a bold commitment to the health of our ocean and the life it sustains. In the face of climate change and biodiversity loss, we are doubling down on our core mission: to understand ocean biology, inspire action and drive innovation to achieve impact for the benefit of humankind.

We recently published our new Strategy 150 which charts a course towards 150 years of pioneering science at the MBA. The strategy places greater emphasis on commercial application of our science programme. We have a mandate to deliver this through our Royal Charter. It compels us to think commercially, not for financial considerations alone, but to amplify our impact, accelerate innovation and ensure that our science serves people and society.

Our aim is to unlock new pathways for collaboration, investment and innovation. We will build on our heritage to create sustainable ventures that translate marine biological insights into solutions for health, climate resilience, food security and environmental restoration, as well as creating new knowledge. In turn, this will empower our scientists, engage our Members and extend our reach, ensuring the MBA remains a global leader in marine science with real-world relevance.

MBA's voyage continues and the horizon is full of promise.

Professor Willie Wilson FMBA,
Chief Executive

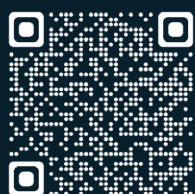


**Read our
Strategy 150**



membership with a mission: pioneering science for the health of our ocean.

Join the voice of marine
biology today:



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