

NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 30 | Oct 2024



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OCEANS PAST INITIATIVE

Fisheries in the landscape and architecture

Serendipitously, I think there is a very nice and natural pairing with the research of our spotlight in this issue, Paul Montgomery, and André Tavares' forthcoming book, *Architecture Follows Fish* – and therefore plenty for all of you to slake your interests in fisheries structures. We also present the newly elected OPI Governing Board and give you a chance to get know our new board members a bit better. To round us out in this issue, we have some newly won projects, recent publications, and resources!

Rachel M. Winter, OPN Editor

Centre de Recherche sur la Biodiversité et l'Environnement, CNRS, Université de Toulouse†



Stone fish weirs, North grouping at Chipiona, Cadiz, Andalusia Spain.

OCEANS PAST SPOTLIGHT*

10 Questions: Dr Paul Montgomery

(Trinity College Dublin Ireland)

Q1. First – a brief introduction: can you describe your research as it pertains to the past in two sentences or less? My interests revolve around studying our relationship with the marine environment, investigating the archaeological and ecological remains of humanity's interaction with the environment, and how this interaction has shaped our societies and influences both societies and the ocean in the context of the wider marine environment.

Q2. Why do you find research on the past important? "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes," as Mark Twain is often reputed to have said. The existence of the human species only represents a tiny slice of our planet's history; despite our short stay here, we have negatively impacted nearly every ecological zone in the world, especially the oceans, which comprise 70% of the earth's surface. Only by striving to understand the nature of our evolution in tandem with our environment can we hope to remedy some of these mistakes and avoid future pitfalls for our species.

Q3. Was there a person or event that had a particular influence on your commitment to studying history and historical ecosystems? My interest in the marine environment began long before my academic development had even started, growing up fishing and gathering bait from the foreshore in Dublin Bay. Being dyslexic and almost illiterate until I was almost halfway through secondary school... the sea was my classroom. Learning to observe the ocean and the behaviour of different species became embedded in my perspective of the natural environment. Later, studying

[†] Views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect that of my employer

*Each issue of Oceans Past News includes a feature article, either as an **Oceans Past Spotlight** or as **10 Questions**. If you would like to be considered for either, or to nominate a colleague or mentee, please contact Rachel Winter at rachelwinter@palaeome.org.

archaeology and ancient history during my development, I drifted more and more toward the maritime/coastal zone as the focus of my research.

Q4. What advice would you give those who want to engage in historical work or collaborate with our community? To develop and grow yourself, you must be willing to open yourself to other ideas and approaches foreign to your education and perspective. Only by exposing your own research ideas to people from different fields of study can you hope to gain new insights and foster collaboration across multiple disciplines.

Q5. Do you believe the past can help with solving contemporary environmental/social problems, and if so, what is one area we can provide insight on? To

solve any problem, we first need to understand the context and the mechanisms of past actions and possible future solutions. Only by studying historical and contemporary examples can we gain enough information and a clear understanding of the processes involved and the implications for what actions we decide to take!

Q6. When you do assess our current environmental and societal challenges, what gives you hope? Without a doubt, there is still hope, as we (society) have realised that our actions have implications. Examples of the recovery of species and the relative improvement of the environment during events like a coronavirus outbreak have shown us that nature has it within itself to rebound. For us, the challenge now is to make better decisions and actively help nature and the natural world improve and maintain our place in this world into the future.

Q7. What knowledge would you like to pass on to the next generation, of the public or of scientists? As impressive as the language of science is, your thoughts and findings will only have a real impact on this world if you shape the way in which you communicate to fit your audience! Being down to earth and simply explaining things is one of the most underrated academic skills.



Sampling a prehistoric fish trap stump recently discovered on the foreshore of Lough Swilly, Ireland.



Watching the catch being unloaded as 5:00 AM in the morning on the docks in Magong City, Penghu County, Taiwan.



Group photos of Day 1 of the 2023 International Conference of the Conservation and Stone Tidal Weirs Taiwan. Hosted by the National Central University of Taiwan in collaboration with the BOCH (Cultural Heritage division of the Tawianese government).

Q8. What field of research – besides the one you are working in – do you consider most exciting? As a maritime archaeologist, I'm very interested in mapping and exploring the marine continental shelf. The earliest human sites of fishing and marine resources, many still exist hundreds of metres below the surface.

Q9. What are you reading at the moment? When not reading something from work I tend towards science fiction and fantasy, Tolkien, Hyperion by Dan Simmons. I am slowly reading The Unnatural History of the Sea by Prof. Callum Roberts in my free time.

Q10. What is a critical but perhaps under-acknowledged question we as a community should be asking? What avenues can we take to break down the perception barriers between academia and the wider public to make the study and conservation of our oceans a more meaningful dinner table discussion topic?

For more about Paul's work: The UNESCO Oceans decade project I am a member of is "**Indigenous People, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and Climate Change: The Iconic Underwater Cultural Heritage of Stone Tidal Weirs**" #OceanAction46159. Our project has eight primary members who are spread all over the world, working in many different locations and contexts, including Ireland (which I represent as the base of our research in the North Atlantic). This project deals with aspects of fisheries, history, biology, archaeology, and anthropology all in the context of coastal communities and their relationship with our world's oceans.

Paul is also very active and shares a lot of great content related to his work on various social media platforms ([Twitter/X](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#)) which I highly recommend checking out! I'm especially partial to the images and science communication he has on LinkedIn. ~RMW

RESEARCH & OTHER NEWS

New Oceans Past Initiative Governing Board

Per the Ocean Past Initiative's (OPI) Constitution, every two years we hold elections for the next governing board in which OPI members elect the next board by popular vote. We wrapped up elections this year in late August and announced our incoming board members to members in early September. Before announcing the new board, we want to extend our most heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the outgoing board members, **Poul Holm**, **Alison MacDiarmid**, and **Cristina Brito**, for their efforts and work over the years to make OPI what it is and building up this community.

Now without further ado, welcome to our **new governing board**: Ruth Thurstan (Chair), Andre Carlo Colonese (Secretary), Ben Fitzhugh (Treasurer), Nayeli Jiménez Cano, Youri van den Hurk, Carolina Chong-Montenegro, Ilse Martínez Candelas, and Madison Bowden-Parry. Please read on to learn a bit more about each of them and how they plan to contribute to the OPI over the next two years!



Ruth Thurstan (OPI Chair). Associate Professor in Marine and Historical Ecology, University of Exeter, UK

What is your position on the Board and what does this entail? I am the new Chair of the OPI Board. In addition to running our monthly board meetings and helping to organise the Oceans Past conference series, I look forward to representing the OPI community to external groups.

What is your interest in serving on the Board of OPI? The OPI has been so important to my professional development over the years. Through the OPI community I have been able to broaden my research network, while the conferences and collaborations developed have opened my eyes to

exciting new questions and approaches. Being on the Board is a fantastic way to give back while helping to shape the future of the OPI. I am passionate to continue growing this global network that does vital work to understand and communicate changes in marine and coastal social-ecological systems through time.

What is one hope or goal you have for OPI moving forward? Key priorities include further strengthening the OPI as an inclusive network that enables researchers to thrive. To establish a secure future for the OPI we need to continue to grow our global membership, and I am particularly interested in finding ways to further support early career researchers and researchers from the Global South who are researching past oceans and human-ocean interactions.

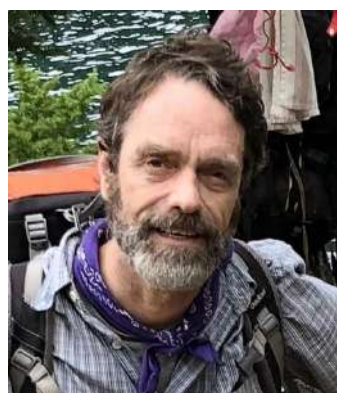


Andre Carlo Colonese (Secretary). *Director of Research in the Department of Prehistory and the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain*

What is your position on the Board and what does this entail? I am the new Secretary of the OPI Board, responsible for managing the monthly board meetings, assisting with the Oceans Past conference series, and promoting OPI to external groups.

What is your interest in serving on the Board of OPI? OPI presents a unique opportunity to facilitate and promote a historical perspective on some of the greatest challenges our society faces today, such as the escalating degradation of our oceans and seas. It also provides a platform to showcase examples of sustainable and respectful human interaction with these ecosystems. My primary interest is to support the research network in achieving its mission. In addition, a quick look at studies on marine historical ecology reveals a significant gap in the southern hemisphere, particularly in Latin American and African countries. Given this gap, and my experience working in South America, my interest in serving on the board is to strengthen its Global South component and connect it to other initiatives worldwide.

What is one hope or goal you have for OPI moving forward? One of my key goals is to enhance OPI's relevance in the Southern Hemisphere, particularly in regions with significant research gaps. I also aim to foster a deeper reflection on its role within the science-policy interface, especially in relation to conservation and cultural heritage management. On an executive level, I will contribute to expanding OPI's membership by increasing its visibility among a wider audience.



Ben Fitzhugh (Treasurer). *Professor of Anthropological Archaeology, Department of Anthropology, University of Washington, United States*

What is your position on the Board and what does this entail? I have served on the board since 2018 and co-hosted both (virtual) 2020 OPI meeting and the 2022 OPI meeting in Seattle (joint with the annual meeting of the Ecosystem Studies of Subarctic Seas/ ESSAS regional fisheries ecology program). In my third term on the Board, I have been elected to the seat of Treasurer with the charge to oversee OPI finances such that we can continue to serve the members and advance the OPI mission and vision.

What is your interest in serving on the Board of OPI? I agreed to serve out of a deep interest in the dynamic interplay between the ocean systems and the histories of maritime cultures, not to mention the opportunity to become acquainted with an exciting community of scholars with interests closely connected to my own. I enjoy facilitating interdisciplinary discovery and the unexpected synergies that emerge when communities of diverse scholarship have the opportunity to listen, learn and exchange ideas with each other. The OPI congresses provide this unique opportunity, and the work of the Board between

congresses helps keep OPI members connected, draw new scholars into the community, and provide services of value (e.g., OBIS, OPI Website, and Ocean's Past News).

What is one hope or goal you have for OPI moving forward? I see OPI as the perfect venue to build richer connections between the histories of human maritime interactions and the temporal dynamics of climate and ocean ecosystems. I enjoy learning about the great work being done by colleagues across OPI that connect these themes globally. In the past several years, we have managed to expand participation from researchers in the North Pacific, where my own research is focused. I have been pleased to see OPI expand as well to be more inclusive of scholars from the tropics and southern hemisphere and to grapple with ways of including more Indigenous voices and Indigenous knowledge. We need to keep working to increase representation in these areas and, in particular, to facilitate participation in OPI meetings, perhaps even hosting meetings every few years in the Global South. I believe historical ecology of the maritime system has vital lessons to share with the world about long-term trends in human-ecological relationships that are obscured in much contemporary the science and policy. We can do better, and OPI research makes an important contribution future planning. To succeed equitably, we need global engagement!



Nayeli Jiménez Cano. *Marie Curie Postdoctoral fellow, Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, France*

What is your position on the Board and what does this entail? I am a new Board member. I participate in the monthly meetings and am eager to help with organizing the OPI biannual meetings. Specifically, I am part of the website management team to ensure the platform reaches a wider audience, including future members and the research community.

What is your interest in serving on the Board of OPI? I see OPI as an ideal platform to bring together interdisciplinary research to help understand the past of the Oceans from a socio-ecological perspective and I am excited to amplify the presence of diverse researchers from different origins and backgrounds. I am also enthusiastic about integrating local communities into the research process and communicating OPI's work with those who directly face these coastal and marine challenges, contributing to promoting their views and constructing a more comprehensive and collaborative research network.

What is one hope or goal you have for OPI moving forward? My goal for OPI is to strengthen its research network by fostering connections between researchers across diverse fields and stages of their careers. I also aim to expand OPI's reach to a broader audience, beyond the Global North, to engage with researchers from around the world. By doing so, I hope to encourage richer, cross-cultural collaborations that can enhance the impact of OPI's research, making it globally relevant.



Carolina Chong-Montenegro. *Postdoctoral research fellow, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland*

What is your position on the Board and what does this entail? I am the membership officer of OPI. I oversee membership status, respond to inquiries, and process renewals. Additionally, I participate in our monthly meetings and help organize OPI conferences.

What is your interest in serving on the Board of OPI? OPI has an extensive research community that brings together experts from various disciplines to explore the histories of our

oceans. My interest in serving on the Board is to support OPI's goals and help establish collaborations across regions, particularly by strengthening networks with regions in the Global South.

What is one hope or goal you have for OPI moving forward? I hope to increase OPI's visibility and attract individuals, particularly Early Career Researchers, interested in the historical legacies of our oceans. I also aim to foster collaborations across regions, where we can learn from each other's experiences and help build stronger partnerships among OPI members.



Madison Bowden-Parry. *PhD Researcher in Marine Historical Ecology, University of Exeter, UK*

What is your position on the Board and what does this entail? I am a new Early Career Representative board member. As well as contributing to regular OPI objectives, alongside Ilse, Youri, and Carolina, I will help facilitate and manage the OPI social media accounts.

What is your interest in serving on the Board of OPI? My PhD uses interdisciplinary approaches to better understand past marine ecosystems and communities, which has naturally provided me with the opportunities to foster cross-disciplinary collaborations. It is through this work that I was able to connect with the OPI community and broaden my research network, by attending and being a part of the local organising committee

for the OPX 2024 conference. I am excited by the strong ECR representative of the board and opportunity to work alongside a great team, as well as the professional development opportunities provided within the OPI.

What is one hope or goal you have for OPI moving forward? I hope that by contributing to OPI as a board member, and through the digital outreach work, I can contribute towards growing the community and its reach. By helping facilitate a space that showcases marine historical ecology research and the lessons to share, I hope we can generate collaborations across disciplines, including contemporary science and policy, as well as the ECRs in this space.



Ilse Alejandra Martínez Candelas. *Ph.D. student. School of Environmental Studies, University of Victoria, Canada*

What is your position on the Board and what does this entail? I am one of the early career board members and part of the social media team. My role is to be part of the decision-making and to help organize the Oceans Past Conference.

What is your interest in serving on the Board of OPI? The Oceans Past conference was the one event where I felt that my research fit perfectly. I was inspired by amazing researchers from disciplines as diverse as

archeology, history, and biology. I wanted to be part of OPI to help it expand to other latitudes and bring the perspective of the Global South to the table.

What is one hope or goal you have for OPI moving forward? My main goal is to get more people involved. There are amazing projects and research happening across the world, and OPI is the perfect place to promote them, either through the conference or the newsletter, and to build collaborative networks.



Youri van den Hurk. *Postdoctoral fellow, Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, France*

What is your position on the Board and what does this entail? I am one of the Early Career Researcher representatives on the board. I would like to ensure a strong presence of ECRs within the OPI. I take care of some of the social media activities and have been involved in organizing the 2024 conference.

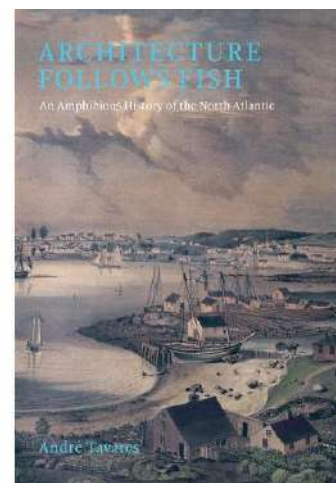
What is your interest in serving on the Board of OPI? I have attended the OPI meetings for several years now and have always enjoyed attending these conferences. By sitting on the board I hope to make these meetings even more attractive to researchers and especially to ECRs.

What is one hope or goal you have for OPI moving forward? I would like to see the OPI get bigger and attract people from more various backgrounds. Moreover, I would like to see a direct link with conservation ecologists and policy makers and make the data we collect from the ocean's past more relevant to modern issues. It is my strong belief that the past holds important lessons for the present and future.

Forthcoming book: *Architecture Follows Fish: An Amphibious History of the North Atlantic* by André Tavares

A highly original exploration of the history of architecture in relation to fish, shedding light on the connection between marine environments and terrestrial landscapes.

Architecture Follows Fish is set in the North Atlantic, and its protagonist is fish. In this book author and architect **André Tavares** explores the notion of fishing architecture, a concept coined to describe architectural practices that are spawned by fisheries. To encompass the scope of fishing architecture, and to establish the connections between marine ecology and architectural practice, the book oscillates between different continents, centuries, and species. Fisheries are unique, and this book sheds light on that uniqueness through an articulated narrative and a wealth of iconography.



Up until now there has been no history of architecture from the perspective of fish, although there are counterparts for meat, timber, oil, and many other industries. Tavares provides a counternarrative to the traditional history of marine environments, which tends to focus on water ecosystems, and instead forms a bridge between what happens at sea and what happens on land. The hope is that, after reading this book, readers will better understand life in the sea in relation to urban growth and terrestrial landscapes. (publisher's note)

André's book will be published later this month (29th October), keep an eye out for it [here](#)! ~RMW

Recently Funded UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) Project: *Converting historical knowledge into sustainable ocean management*

Dr Alec Moore from **Bangor University** will bring together historians and marine scientists to convert historical observations of fishers, past and present, into knowledge that will inform marine ecosystem management.

The project will focus on historical data about the Atlantic herring, a fundamentally important component of the marine ecosystem in the northeast Atlantic which collapsed in the mid-20th century.

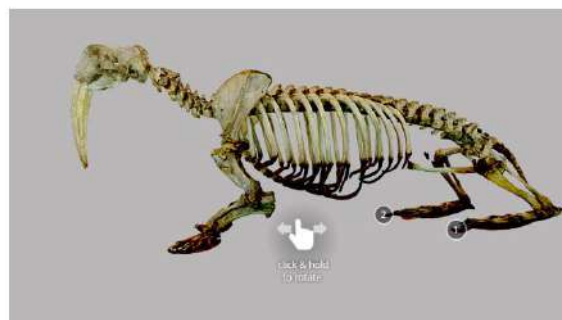
It will use historical sources mostly from the 17th to the early 20th centuries, including:

- the writings of early modern naturalists and travellers
- newspaper archives
- government inquiries
- the memory of living fishers

The findings will help to identify ecologically important herring spawning areas and understand the long-term variations in spawning activity in response to changing climates.

RESOURCES

Dr. Katrien Dierickx (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) has created a **virtual reference collection** for the **Atlantic walrus** (*Odobenus rosmarus*), which is accessible directly from Sketchfab at <https://skfb.ly/oVG8B> or via the 4-OCEANS website at www.4oceansercnorway.org



Job opportunity. A **one-year postdoc** position in Archaeomalacology and Sclerochronology as part of the Ginnerup Project team at **Aarhus University** is open for applications. The **deadline to apply is 25 October** with an anticipated start on 1 December 2024 (or as soon as possible thereafter), to undertake sclerochronological and isotopic analyses on shells from the Neolithic site of Ginnerup. Additional details of the position can be found here: <https://international.au.dk/about/profile/vacant-positions/job/a-one-year-postdoc-position-in-archaeomalacology-and-sclerochronology-as-part-of-the-ginnerup-project>

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Agiadi K, Caswell BA, Almeida R, Becheker A, Blanco A, Brito C, León-Cobo MS, Cook EE, Costantini F, Karakuş M, Leprieur F, López C, López-López L, O'Dea A, Pallacks S, Rabanal I, Schultz L, Tanner SE, Theodoropoulou T, Thurstan, RH, Vieira N, Darnaude AM. (2024). ***Changes in marine functional connectivity through the ages: a geological and historical perspective***. Human Impacts on Marine Functional Connectivity. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, tbc, 1-28. [doi: 10.1093/icesjms/fsae117](https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsae117)

Guiry E, Robson HK. (2024). ***Deep antiquity of seagrasses supporting European eel fisheries in the western Baltic***. *Proceedings. Biological Sciences*, 291(2027), 20240674. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2024.0674>

Holm, P. (2024). *Explaining major shifts in early-modern economies: the causes for the decline of the North Sea Fisheries of Southwest Denmark, 1537–1657*. *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03585522.2024.2406762>

McClenachan L, Rick T, Thurstan RH, Trant A, Alagona PS, Alleway HK, Armstrong C, Bliege Bird R, Rubio-Cisneros NT, Clavero M, Colonese AC, Cramer K, Davis AO, Drew J, Early-Capistrán MM, Gil-Romera G, Grace M, Hatch MBA, Higgs, E, ... Van Houtan KS. (2024). *Global research priorities for historical ecology to inform conservation*. *Endangered Species Research*, 54, 285–310. <https://doi.org/10.3354/esr01338>

McClenachan L, Cope J, Martínez-Candelas I, Nowlis J, Rubio-Cisneros NT, Tewfik A, Cramer KL. (2024). *Pathways for integrating historical information into fisheries decision-making*. *Fish and Fisheries*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/faf.12854>

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Ruiz-Puerta EJ, Jarrett G, McCarthy ML, Pan SE, Keighley X, Aiken M, Zampirolo G, Loonen MJJE, Gotfredsen AB, Howse LR, Szpak P, Pálsson S, Rufolo S, Malmquist HJ, Desjardins SPA, Olsen MT, & Jordan PD. (2024). *Greenland Norse walrus exploitation deep into the Arctic*. *Science Advances*, 10(39), eadq4127. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.adq4127>

Tavares A. 2024. *Architecture Follows Fish: An Amphibious History of the North Atlantic*. The MIT Press.

Thurstan RH, McCormick H, Preston J, Ashton EC, Bennema FP, Bratoš Cetinić A, Brown JH, [...] zu Ermgassen PSE. 2024. *Records Reveal the Vast Historical Extent of European Oyster Reef Ecosystems*. *Nature Sustainability*, October, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-024-01441-4>

ANNOUNCEMENTS: CONFERENCES and WORKSHOPS

Upcoming conference. The VIII International Symposium on Maritime History and Archaeology: Offshore, Inshore: Connections, Perceptions, and Vestiges in the Maritime and Coastal Space (VIII Simposio Internacional de Historia y Arqueología Marítimas: mar adentro, mar afuera conexiones, percepciones y vestigios en el espacio marítimo y litoral) has been organised by the **Universidad de Cadiz** (Spain) and **Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México** and **Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Mexico)** from the **21st-25th October 2024** in **Mérida, Mexico**. For more information, see the conference website: <https://www.cephcis.unam.mx/evento/viii-simposio-internacional-de-historia-y-arqueologia-maritimas/>

Upcoming conference. International conference 'Commodities and Environments in Early Modern Global Asia, 1400–1800', organised in the framework of the ERC-funded project CAPASIA The Asian Origins of Global Capitalism and hosted by the European University Institute in Florence from the 13th – 15th November 2024. [Conference website](#).

Upcoming conference and call for papers. The Built Ocean is the theme for the **EAHN (European Architectural History Network) 2025 Thematic Conference** taking place in **Porto, Portugal** on **September 10-13, 2025**. EAHN Porto 2025 will be hosted by the research project **Fishing Architecture** at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto. Architects require solid ground on which to base their practice, yet oceans have always been a key element shaping the history of architecture and the built environment. This themed conference aims to shift the focus of

architectural history from the land to the sea. It will address the planet's bodies of salt water either as areas of increasing urbanization (through the building of structures such as underwater cables, oil rigs, windmills, etc.), as connectors between space and cultures (navigation routes for people and resources, transported in the form of knowledge, labour, and materials), or as an ecosystem functioning, in connection with the land, as an essential life-support system (defining climatic patterns, providing resources from food to raw materials, and securing services from carbon sequestration to large-scale habitats). The **conference aims** to bring together scholars representing a wide range of interdisciplinary knowledge and sets out to cover a broad chronological scope, from deep history and archaeological sources to more recent accounts of ecological decline and potential futures. *Where is the architecture of the sea? To what extent does the built environment impact saltwater landscapes? What reciprocal impacts do seascapes have on the built environment?*

Proposals are to be submitted using the conference's online platform, via a link soon available; they should include an abstract of no more than 400 words and an author's bio (c.200 words per author). Abstracts will be evaluated primarily on the basis of their relevance to the conference theme; innovative methods, interdisciplinary exploration, and sound research will also be taken into account. Contributions should be the result of original research and should not have been previously published or be in the process of being published elsewhere. The **deadline for abstract submission is 18 January 2025**.

We welcome and encourage proposals from researchers from around the world, at any career stage and representing a broad range of disciplinary backgrounds and methodological approaches to architecture and the built environment—including but not limited to marine biology, ecology, literary studies, history, geography, archaeology, anthropology, or media studies.

For further details, please see the conference website: www.thebuilttocean.com or email: fish@arq.up.pt



CONTACT

Oceans Past News is a quarterly newsletter that aspires to both unite and inform the worldwide community interested in historical perspectives of marine social-ecological systems by providing insight into the wide-ranging and excellent work being done and the resources available. If you would like to propose work for OPN in the future, please contact **Rachel Winter** (rachelwinter@palaeome.org).

*The next Oceans Past News will be out in January 2025. We **warmly welcome submissions** through December 2024.*

RESOURCES

The Oceans Past News Archive is available online: <https://oceanspast.org/newsletter.php>

More on the Oceans Past Initiative: <http://oceanspast.org>

OPI on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/122288493384/> and Twitter: [@oceans_past](https://twitter.com/oceans_past)