

NEWSLETTER

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OCEANS PAST INITIATIVE

Celebrating the two decade milestone of OPI

This edition of the Oceans Past Newsletter, in particular, its timing, is truly something to note as it coincides with the foundations of the Oceans Past Initiative, two decades ago. In this rendition of your quarterly news, you're treated with a snapshot of what this community encompasses, reflections and personal anecdotes on OPI from Prof. Cristina Brito, reevaluations of how far back we will look with Prof. Daniel Pauly, and a showcasing of one of the ECRs with Dr. Liz Quinlan. Cheers to the future and seeing what another two decades (plus) of OPI will bring!

Rachel M. Winter, OPN Editor
Globe Institute, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

OCEANS PAST SPOTLIGHT*

Reflections from two decades of growth

This month marks a monumental anniversary in thinking about the origins of and evolution to where our OPI community currently stands (read on if you're not clear why 😊). Prof. Cristina Brito, an Associate Professor in the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas and senior researcher at the CHAM – Centro de Humanidades, NOVA FCSH, Lisbon (and also a PI of the ERC-Synergy 4-OCEANS project) is very well-positioned to provide her personal reflections on how our community has grown since its inception in 2005. ~RMW

Year Zero. Year Ten. Year Twenty.

In October 2005, in Denmark, while attending the first *Oceans Past* conference as a PhD student, I was simultaneously pregnant with my daughter and beginning my doctoral project. For these reasons it was a turning point. This event marked the start of a trajectory that would become distinctly interdisciplinary, bridging biology and history, and that offered me the opportunity to meet mentors and colleagues. It represented a moment of rupture, of disruption, a definitive threshold between a “before” and an “after.” Over the course of twenty years, this trajectory has unfolded through personal and professional experiences closely tied to the sea, the islands, marine animals, books, the visual and material dimensions of the oceans, as well as to the histories – both coastal and pelagic, both close and distant – of the Atlantic world. Histories that are also our own. They are mine, and those of Rafaela and Nina, Ana, Catarina, Patrícia, Joana, Brígida, and Jaime, André, and Diogo, who quickly learned how to dive deep and return to the surface.



Prof. Cristina Brito.

Our intertwined paths and narratives shape the argument and the project that is marine environmental history in Portugal: a collective endeavor undertaken side by side, among colleagues and across disciplines, trading and discussing perspectives on the past and the future of the oceans. The aim has been to construct, with both scientific rigor and a structure that extends beyond the strictly academic, a set of *humanities for the oceans* conceived in Portuguese, yet attentive to a plural, multispecific and multicultural world.

Back in 2015, Inês Amorim established the national network in Portugal - *Report(h)a* – and several conferences have been organized since. Articles were published, projects developed, and new spaces opened for emerging researchers and joint funding opportunities. These were supported not only by the European Society of Environmental History but also by the global network and by partnerships that grew out of what, after the HMAP (History of Marine Animal Populations), became our *Oceans Past Initiative*.

Within this history, Poul Holm has been a driving force, a leader and mentor, coordinator of projects and working groups. And a good friend to many of us. He is the central figure in a community of scholars with shared interests spread across the world, serving as both a common denominator and a connecting link between methodological approaches and research questions that bring human history into dialogue with the histories of other marine species. Also in 2015, after securing the European COST Action *Oceans Past Platform* (OPP, 2015–2019), Poul obtained an ERC Grant for the project *NORFISH: North Atlantic Fisheries: An Environmental History, 1400–1700* (2016–2021), thus consolidating a field of research that until then had been slowly emerging. Marine environmental history gained its own place in Europe and, in a tentacular way (Donna Haraway comes to my mind), spread across multiple countries and research groups.



Poul Holm at the CHAM International Conference Lisbon 2017.

In Portugal, based at CHAM – Centre for the Humanities, NOVA FCSH, the European project *CONCHA: The Construction of Early Modern Global Cities and Oceanic Networks in the Atlantic* (2018–2022) developed a working group dedicated exclusively to the study of marine resource exploitation in the early modern Atlantic. Within this research unit, a line of inquiry focused on maritime studies was established, which later evolved into a dedicated group on environment, interactions, and globalizations in the long chronology. Alongside this, a series of conferences on the history of people and environments have been organized by Ana Roque and colleagues, complementing the national conferences on environmental history. International scholars have participated in these initiatives, among them Steve Mentz, whose contributions are particularly noteworthy.



Troia fieldtrip 2024.

Equally significant, CHAM hosts one of the principal investigators and the so-called Lisbon research team of the ERC *4-Oceans: Human History of Marine Life* (2021–2027). This was the first Synergy Grant in the domain of the Humanities obtained in Portugal and, significantly, deals with the past of the oceans. It is a partnership formed with Poul Holm and Francis Ludlow (both at Trinity College Dublin), zooarchaeologist James Barrett (NTNU), and me serving as an environmental historian (NOVA FCSH). Under my leadership, but growing past it, a multidisciplinary team is advancing knowledge on the uses of marine megafauna from Roman and medieval times through the modern period, with a special focus on the Global South. Our work ensures that the environmental history of the oceans also speaks Portuguese, and that it is transmitted to new generations in dialogue with the most recent scientific and historiographical developments.

Today, October 2025, at NOVA FCSH in Lisbon, courses in Ocean History and Environmental History form an integral part of curricula in history as well as in other fields across the humanities, social sciences, and the arts. In this way, pathways are opened toward the *blue humanities*, and the humanities that encompasses all the shades (and shadows) of the natural and more-than-human world.

In terms of conceptual framing and theoretical orientation, our research engages with the dynamics of ecological and oceanic teleconnections and the long-distance transfer of energy. Our colleague Nina Vieira, with a brand-new tenure-track position in the environmental humanities at NOVA FCSH, discusses how whale oil, for instance, functioned as one of the many forms of “cheap nature” produced under European imperialism, reshaping global relations of food, energy, and labor. Similarly, the extraction and utilization of seals and sea lions across the Global South illustrate patterns of continuous exploitation, while the ways in which sea cows were globally used, represented, and reimagined by different human societies reveal shifting cultural and ecological meanings over time and across regions. Beyond the focus on marine mammals, our work also incorporates extensive information on fish. This encompasses various taxonomic groups of commercial importance, the geographic distribution of capture and trade of fish, as well as patterns of internal consumption, preferences, resource availability and extraction volumes. Taken together, these strands contribute to an effort to build a new history of natural history, ichthyology, and the oceans – one that highlights the entanglement of ecological and cultural processes and includes animals as active agents. Many dimensions of this field remain uncovered and marine environmental history and the blue humanities in Portugal have a long path ahead. This is my journey.

We have been growing together thanks to a global effort, and so it is the time to say cheers for the past years. Let us have another twenty. ~**Cristina Brito**

STRETCHING THE DEFINITION OF 'PAST' TO ITS LIMITS

With this contribution from Professor **Daniel Pauly** of the **Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries** at the **University of British Columbia** which stretches our definition of the past much deeper in time, we simultaneously are presented with his challenge, and I quote, of looking so far back into the past "to a limit that no one will be able to stretch further." (To see Prof. Pauly's prior look in OPN into deeper time, see the 25th edition). ~RMW

The most ancient growth curve

Daniel Pauly

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As a student, I learned that the Cambrian (539 – 487 million years ago) was the earliest period with abundant and varied metazoan life. However, this 'sudden' appearance of a wide range of fossils was hard to explain, not least to Charles Darwin, whose conception of evolution was slow and gradual.

Then, a book appeared that suggested the invention of eyes facilitated predation, which led to the need for armor and consequently, to bodies that left easily recoverable fossils¹. Voilà, the Cambrian explosion was explained.

Except for sponges, whose chemical traces appear in the fossil record over 600 million years ago, the first metazoans seem to have appeared at the end of the period now known as the Ediacaran, which lasted 96 million years, and ended with the Cambrian. These metazoans had no head, no mouth, no appendages to grasp things with, and therefore no way to prey on their neighbors.

But they had to eat, and they did – at least in the small Ediacarans of the genus *Parvancorina* – by orienting themselves against water currents near the sea floor, which were rendered turbulent by a ridge in front of their bodies. This turbulence then caused food particles (bacteria, phytoplankton) to be deposited on their back (see Figure 1), where they were consumed by phagocytic dorsal cells². Thus, they had the energy required for growth, but how did they grow?

Fortunately, various sites have been identified, starting in the Ediacaran Hills of South Australia, where large numbers of these animals were in underwater avalanches. Some of the sites have yielded hundreds of specimens of different sizes, all entombed at the same time.

When dug up and studied, neat length-frequency (L/F) data sets can thus be produced which can be analyzed using methods used for studying the growth of tropical fish and invertebrates, both of which lack the annual 'rings' that make it easy to 'age' them.

As I earlier did for Ordovician trilobites³, I applied the Electronic Length-Frequency Analysis (ELEFAN) software I developed in the early 1980s to study the growth of tropical fishes to the L/F data of 221 *Parvancorina minchami* collected by paleontologists from rocks around the White Sea, in Northwestern Russia, and estimated the growth parameters of the standard von Bertalanffy growth equation from these data⁴.

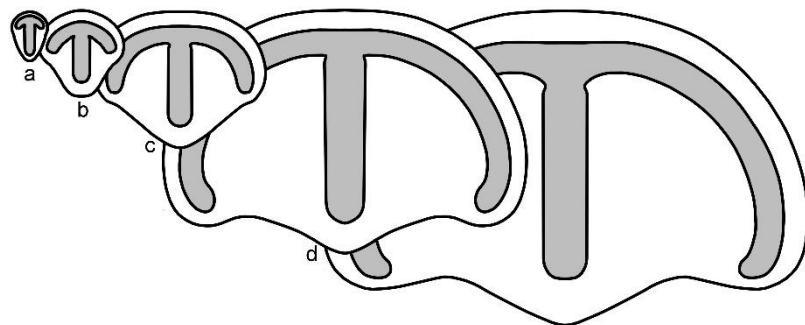


Figure 1. Body shape changes with growth in the Ediacaran *Parvancorina minchami*. Left: ‘Juvenile’ stages (a – c); d: ‘pre-adult’ stage. Right: ‘adult’ stage.

So, now we know how Ediacaran animals around what is now the White Sea grew: it took them 3–4 years to reach lengths of approximately 2 cm. Paleontologists can now use this growth curve to draw various inferences about the ecology of these weird animals.

As for me, I might have traced the growth curve for the most ancient animal so far, i.e., based on fossils at least 550 million years old. Will I make it into the *Guinness Book of World Records*?

References

- ¹ Parker, A. 2003. *In the Blink of an Eye*. Perseus Publishing, Cambridge, MA, 352 p.
- ² Darroch, S. A., L. A. Rahman, B. Gibson, R. A. Racicot, and M. Laflamme. 2017. Inference of facultative mobility in the enigmatic Ediacaran organism *Parvancorina*. *Biology Letters* 13:20170033.
- ³ Pauly, D. 2022. Trilobites’ growth may have resembled that of modern marine crustaceans. *Ocean Past News* July-August (25): 3-4.
- ⁴ Ivantsov, A., M. Zakrevskaya, A.H. Knoll, M.A. Fedonkin and D. Pauly. 2025. the growth of the enigmatic Ediacaran Parvancorina minchami. *Paleontology* 1-8, <https://doi.org/10.1017/pab.2024.55>

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER SPOTLIGHT

Thinking about where our field goes moving forward certainly feels like a great time to highlight one of our ECR’s and we have been lucky enough to get to hear more about Dr. Liz Quinlan’s work and her recently commenced AHRC funded project at the University of Exeter. ~RMW

If you had asked me when I finished my undergraduate archaeology degree in 2016 whether I envisioned a career studying fish bones I would have laughed and said “Of course not, everyone hates fish!”. Fast forward nearly a decade later and, after a MA flirting with fish bones and a PhD focused entirely on historical ecology and ichthyoarchaeology of *Salmo* sp. fishes, I’ve never been happier to be proven wrong.

I often broadly describe my research as sitting at the intersection of historical ecology and archaeology, and I began developing my interest and specialisation in the examination and analysis of archaeological fish



Photo of Liz enjoying one of the local coastlines near Exeter.

remains during my PhD from 2019-2023. My research was part of the SeaChanges MSCA doctoral training network (Agreement No. 813383), and incorporated documentary, biomolecular, and osteological analysis methods into a study of the medieval historical ecology and North Sea trade in *Salmo* sp. fishes. By combining bulk stable carbon and nitrogen analysis with collagen peptide barcode identifications (aka zooarchaeology by mass spectrometry or ZooMS) I was able to explore the past biogeography and exploitation of *Salmo* sp. fishes, predominantly anadromous Atlantic salmon and anadromous sea trout, across the North Sea region.

During my PhD I had the opportunity to not only learn new biomolecular analysis techniques and develop my ichthyoarchaeological skills, but also collaborate and form relationships with my fellow Early Stage Researchers who came from fields including marine sciences, ecology, and genetics. This exposure to multidisciplinary studies of past aquatic environments helped me develop my own current approach, incorporating aspects of anthropology, archaeology, and ecology to provide a holistic view of how humans interacted with and impacted fish in the past.

My present research at the University of Exeter is an AHRC-funded project entitled ["Beyond Stockfish: Migratory and Freshwater Fisheries During the Rise of Early Modern Trading Companies"](#) (UKRI556). The primary archaeological goal of the project is to investigate the trade in fish other than herring and stockfish, using case studies of archaeological material from two major industrial trading centres in Germany and England—Lübeck and Exeter, respectively. This project has three arms; one focused on zooarchaeological analysis including comparative osteology and ZooMS; one focused on the development of new osteometric and biomolecular identification and characterization techniques; and one focused on incorporating complementary document and historical analysis. One of the major outputs from this project includes a review of existing size estimation regression equations for commonly exploited freshwater and migratory species, with ongoing osteometric data collection intended to update and/or develop new regression formulas that can be used to estimate live length and weights from both archaeological and modern skeletal samples.

An underlying goal of this research, and my previous work, is to help better integrate archaeological palaeoenvironmental and osteometric data into modern ecological and fisheries research by making it more accessible to people from different fields. This is one of the many reasons I'm a member of the Oceans Past Initiative, and I'm hopeful that my ongoing work can benefit other members.

Questions for ECR Spotlights

1. Was there a particular book, course, or life experience that profoundly impacted you and contributed to your current research interests?

During my undergraduate research I had the opportunity to take an intensive zooarchaeology course at the University of Toronto from Professor Max Friesen, a specialist in North American Arctic archaeology and zooarchaeology. It was my first exposure to the study of animal bones, and taught me how to ask more complex questions of archaeological material. I really valued being given the opportunity to conduct my own zooarchaeological assessment, and learn and grow in confidence in a supportive and knowledgeable environment, guided by both Max and our TA, Danielle Desmerais.

2. What do you think more senior researchers can be doing to support and mentor early career researchers?

I think one concrete thing that senior researchers can do is to create opportunities for early career researchers—whether that's recommending them for journal reviews, including them on grant applications, or offering to let them shadow in the lab to learn a new technique. I think more senior researchers should try to be involved in formal

mentoring schemes, but we do also need to recognize the need for adequate institutional support for these senior researchers to do this—if they don't have time allocated to developing their career and the careers of their mentees, then it's not going to be prioritised.

3. What is a practice or tradition that you have seen in your research thus far that you have cherished and think should become more widespread? (E.g., supervisors getting mugs with student's first paper printed on them)

I don't know if I would call it a "tradition" per se, but I've had many a fun night of karaoke with my mentors and other senior researchers throughout my early career and I think it's a great way to break down barriers and provide some equalising in a social setting. Sometimes you just gotta make everyone in the bar suffer through you singing "Islands in the Stream" with your PhD supervisor and colleagues after a long day at a conference. I think more people, senior and early career researchers alike, should be willing to do "embarrassing" or "silly" things—if it's all serious all the time then we're not going to be the most well-rounded scientists, and people, we can be.

4. What areas of research are you interested in further exploring but perhaps are not yet sure where to start or have not yet had the opportunity to dabble into?

I have lots of colleagues who work in aDNA and sedDNA research and while I don't necessarily think I'll ever be in a clean room myself, I would like to find more opportunities to integrate it into my future research through collaborations. I'm also interested in working more closely with programmers and other data scientists to solve persistent problems in making archaeological science as efficient as it could be.

5. If you could recommend one paper/book/piece of media that pertains to your research interests to everyone, what would it be and why?

I'm going to go a little off-script and instead of recommending something that pertains specifically to my research interests I want to share a book I read over the summer that I related to on a more personal level as a queer scientist who has been in love with the ocean for as long as I can remember (though not always studying it). It's called "My Life in Sea Creatures" by Sabrina Imbler, and I think it's a brilliant memoir that covers the at-times contradictory intersections and expressions of queer and racial identities, complexities of family and interpersonal relationships, and the simultaneous beauty and brutality of the ocean. As someone who has struggled with my identity as a scientist, and as a queer woman, I find personal meaning in the book, but I honestly recommend it for anyone who has experienced any type of imposter syndrome, cares about human-environment interactions, and who finds solace in the sea.

RESEARCH & OTHER NEWS

Job advert. (Post-doctoral position (two years) at the University of Turin). *Avifauna in archaeo-ecological networks: Reconstructing past ecosystems, habitat shifts and environmental changes.* We are seeking a post-doctoral researcher for a two-year position as part of a larger ERC project, AviArch, that investigates the long-term interaction between humans, birds and the environment. Building on existing datasets of bird remains from case study sites in Crete, Turkey and the Middle East, the project will develop novel techniques in identifying bird remains from bones and eggshells. The post-doc will then use this information to draw inferences about past bird distributions, including impacts of climate change and human modification of the landscape. Ultimately, this will facilitate a greater understanding of how environmental change effects bird communities both now and into the future.

The post-doc will be part of an interdisciplinary team that includes ecologists and archaeologists, the latter including researchers with expertise in advanced biomolecular methods. Building on remains identified in other Workpackages of the AviArch project, the post-doc will be expected to reconstruct past avian communities based on hindcasting species distribution models, analysing traits (e.g. habitat preferences, migratory strategy) that are associated with species at a given site, and identifying modern analogue communities. This will clarify the role of environmental change on two highly-debated processes: the transition to agriculture and the end of the Bronze Age. It will also facilitate the identification of climate-resistant and climate-sensitive species, and those species whose distributions have likely been influenced by human modification of the landscape.

The position is for two years (starting in early 2026). The net salary will be in the region of €2000 per month.

The formal application procedure is now available on the university website. The deadline is 30th OCTOBER 2025. Note that this is not currently available in English. Please contact Dan Chamberlain (dan.chamberlain99@gmail.com) or Beatrice Demarchi (beatrice.demarchi@unito.it) for help with the application procedure WELL IN ADVANCE of the deadline, or for any other general queries about the post.

<https://lavorainateneo.unito.it/details.html?id=c61834fa-0cee-4024-a738-bb334bbc1bf2>

Main tasks

- *Construction of a matrix of ecological traits of avian taxa identified from the archaeological remains based on key habitat and dietary requirements, behavioural strategies (e.g. migration, nesting, foraging), and traits of potential importance to humans (e.g. plumage, song, homing instinct)*
- *Identification of modern day analogous communities and their habitats to infer the past bird communities and habitat type(s) within the region of each site*
- *Development of species distribution models of modern day European birds based on climate and topography. These will be used to hindcast species distributions for the sites of interest based on available spatially referenced scenarios of past climates in time steps of 1-2000 years*
- *Estimate changes in past whole bird communities over time for the sites of interest based on trait analyses, species distribution models and archaeological evidence, identifying local vs non-local (migratory, transient, imported) and climate-sensitive vs resistant species (i.e. able to adapt to changing climate conditions without impacts on their distribution), and changes in migrant species over time. This will allow inference on how species may respond to climate change in the future*
- *Publication of outputs in ISI journals. It is expected that a paper showing how bird communities have been influenced by climate and human modifications of the landscape will be published in a high impact journal, e.g. Nature Communications or PNAS*
- *Collaboration with other members of a large interdisciplinary team in terms of providing data, statistical support and ecological interpretation*

Pre-requisites

- *A PhD in animal ecology with a strong statistical element*
- *A sound knowledge of the ecology of European birds, in particular their typical habitats and migration strategies*
- *Well-developed statistical skills, including experience of modelling approaches. Experience of species distribution models is desirable*
- *A proven track-record of publishing in ISI journals*
- *Good communication skills and a track record of presenting research at international conferences*

[RECENT PUBLICATIONS]

Barclay KM, Baum JK, St. Claire D, McKechnie I. (2025) **Merging coastal archaeology and conservation paleobiology to evaluate shellfish resilience to Indigenous harvest over the past 3000 years.** *Biological Conservation* 307:111186. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2025.111186>

Bettencourt J, Mendes F, Carvalho P. (2025). **Barcos, embarcaciones menores y arqueología naval en Lisboa: los últimos cinco años (2019-2024).** PH Instituto Andaluz del Patrimonio Histórico n.º 115, 70-94. <https://doi.org/10.33349/2025.115.5901>

Brito C, Garcia AC, Nicholls J et al. (2025). **Analyses of historical documents reveal past trends of exploitation of manatees (*Trichechus inunguis*) in the Amazon Basin (16th-19th centuries).** *Open Res Europe* 5, 245 <https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.20811.1>

Falcato D, Carvalho A, Vieira N, Brito C. (2025). **Quantifying the past: a global literature review on historical pinniped exploitation.** *Zenodo.* <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15773939>

Hurk Y van den, Sikström F, Amkreutz L, Bakker H, Buss D, Ersmark E, Lehouck A, López A, Martínez Cedeira J, Nores C, Pis Millán JA, Seiler M, Philippsen B, Barrett J. (2025) **Dating the first historic extirpation of a whale species: The demise of the grey whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) in the eastern North Atlantic.** *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 109583. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2025.109583>

Martínez-Candela IA, Espinoza-Tenorio A, McClenachan L. (2025) **Fisheries decision-makers' perspectives on the use of historical data to inform assessment and management.** *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 270, 107908. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2025.107908>

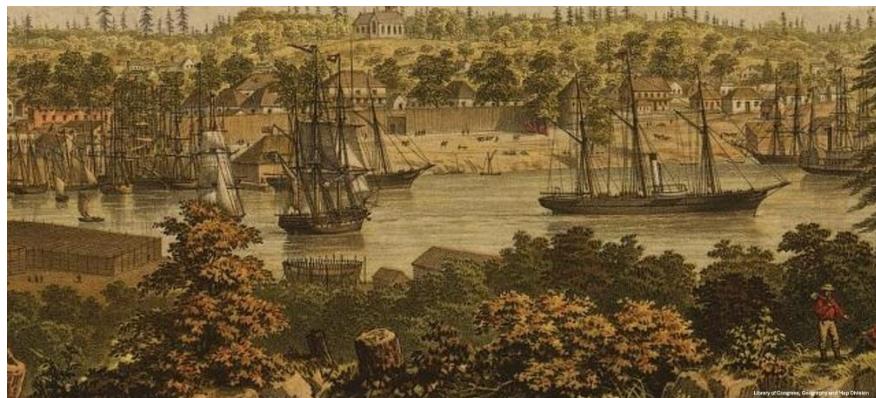
Palomino E. (2025) **Adornments from the Sea: Fish Skins, Heads, Bones, Vertebrae, and Otoliths Used by Alaska Natives and Greenlandic Inuit.** *Wild*, 2(3), 30. <https://doi.org/10.3390/wild2030030>

Reise K, Buschbaum C, Dolch T. et al. (2025) **Benthic losers and winners in a tidal bay since the 1920s.** *Mar. Biodivers.* 55, 83 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12526-025-01566-5>

Tinker TM, Salomon AK, Larson SE, McKechnie I. (2025) **A catastrophic and unintended experiment: Revising our understanding of sea otters and their social and ecological importance based on a system in transition.** In *Sea Otter Conservation II: Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration* <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-443-18805-3.00003-3>, edited by Shawn Larson, James Bodkin, and Erin U. Foster, pp. 165–202. Academic Press, New York. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-443-18805-3.00003-3>

ANNOUNCEMENTS: CONFERENCES and WORKSHOPS

Call for Abstracts and ECR funding award submissions is now open for OPXI!



OCEANS PAST XI CONFERENCE: OCEAN-CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

June 15-19, 2026
University of Victoria British
Columbia, Canada

Save the dates for **15-19 June 2026** for **OPXI (Oceans Past XI)**, being hosted at the **University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada**. The theme for this edition of the conference is **Ocean-connected communities: Historical perspectives inform modern relationships** and our local hosting team is led by Professors Jason Colby, Loren McClenachan and Iain McKechnie.

OPI XI Abstract submission deadline: December 19th 2025. Registration will open in February 2026. Discounts will be available for OPI members, early career researchers and those from lower income countries.

Oceans Past XI themes

Select one or more themes which most closely related to your proposed topic:

- *Trajectories of human influences on the seas: fisheries, pests, and pollution*
- *Indigenous ocean knowledges*
- *Connecting communities: blue memory, place, heritage, and justice*
- *Marine ecosystems past and future, from kelp forests to coral reefs*
- *Physical and biological change in marine systems*
- *Ocean stewardship and belonging*
- *The future past of marine paleobiology*
- *From collapse to recovery: Learning from our shared pasts to inform future policy and management*

Travel Support Requests

Are you a current undergraduate, Masters, or PhD student, or have you completed your Masters or PhD within the last 5 years? You may be eligible for partial attendance support from the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES). If so, add a request to your abstract submission for ECR monetary support, describing how an award will aid your attendance and benefit your research trajectory (max. 200 words). You must present your work at the conference to be eligible for an award. Awards will be available on a competitive basis and based on demonstrated need and the value to the applicant of attendance.

Abstract and Funding Award Submission

To qualify for an oral or poster presentation, provide the following information by **19 December 2025**:

- *Title of presentation*
- *Full name(s) and affiliation of all author(s)*
- *Email address of lead author/primary contact*
- *Abstract (max 200 words)*
- *Preferred presentation type [oral or poster]*
- *Preferred theme(s) [select one or more from list]*
- *Additional information (optional): Are you considering in-person or online attendance at this stage? [this information is for planning only and will not affect submission outcomes]*
- *Institution / Employer and country*
- *Travel support request (optional): for current students and ECRs within 5 years of completing MSc or PhD*
 - *Year of award of most advanced degree*
 - *Demonstrated need and benefit of monetary support (max 200 words)*

Submit your abstracts using the form linked [here](#).

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**Upcoming conference and call for papers. Whales and Humans: Past Entanglements and Current Relations**

**International Conference at the University of Iceland, June 22 – 23, 2026.** Scholarship on the relationship between humans and whales around the globe continues to be exciting and innovative. Yet, since the Sandefjord Whaling Museum last hosted a conference on the topic in 2013, there have been few opportunities for this community of scholars to come together. Therefore, we – a consortium of scholars from Iceland, Japan, and the United States – are soliciting papers for a conference on the history and present of humans and whales, to take place at the University of Iceland, in **Reykjavik, from June 22 – 23, 2026**. We hope to receive submissions examining as many different parts of the world oceans as possible.

*Those interested in presenting work on any aspect of the entangled histories of humans and whales, please submit a short CV (2-page maximum) as well as an abstract proposal of no more than 300 words no later than December 21, 2025. Conference sponsors aim to cover participants' food and lodging in Iceland, as well as travel costs for some graduate students and early career scholars. The conference will take place in connection with the Húsavík Whale Museum's annual Whale Conference, on June 25, with participants warmly invited to extend their stay in Iceland to attend.*

*Please submit your CV and abstract in one email to: [whales@hi.is](mailto:whales@hi.is)*

*For inquiries, please use the same email address.*

*Updates will be posted on the conference website closer to the event, [www.whales.hi.is](http://www.whales.hi.is)*

*Conference committee & institutional sponsors:*

*Kristín Ingvarsdóttir, main organizer, University of Iceland*

*Ryan Tucker Jones, University of Oregon*

*Akamine Jun, ArCS III (Arctic Challenge for Sustainability), Hitotsubashi University*

*Lissa Wadewitz, University of Oregon*

**Upcoming conference and forthcoming call for papers.** ESSAS (Ecosystem Studies of Subarctic and Arctic Seas)'s Annual Science Meeting will be taking place between the 23-25<sup>th</sup> of June 2026 in Reykjavík, Iceland. Expect a call for abstracts and open registration in early December, with abstracts due January 15, 2026. Ben Fitzhugh has noted the following for all of us regarding this conference: “[ESSAS takes place] the week after OPXI. (PESAS, the *Paleoecology of Subarctic and Arctic Seas, working group that Ben Fitzhugh co-founded represents the historical dimension of this organization*). OPI folks traveling back to Europe ... or interested in visiting Iceland otherwise ... may like to build this conference into their travel plans. There may be an opportunity to visit Norse Medieval and later archaeological sites after the conference. The ESSAS conference theme is “Borealization” (warming) of northern marine ecosystems. OPI folks working in northern oceans and coasts likely have something to contribute here.” Further details can be found on the [conference website](#).



## [ 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** ([info@oceanspast.org](mailto:info@oceanspast.org)).

If you have news or an event to share with the wider OPI community, please get in touch with us ([info@oceanspast.org](mailto:info@oceanspast.org)) and we would be happy to share your content on our social media platforms.

The next Oceans Past News will be out in January 2026. We warmly welcome submissions through December 2025.

## RESOURCES

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

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

OPI on X: **@oceans\_past** and Bluesky: **@oceanspast.bsky.social**