

PEER24 - Report of the First iMarCo Conference held in St Andrews between 27-29 June 2016

Oscar Gaggiotti oeg@st-andrews.ac.uk

The International Marine Connectivity Network (iMarCo) held its first meeting in St Andrews at the Byre theatre. It was attended by 50 participants from several European countries (Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Portugal and UK). There were 18 participants from Scotland, all of them from MASTS partner institutions. The meeting consisted of 29 presentations covering all the approaches available for the study of marine connectivity (genetics, biophysical modelling, microchemistry, and tagging). The final program with the abstracts can be obtained by following this link: http://synergy.st-andrews.ac.uk/meme/files/2016/04/iMarCo_full_programme.pdf

It was decided that the second iMarCo meeting will take place next year in Brussels (Belgium) and will be organised by Genevieve Lacroix (Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences) and Filip Volkaert (KU Leuven). The third meeting will take place in 2018 in Crete (Greece) and will be organised by Costas Tsigenopoulos (Hellenic Centre for Marine Research) and George Gkafas (University of Thessaly).

Two H2020 proposals are being prepared in order to obtain funding to finance the activities of the network. On the morning of Monday 27th of June there was a meeting to work on a COST Action proposal, which will be coordinated by Sophie Arnaud-Haond (IFREMER, France) with the help of Peter Wright (Marine Science Scotland) and input from representatives from the different institutional partners including three MASTS members: Tom Adams (SAMS), Les Noble (U of Aberdeen) and Oscar Gaggiotti (U of St Andrews). Its main objective will be to foster an interdisciplinary approach to the study of marine connectivity and improve coordination of management and conservation initiatives based on connectivity across European countries. This proposal will be eventually extended to include partners from several other European Countries.

During the afternoon of Wednesday 29th of June there was a meeting to work on an ITN Marie Curie proposal, which will be coordinated by Oscar Gaggiotti with help from Filip Volkaert (KU Leuven) and input from partners from Belgium, France, Greece, Norway, and Scotland. The objective of this proposal will be to cultivate a new type of young marine scientist - individuals with rigorous training in all the disciplines required for the study of marine connectivity and its application to management and industry. This proposal will be restricted to a small group of countries due to the limited number of Early Stage Researcher positions that can be requested under this funding stream.