7TH WORLD CONFERENCE ON MARINE BIO DIVERSITY
17-20 NOVEMBER 2026
BRUGES (BELGIUM)

WCMB 2026 - GENERAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW - November 5th, 2026

TUESDAY - 17 November 2026

8h-9h — **Doors open - registration - putting up posters**

9h - 10h30 — **PLENARY SESSION**
David Obura - Keynote - Science for sustainability, lessons from coral reefs
Vidar Helgesen - Keynote Theme 1 - title tbc

10h30-11h — ***Coffee/tea break***

Parallel sessions - Themes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7

Where?	**Concertzaal Whale room**	**Kamermuziekzaal Squid room**	**Forum 6 Anglerfish room**	**Studio 1 Coral room**
11h-12h40	1.1. Marine Life 2030: Advancing UN Ocean Decade Challenge 2 Protect and Restore Ecosystems and Biodiversity	7.2. Integrating Novel Technologies Into Traditional Coastal Monitoring Programmes to Enhance Marine Biodiversity Knowledge	2.2. Marine Biodiversity at Risk: The Climate-Fisheries Nexus and the Future of Ocean Resources	General session
12h40-13h40	***Lunch break***			
13h40-14h10	**PLENARY SESSION - *Carlo Heip Award***			
	Parallel sessions - Themes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7			
14h10-15h50	1.2. Leveraging Public-Private-partnerships and Innovative Technology in Marine Ecosystem Restoration	7.1. The Marine Biodiversity Observation Network (MBON): Advancing Marine Biodiversity Observations and Data Management	2.1. Marine Mammals in the Anthropocene: Navigating Challenges, Shaping Recommendations	6.1. Strategic Knowledge Sharing: Unlocking the Potential of Marine Artificial Structures for Biodiversity
15h50-16h20	***Coffee/tea break***			
16h20-18h	1.3. Sustainable Ocean Biodiversity through Mapping, Technological Deployment, and Restoration Initiatives	4.2. Citizen Science: A Critical Lever for a Deeper Knowledge of and a Wide and Global Support for Marine Biodiversity	2.3. Towards a Holistic Understanding of Ecosystem Impacts of Renewable Eenergy Installations Across Space and Time	6.2. Science, outreach, capacity Building and Policy / Diplomacy the Role of the Global Network of Marine Stations

Poster Session 1 (continuous Tue+Wed)

* 1.1	*2.7
* 1.2	* 4.2
* 1.3	* 4.4
* 1.4	* 6.1
* 1.5	* 6.2
* 1.6	* 6.4
* 2.1	* 6.5
* 2.2	* 6.6
* 2.3	* 7.1
* 2.4	* 7.2
* 2.6	

2021 2030 United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

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WEDNESDAY - 18 November 2026

8h-9h **Doors open - (day) registration**

9h - 10h30 **PLENARY SESSION**

Daniel Lauretta - Keynote Theme 4 - Exploration and Science Communication: Live-Streaming a Deep-Sea Expedition to the Mar de Plata Submarine Canyon

Katherine Tattersal - Keynote Theme 6 - title tbc

10h30-11h ***Coffee/tea break***

Parallel sessions - Themes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

Where?	**Concertzaal Whale room**	**Kamermuziekzaal Squid room**	**Forum 6 Anglerfish room**	**Studio 1 Coral room**	**Poster Session 1 (continuous Tue+Wed)**
11h-12h40	1.4. Minimizing the Impact of Ocean Acidification on Marine Biodiversity: The Way Forward	2.4. Assessing the Impact of Plastic Pollution on Marine Biodiversity	6.4. Bright Spots and Bridge Building: Co-Designing Marine Biodiversity Knowledge to Inform Conservation, Stewardship, and Action	4.1. From Roots to Resilience: Bridging Science and Communities for Mangrove Restoration in Latin America and the Caribbean	* 1.1 * 1.2 * 1.3 * 1.4 * 1.5 * 1.6 * 2.1 * 2.2 * 2.3 * 2.4 * 2.6 *2.7 * 4.2 * 4.4 * 6.1 * 6.2 * 6.4 * 6.5 * 6.6 * 7.1 * 7.2
12h40-13h40	***Lunch break***				
13h40-15h20	1.5. Enhancing ocean data sharing: Addressing data gaps in marine biodiversity through the Ocean Decade	2.7. Challenges and opportunities of monitoring biodiversity through environmental DNA (eDNA): Understanding and Predicting the Behaviour and Fate of eDNA in Marine Environments	6.5. Science-Policy Synergy: Lessons from EU Marine Conservation Projects	4.3. WE ARE OCEAN Blaupausen: The Impact of Art-Science Based Ocean Education	
15h20-15h50	***Coffee/tea break***				
15h50-17h30	1.6 From Local to Global: Scaling National Marine Biodiversity Best Practices	2.6. Integrating Biodiversity as a Measure of Seagrass Status in Monitoring, Conservation, and Restoration - Challenges and Opportunities	6.6. Preserve, Revive, Thrive: The Baltic Sea as a Test-Laboratory for the World's Oceans	4.4. Sensors, Stewards and Stories: A Low-Cost Revolution in Marine Biodiversity Monitoring	

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THURSDAY - 19 November 2026

8h-9h **Doors open - (day) registration - putting up posters**

9h - 10h30 **PLENARY SESSION**

Leen Vandepitte - Keynote Theme 5 - Marine taxonomy/-ists throughout history: challenges and opportunities

Philippe Bouchet - Carlo Heip Awardee - Mighty numbers of small and rare species

10h30-11h ***Coffee/tea break***

Parallel sessions - Themes 2, 3, 5, 6, 7

Where?	**Concertzaal Whale room**	**Kamermuziekzaal Squid room**	**Forum 6 Anglerfish room**	**Studio 1 Coral room**	**Poster session 2 (continuous Thu+Fri)**
11h-12h40	5.1. Today's Challenges and Future Opportunities for Identifying the Evolution, Taxonomy, and Systematics of Invertebrates	2.5. Solving the Ocean Biodiversity Data Crisis... One Byte at a Time	7.3. Animal Movement, Behaviour and Biologging	6.7. Advances and Challenges in Developing and Applying Conservation and Restoration Science to Meet Societal Goals and Legislative Needs	* 2.5 * 6.3 * 2.8 * 6.7 * 3.1 * 6.8 * 3.2 * 6.9 * 5.1 * 6.10 * 5.2 * 7.3 * 5.3 * 7.4 * 5.4 * 7.5 * General
12h40-13h40	***Lunch break***				
13h40-15h20	5.2. The Ocean Census: Collective Efforts to Accelerate the Discovery of New Ocean Life	2.8. Keeping Your Cool - Polar Benthic Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning in a Changing Ocean	7.5. New Technology for Biodiversity Monitoring Innovations and Challenges to Implementation	6.8. Understanding Environmental Impacts of Deep-Seabed Mining: Science for Sustainable Ocean Governance	
15h20-15h50	***Coffee/tea break***				
15h50-17h30	5.3. The African Linnean Shortfall: Overview, Status and Opportunities in Capacity Building and Research in Marine Taxonomy	3.1. Bringing Marine Ecosystem Modelling in Operation to Predict and Protect Ocean Biodiversity	7.6. Innovative and Large-Scale Approaches for Biodiversity Observation in Pelagic Ecosystems	6.9. Biodiversity Benefits of Nature Based Solutions?	

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FRIDAY - 20 November 2026

8h-9h **Doors open - (day) registration**

9h - 10h30 **PLENARY SESSION**

Fei Chai - Keynote Theme 3 - Building a Digital Representation of the Ocean to Close Marine Biodiversity Knowledge Gaps

Lisa Levin - Theme 2 + 7 - Deep Thinking on Marine Biodiversity: Baselines, Status, Trends and Futures

10h30-11h ***Coffee/tea break***

Parallel sessions - Themes 3, 5, 6, 7

Where?	**Concertzaal Whale room**	**Kamermuziekzaal Squid room**	**Forum 6 Anglerfish room**	**Studio 1 Coral room**	**Poster session 2 (continuous Thu+Fri)**
11h-12h40	3.2. Digital Twins and AI Applications for Marine Biodiversity & Ecosystems: From Virtual Oceans to Real-World Impact	5.4. The World Register of Marine Species as a Catalyst for Understanding Marine Biodiversity	7.4. Plankton Biodiversity for Ocean Health	6.10. Biodiversity as a Source of Solutions: Unlocking the Societal Value of Marine Life	* 2.5 * 6.3 * 2.8 * 6.7 * 3.1 * 6.8 * 3.2 * 6.9 * 5.1 * 6.10 * 5.2 * 7.3 * 5.3 * 7.4 * 5.4 * 7.5 * General
12h40-13h40	***Lunch break***				
13h40-15h20	**PLENARY - CLOSING SESSION**				
15h20	***Goodbye coffee/tea break***				

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