WCMB 2026 - PLENARY SESSIONS OVERVIEW

Tuesday Nov. 17 - Conference opening (9h-10h30)

Moderator: Enrique Montes

10 min	IABO - Enrique Montes	Welcome words by IABO
10 min	local host - Jan Mees	welcome words from local host
30 min	David Obura *(general)*	***Science for sustainability, lessons from coral reefs***
30 min	Vidar Helgesen *(Theme 1)*	***Tbc***
10 min	Q&A	
5 min	Britt Lonneville	practical announcements

Tuesday Nov. 17 - Carlo Heip Award session (13h40-14h10)

Moderator: Jan Mees

10 min	Jan Mees	General introduction to Carlo Heip Award
5 min	Enrique Montes	Official hand-over of the Award to Philippe Bouchet
5 min	Pilippe Bouchet	some words from Philippe

Wednesday Nov. 18 - Plenary session (9h-10h30)

Moderator: Isabel Sousa-Pinto

5 min	Britt Lonneville	Practical announcements
5 min	*Tbc*	Sponsor pitch - Mercator
5 min	*Tbc*	Sponsor pitch - FOD - BBNJ
5 min	Matt Frost	Blue Connectors summary of Day 1
30 min	Daniel Lauretta *(Theme 4)*	***Exploration and Science Communication: Live-Streaming a Deep-Sea Expedition to the Mar del Plata Submarine Canyon.***
30 min	Katherine Tattersall *(Theme 6)*	***TBC***
10 min	Q&A	

Thursday Nov. 19 - Plenary session (9h-10h30)

Moderator: Hendrik Segers

10 min	Britt Lonneville	Practical announcements
5 min	Jason Landrum	Blue Connectors summary of Day 2
30 min	Leen Vandepitte *(Theme 5)*	***Marine taxonomy/-ists throughout history: challenges and opportunities***
30 min	Philippe Bouchet *(Carlo Heip Awardee)*	***Mighty numbers of small and rare species***
10 min	Q&A	

Friday Nov. 20 - Plenary session (9h-10h30)

Moderator: Christos Arvanitidis

5 min	Britt Lonneville	practical announcements (incl poster removals & guided city tours)
5 min	Tbc	Blue Connectors summary of Day 3
30 min	Fei Chai *(Theme 3)*	***Building a Digital Representation of the Ocean to Close Marine Biodiversity Knowledge Gaps***
30 min	Lisa Levin *(Themes 2 & 7)*	***Deep Thinking on Marine Biodiversity: Baselines, Status, Trends and Futures.***
10 min	Q&A	

FRIDAY - 20 November 2026 - Closing session (13h40-15h20)

Moderator: Leen Vandepitte

15 min	local host	Overview of the week
10 min	Enrique Montes	Closing statements by IABO
5 min	Enrique Montes	IABO hand-over of chairmanship
15 min	*Tbc*	Next World Conference on Marine Biodiversity
25 min	*Tbc*	UN Decade secretariat (global) - Decade Coordination Unit (DCU)
15 min	local host	Final goodbyes

2021 2030 United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

VLIZ pioneer in marine science