



August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

## **Annual Report of the International Association for Biological Oceanography (IABO)**

**Prof. Judith Gobin, President, IABO**

### **Activities summary for 2023 - 2024**

During this performance cycle, IABO activities focused on the following:

- 1) Preliminary organizational steps to support the VII WCMB meeting to be held in Bruges, Belgium between November 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of 2026;
- 2) Continuing implementation of the *PeerJ-IABO Hub*;
- 3) Preliminary selection of 2023 and 2024 Carlo Heip awardees
- 4) Transfer of hosting of IABO's website

Details about each of these activities are provided here:

#### **1. VII WCMB meeting in Bruges, Belgium 2026**

Dr. Leen Vandepitte (VLIZ) as the lead organizer of the VII WCMB conference to be held in Bruges, Belgium, in 2026. The website [www.wcmb2026.org](http://www.wcmb2026.org) currently has basic information, which we will expand over the next months.

Twitter (X) <https://x.com/wcmb2026>

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/world-conference-on-marine-biodiversity-378410326/>

We wish to request that colleagues will share these links for greater outreach.

Flanders Marine Institute ([VLIZ](http://www.vliz.be)) is a prominent research organization based in Ostend, Belgium, dedicated to the study and sustainable management of the marine environment. It serves as a hub for marine science, offering support to research initiatives, data management, and international collaboration. VLIZ focuses on multidisciplinary research, covering areas such as marine biodiversity, oceanography, and climate change, while also engaging with policy-makers and the public to promote marine conservation and awareness. Through its extensive networks and resources, VLIZ plays a crucial role in advancing marine science both regionally and globally.

IABO will soon begin coordination; that is guiding international students and early career researchers (ECR) to apply for SCOR travel support to attend the VII WCMB conference. <https://scor-int.org/work/capacity/travel-grants/>



## **2. Continuing implementation of the *PeerJ-IABO Hub***

The Association launched the IABO Hub (<https://peerj.com/hubs/iabo>) on December 21<sup>st</sup> of 2022 in partnership with *PeerJ Publishing Group* to enable access to their open-access journals (including discounts and full fee waivers for selected countries). The launch of the IABO Hub has resulted in the growth of the Association's membership, promoting IABO announcements (e.g. Carlo Heip Excellence Award notifications, WCMB conferences, community workshops), and the collection of funding in the form of tokens that can be used toward publishing fees of submissions from registered IABO members from developing and least developed nations. The Editorial Board of the Hub is composed by members of the IABO Executive Committee and Task Group Members to ensure that manuscripts submitted to this platform are reviewed by members of the IABO community.

IABO continues to grow its membership via the [Google Form](#) in the IABO website to verify member information. Once registered, IABO members can receive notifications about travel grants, fellowships, job opportunities, international collaborations, and publishing benefits of the *PeerJ-IABO Hub*.

## **3. Preliminary selection of 2023/24 and 2024/25 Carlo Heip awardees**

In this cycle, IABO is working towards nominations for the Carlo Heip Awards for 2023/24 and 2024/25. The award ceremony will be carried out at the 7<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Marine Biodiversity in Bruges, during the IABO's General Assembly.

## **4. Activities of IABO President on behalf of IABO**

The overall responsibilities of the President of IABO include fostering collaborations between IABO and partner organizations to advance the scope and reach of marine biology and biological oceanography sciences. In this respect, there has been continuing participation as an Executive Committee Ex-Officio member of the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR), support programs under the UN Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development such as Marine Life 2030 and others. This includes the review and updates on SCOR proposals.

A Caribbean meeting was organized by the President and held (online) to introduce SCOR and the activities of IABO. Emily did a presentation which was well received and we anticipate a growth in interest of SCOR and membership of IABO.

IABO website update: The IABO website's previous hosts could no longer accommodate us. IABO took some time to locate a new host. Unfortunately there was a period during the early part of this year when there were some issues with accessing the page. We are very pleased to announce that the Air Centre as a partner organization of IABO are kindly supporting us by hosting our website, which is now up and running. Many thanks to Joana and the Air Centre team!

IABO finances as at 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024- stand at \$ 4262.39.