

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025

**Annual Report of the International Association for Biological Oceanography (IABO)**  
**Activities summary for 2024 – 2025**

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

- 1) Continuing organizational support for the 7th World Conference on Marine Biodiversity (V11 WCMB) to be held in Bruges, Belgium from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2026.
- 2) Review of SCOR Working Group proposals;
- 3) Continuing successful operations of the *PeerJ-IABO Hub*;
- 4) Nominations for the 2022-23 and 2024-2025 Carlo Heip awards
- 5) Other activities

**Details about each of these activities are provided here:**

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

IABO's Executive Committee continued to organizationally support Dr. Leen Vandepitte (Flanders Marine Institute; [VLIZ](#)) who is serving as the lead organizer of the VII WCMB conference which will be held in Bruges, Belgium, in 2026. The conference website ([www.wcmb2026.org](http://www.wcmb2026.org)) currently has expanded details and information. Other social media outlets include:

- Twitter (X): <https://x.com/wcmb2026>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/world-conference-on-marine-biodiversity-378410326/>

[VLIZ](#) 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 submitted a request to SCOR for travel support to sponsor international students and early career researchers (ECR) to attend the VII WCMB conference. Full travel grants (USD 370 fees + 230 Travel Support= 600) and will be awarded to a number (at least 3) with partial travel support for at least 1 ECR.

## **2. Review of SCOR Working Group Proposals**

IABO's Executive and Scientific team reviewed and evaluated 14 SCOR Working Group proposals (2025). The team provided a detailed analysis of strengths, weaknesses & final recommendations. These evaluations were submitted in a timely manner to SCOR's Executive Director, Emily Twigg.

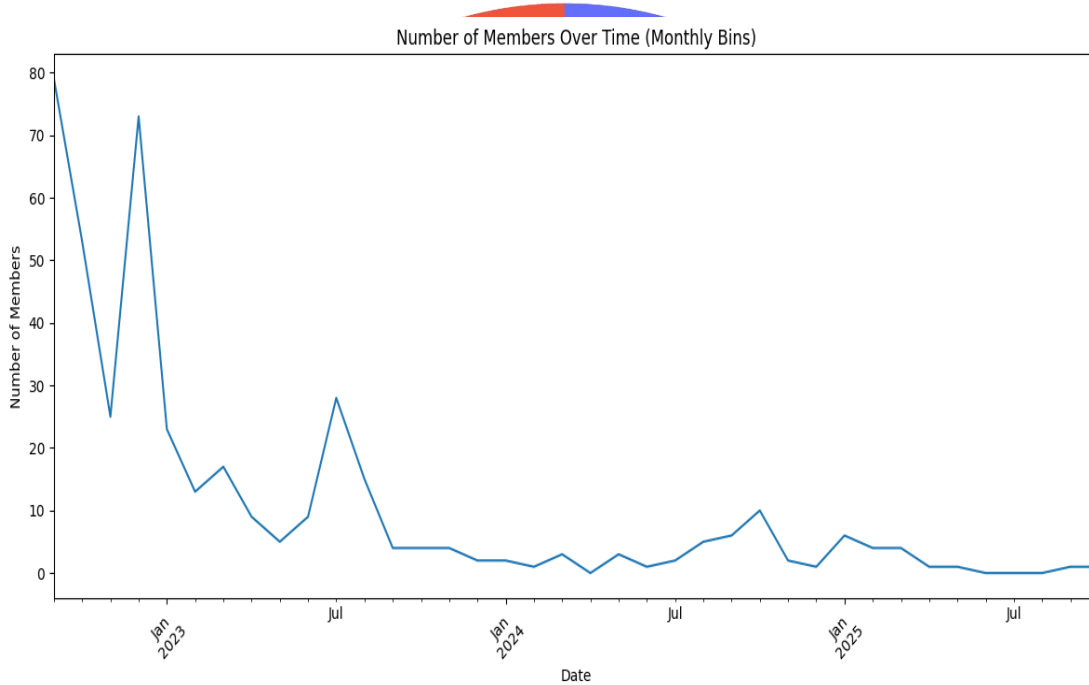
## **3. Continuing success of the PeerJ-IABO Hub**

The PeerJ-IABO Hub (<https://peerj.com/hubs/iabo>) continues to run successfully and enables access to open-access journals (including discounts and full fee waivers) for selected countries. The PeerJ-IABO Hub continues to see 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 of 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*.



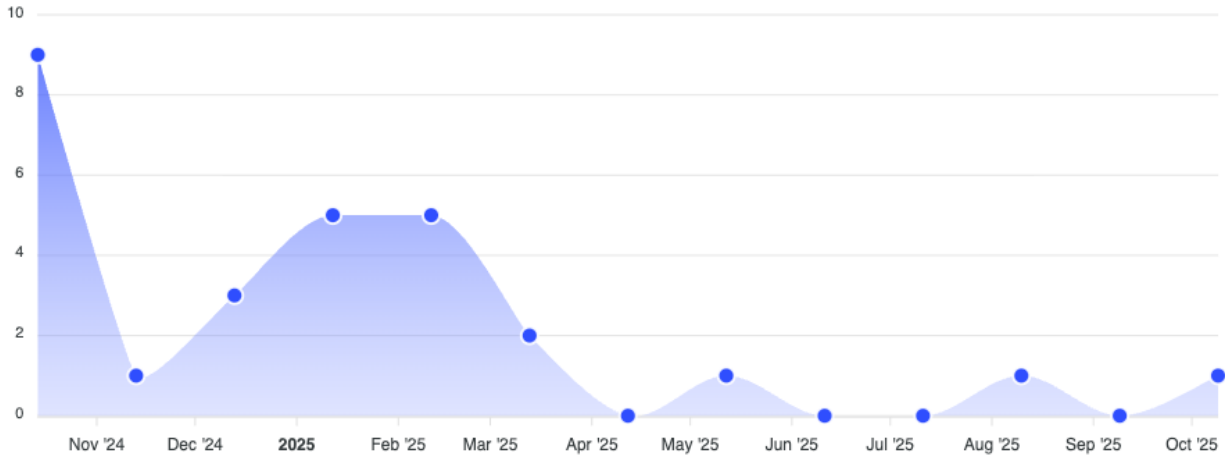
**As of October 2025, the *PeerJ-IABO Hub* has accumulated: 395 members**



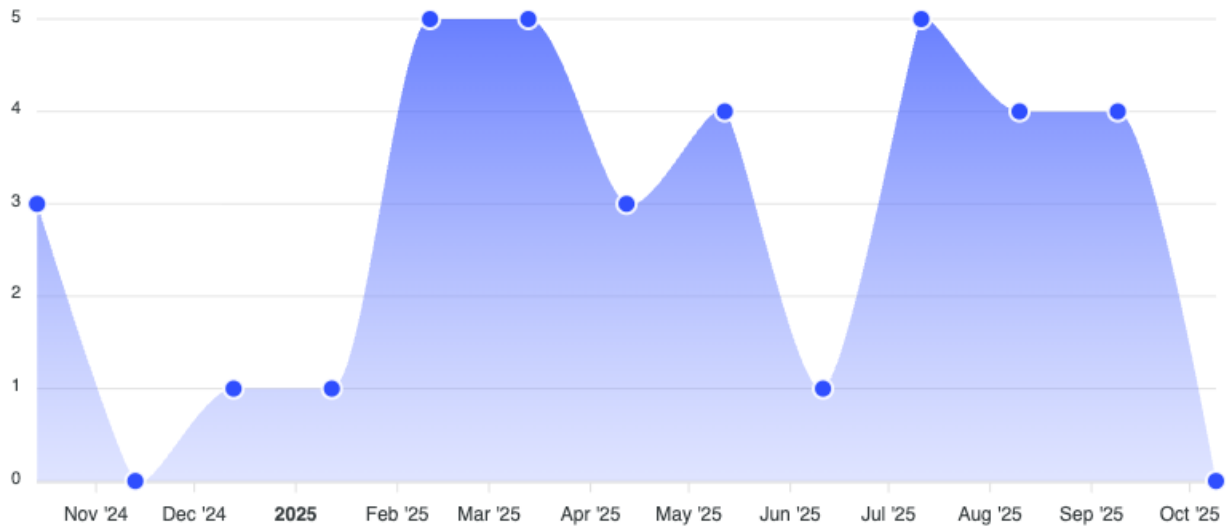
We note a decline in attracting new membership and have begun discussions on ways in which to improve and expand the membership!

IABO membership is now representative of 106 countries in total! We are also working towards improving on this number!

The following plot shows the increases in membership during the cycle.



The following plot shows the increases in submissions during the cycle. These are considered overall positive, even as we strive to improve on this also!





**The following figures show the 2 publishing awards through the *PeerJ-IABO Hub*:**

A Preliminary study of carbon dioxide and methane emissions from patchy tropical seagrass meadows in Thailand

id: f261b2a3-1a0a-4e1c-97c5-6fecface2040

✓ Funding has been used for this article.

Requested \$500.00 – Mar 17

Abstract

Awarded \$500.00 – Mar 25

Statement from the author

Award used – Aug 21

Using transplantation to restore seagrass meadows in a protected South African lagoon

id: 3dd79a6c-d934-4514-8ad7-ea1cf6d6b8fe

✓ Funding has been used for this article.

Requested \$1,595.00 – Sep 26

Abstract

Awarded \$1,255.50 – Oct 23

Statement from the author

Award used – Oct 31

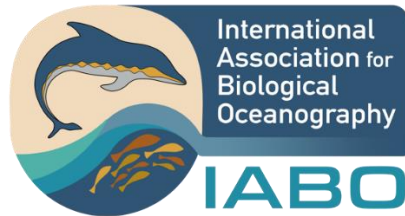
The remaining amount in the *Peer-J IABO Fund* (tokens) is currently \$405.00. While we have attracted some donations, we propose to actively seek additional donors.

**4. 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 both 2023/24 and 2024/25. The award ceremony will be held within the 7<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Marine Biodiversity in Bruges, during the IABO’s General Assembly.

**5. 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), supporting 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. IABO’s Secretary General provides support to these tasks by



maintaining correspondence with (and reporting to) SCOR, organizing meetings and IABO's General Assembly (WCMB conferences), coordinating the Carlo Heip Award, and managing the IABO Hub and the Association's finances.

The IABO President and Secretary General positions will be up for renewal/extension in 2026.

The IABO president continues to support 2 SCOR working groups:

Advancing the standardisation of Coastal and Nearshore demersal fish visual CENSUS techniques (CoNCENSUS)

and

Respiration in the Mesopelagic Ocean: Reconciling ecological, biogeochemical and model estimate (ReMO)

Additionally, a follow-up Caribbean meeting was organized by the President and held online in July 2025 to continue to engage the University of the West Indies in terms of Caribbean participation. The SCOR Executive Director Emily Twigg again did a presentation which was well received and we anticipate a growth in interest of SCOR and membership of IABO in the region. The President will follow-up on this.

President: Judith Gobin