

#### From the President

Dear EURASLIC members,

Nollaig Shona Daoibh, an Irish Christmas greeting to you all.

As we approach the end of another remarkable year, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the incredible work and dedication shown by our community. I am delighted to take this opportunity to reflect on 2024 and highlight some of the wonderful adventures and achievements from our people, as well as taking the time to say goodbye to others.

This year has been particularly special for IAMSLIC in general, as we celebrated the 50th Annual IAMSLIC Conference in the historic city of Alexandria, Egypt. The conference, themed "Shining a Light," was a beacon of knowledge and collaboration, reflecting the guiding role of libraries and information centres in navigating the vast ocean of knowledge.

The conference was a resounding success, thanks to the efforts of the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (NIOF) and the AFRIAMSLIC Regional Group. We were privileged to have insightful presentations, engaging workshops, and meaningful discussions that highlighted the importance of our work in aquatic and marine science libraries. The hybrid format allowed for a diverse range of participants, both in-person and virtual, ensuring that our global community could come together to share and learn. We had three EURASLIC members attend in person, and many more join online. You can read my full account of the conference in this newsletter.

**Important announcement:** preparations are underway for our 21st Biennial Conference next year and I am thrilled to announce that it will be held in the beautiful city of Pisa, Italy. We will be hosted by The Institute of Information Science and Technologies (ISTI), an institute of the Italian National Research Council (CNR).

This symbolic milestone, representing our continued growth and resilience, will be jointly hosted with ASFA and GreyNet International. The conference, will focus on *Enhancing Global Collaboration and Innovation in Aquatic Sciences and the Shared Impact of Grey Literature*. It promises to be a fantastic event. We will announce the Spring dates for #Pisa2025 in the coming weeks once all is confirmed. After hearing about the Rosetta Stone in Egypt this year, it might be prudent to engage with the modern version and start practicing your Italian while you wait!

Fun fact: Did you know that Pisa is not only famous for its Leaning Tower but also for being the birthplace of the renowned scientist Galileo Galilei? His contributions to science have left an indelible mark on history, much like our work in the field of aquatic sciences

News from our members: As we look back on 2024, we also celebrate the achievements within EURASLIC. Our members have continued to innovate and support each other, fostering a spirit of collaboration and excellence. The initiatives and projects undertaken this year have further strengthened our network and enhanced our ability to serve our respective communities. You can read about some of the conferences, events and activities attended by the community in this newsletter.

Elections for our Executive Board will take place next year, with the new board announced at our upcoming conference and we encourage you all to consider getting involved. Our long standing archivist Malgorzata Grabowska-Popow is retired, as is

Natalja Kondratjeva and we wish them well in respective their new life adventures. Andreas Walker is leaving the board to pursue a new career as Lecturer in Library Science and our EURASLIC member Olena Mykhalechko has moved on from her current role of librarian at the Institute of marine biology, NAS of Ukraine.

This year, we hope to recruit more members to join our vibrant community. Your participation and engagement are what make EURASLIC a thriving network, and we look forward to welcoming new faces and fresh ideas.

Let's continue to build on our successes and make 2025 an even more impactful year. Stay connected, get involved, and let's make a difference together!

In the spirit of the holiday season, on behalf of the Executive Board, may we wish you all a joyous and restful Christmas. May the New Year bring you health, happiness, and continued success in all your endeavours.

Warm regards,

**Stephanie Ronan**  
**EURASLIC President**

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## Open Access Week at the Ruđer Bošković Institute – 1. Open Access Escape Room

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International Open Access Week was held from October 21st through 27th, 2024. Titled the same as last year, “Community over commercialization”, it emphasizes the need for continued discourse regarding open science practices important for the public and the academic community.

The Center for Scientific Information of the Ruđer Bošković Institute in Croatia, organized various activities to mark this occasion, the first of which was the 156th library colloquium titled “Registration Practices and Improvement of the Quality of Scientific Research.” The colloquium, held live and over Zoom, presented and described research registration or even pre-registration process. A pre-registration is the practice of announcing the research plan, giving its detailed description, methods of data collection and an analysis plan prior to the beginning of the study. Advantages of pre-registration are: reduced duplication of research, greater possibilities of collaboration, increased transparency. Potential issues that could arise during the registration process: it can be time-consuming and require advance research planning. Following the colloquium, the Center offered a workshop for researchers at the Institute on how to write their research Data Management Plans (DMP). The week concluded with the 157th library colloquium “Open Science in Practice: Requirements of the Croatian Science Foundation and Horizon Europe Projects.” Lecturers discussed the importance of open science and its application in daily research activities. The main focus was on researchers' obligations toward their funders, the Croatian Science Foundation and the European Commission through the Horizon Europe program. Alongside the colloquiums and the workshop, the Center organized its first *Open Access Escape Room*. This project was developed and made available by Katrine Sundsbø on Figshare through Creative Commons Attribution Licence. It was adapted based on the resources available at the Institute, with many of the props being homemade. The Escape Room at the Institute gathered 47 participants in 13 teams. Each team had an hour and an unlimited number of hints, though the highest number of hints needed to complete the room was 3. The main goal of the Escape Room was to stop the Villain from stealing all the knowledge in the world and to save and unlock the knowledge he’s stolen at the Institute. To defeat the Villain, the participants had to choose between two routes, Green or Gold Open Access, presented to them in green and gold envelopes. Out of 13 teams, 10 of them picked the green route, Green Open Access, meaning they were met with the limitations of an embargo. The embargo was implemented through a fortune teller where the participants could be docked 4, 5, 6 or 12 minutes based on their choices, meaning they had less time to complete the Room. While progressing through the Room, using UV light, keys, different types of locks, puzzles and riddles they unlocked the data, books, conference proceedings and scientific articles, i.e. knowledge. In doing so, the Villain was defeated, the world saved and all knowledge made available and Open Access. All 13 teams managed to complete the Room, making it a huge success. Each team, based on their profession, had a different approach to solving the Room. For example, librarians focused on call numbers of books while physicists were trying to solve random equations placed in the room as decor. Held just in time before Halloween, the Center provided Halloween candy and music making it all the more entertaining. As a reward, all participants received a certificate, congratulating them on



their victory. Through this fun and engaging activity, employees at the Institute were able to learn about Open Access and the differences between Green and Gold Open Access. All activities were well-attended, the most attended being the new one, the Escape Room, which suggests that interest in Open Access topics remains high especially when presented in various and engaging ways.



## Shining a Light on the 50th IAMSLIC Conference, Alexandria, Egypt

Stephanie Ronan  
Marine Institute, Galway, Ireland

The 50th Annual IAMSLIC conference, held from October 27-31, 2024, in Alexandria, Egypt, was a remarkable event that truly lived up to its theme, "Shining a Light." Warmly hosted by the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (NIOF) and the AFRIAMSLIC Regional Group, this hybrid conference brought together experts and enthusiasts from around the globe, both in-person and virtually.

### Conference Highlights

The conference kicked off with a warm reception at NIOF, where Dr. Abeer Elsahrity, President of NIOF, set the tone for the event with a welcoming address, followed by greetings from the conference committee, sponsors and invited dignitaries. Our hosts lavished us with a celebration cake and a local delicacies seafood meal on the gorgeous NIOF terrace, overlooking the site of the Lighthouse of Alexandria, with the evening culminating in a spectacular Egyptian Whirling Dervish dance. Geoff Timms, Tamsin Vicary and Alice Endra were all coaxed to the stage to try this meditative practice to amusing results! The following days were packed with insightful sessions, keynote speeches, engaging workshops and networking opportunities.

### Keynote Speakers and Sessions


One of the standout moments was the keynote address by Prof. Amreu Hamouda on strengthening the resilience of Egypt's Mediterranean coastal region to tsunamis and other sea level-related hazards. We saw physical evidence of this on-going effort along the Alexandrian promenade on our drive to NIOF each day. Dr. Suzan El-Gharabawy's talk on uncovering sunken treasures in Egyptian waters was also particularly captivating.

Another highlight was Dr. Marwa Elwaki and her colleagues' session on the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, which included an enthralling field trip to this iconic library. As librarians, visiting the place of the Great Library of Alexandria and its modern equivalent was spectacular for us. The library architecture is breath-taking, and its contents are of such vast historical significance, that it is almost impossible to comprehend the breath of history they include. The library has a fascinating museum and exhibition area. We could have easily spent the whole conference investigating the contents of the shelves!

### Main Themes and Innovative Presentations

The conference featured a diverse range of presentations that can be categorised into the following:

1. **Ethics and Academic Integrity in the Age of AI**, noting the work completed by Teresa de Jesús Barriga Ramírez, where she discussed the challenges posed by AI in academic and research activities, and promoting ethical practices and academic integrity. This theme and the challenges of emerging AI was address by many of the speakers through the conference, promoting lively exchanges on the topic. See more on Daryl's talk below.

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2. **Sustainability and Accessibility.** Helen Brown, Sally Taylor, and Matthew Vis-Dunbar spoke on reimagining our IAMSLIC Conferences and have proposed a new model to enhance sustainability and accessibility. We have successfully hosted hybrid and wholly online conferences and we need to implement the learnings to make a new conference model workable and sustainable. James Thull echoed the sustainability message in his talk, leading to a group discussion on the potential positive impact IAMSLIC could have to improve communities in the event of an in-person meeting, especially ones taking place in developing nations.
  3. **Scientific Visibility and Information Management.** In answer to our conference theme and in general to our role as information professionals, many of our talks addressed scientific visibility and information management. Yuriem Lezcano López highlighted the role of the library in managing the high-impact journal, *Revista de Investigaciones Marinas*. While Saida Messauodi introduced the new English version of the *INSTM Bulletin* aimed at enhancing international visibility. Michael Mogato Mosoti focused on the importance of capturing and indexing aquatic science literature in Kenya. I spoke on aligning institutional repository metadata at an all-Ireland level, and Amanda Whitmire discussed the digitisation and accessibility of historical marine data.
  4. **STEM Information Literacy** was a distinct topic at the conference, with Geoff Timms describing courses designed to enhance information literacy among STEM students, going beyond the ‘one shot’ approach. Kristen LaBonte discussed the importance of librarians in designing rigorous literature searches and guiding systematic reviews. Staying on topic, James Thull took us to Belize and demonstrated the effectiveness of a study abroad class that teaches critical thinking and information literacy through hands-on experiences.
  5. **Citizen Science and Community Outreach.** Sylvina Perez discussed the role of libraries in supporting citizen science initiatives in Uruguay, and Alice Endra highlighted the library's role in disseminating information to local communities in Uganda.
  6. **Historical and Cultural Insights:** Mohammed Deabes and Samar Sharif gave us two wonderful talks on exploring Egypt's historical contributions to knowledge and information, as well as the historical significance of maritime navigation in Egypt. We heard more from Mohammed on a lovely tour of the NIOF library and a perusal through the historical stacks.
  7. **Research and Data Management** is a significant topic for any librarian or educational conference. Daryl L. Superio gave us a virtual presentation on *AI Indexer: Evaluating ChatGPT's Efficiency in Indexing Aquatic Science Literature with AGROVOC Multilingual Thesaurus,* evaluating the use of AI in indexing aquatic science literature. Finally, Tamsin Vicary presented an update on the OpenASFA system for managing and sharing research data.

### **Workshops and Field Trips**

Workshops like Tamsin Vicary's OpenASFA and Jaime Fogel's Digital Asset Management provided practical insights and we could have spent a day on each if time permitted. As mentioned, the field trip to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina was a unique opportunity to explore one of the world's most renowned libraries.





## **Networking and Social Events**

The conference also offered opportunities for networking and socialising. The AFRIAMSLIC meeting and the banquet were perfect settings for attendees to connect and share ideas. NIOF hosted a grand banquet at the Montazah Palace with an exquisite meal and an evening of musical entertainment and dancing not to be forgotten. The final day included a memorable field trip to Cairo, visiting the Great Pyramids, National Museum and night market, adding a cultural dimension to the scientific discussions.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the 50th IAMSLIC Conference was a resounding success, shining a light on the critical role of libraries and information centres in the aquatic and marine sciences. The blend of in-person and virtual participation ensured a wide reach, making it a truly global event. Kudos to the organising committee for putting together such a comprehensive and engaging program. Special thanks to our local librarians and hosts Mohammed Deabes and Samar Sharif who made the conference so special and looked after us so well. We will never forget your hospitality and warm welcome to your institution and to Egypt. We hope to meet again.

Woods Hole have big shoes to fill next year!

## 140 Years of the Marine Biological Association

Carol Giles, Kristina Hixon

National Marine Biological Library, Marine Biological Association

It's been 140 years since the [Marine Biological Association](#) (MBA) was established. Founded in 1884 by Sir Edwin Ray Lankester KCB FRS in response to concerns to overfishing and fish stock sustainability, four years later a purpose-built laboratory was constructed at Citadel Hill, Plymouth UK.

Library facilities were the cornerstone in providing support to the groundbreaking scientific work being undertaken. In 1887 a public appeal was made for donations and periodicals, and a library committee was established to manage the generosity of supporters.

Initially the MBA's library was located on the top floor of the original building and this was the case until 1931. As the need for more shelf space increased, it was decided that the library could no longer stay in its current location.



The original library, September 1897

After a successful funding appeal, former laboratory space was converted into a larger library, which has then been expanded on several occasions over the years. However this original space still remains as part of the library to this day.





North-west corner of the Fisheries Laboratory, 1928  
and Mr. E. Ford.

(Situated in what subsequently became the  
ground floor of the library, the northern  
half the museum occupying the southern half)

Former fisheries laboratory, cleared to develop the library

The library has been located at Citadel Hill almost continuously since its opening in 1888; however, due to the location of large dockyards in Plymouth, the vast collection was rehomed to Hawkmoor House, Tavistock for the period of the Second World War and then safely returned after peace was declared in 1945.

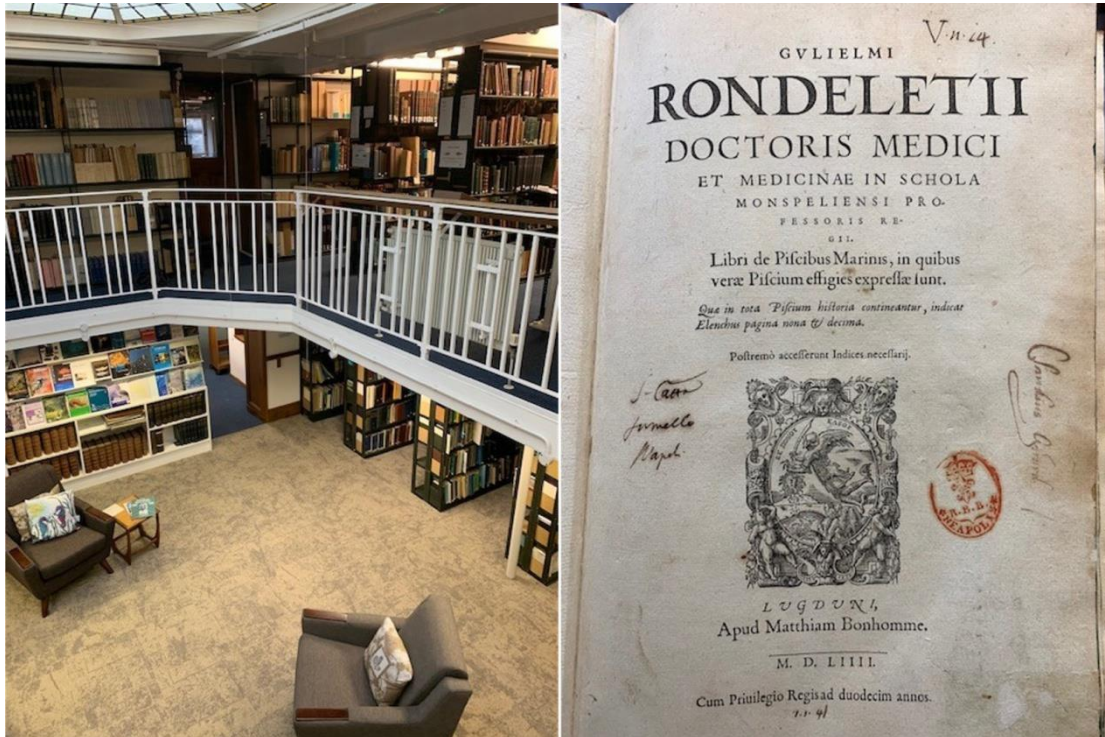
As increasingly more marine biological research was carried out by both the MBA and the global research community, the print collection required to support this activity grew at great pace as well. Allen Varley, former head of Library and Information Services was a key facilitator in the development of library services within the MBA and world-wide and he left a lasting legacy.

In 1973, with help from the Natural Environment Research Council, another extension to the library was started, and was completed in 1975. This now includes the Southward Reading Room and the Rare Books Room, which is home to a selection of former researchers' personal libraries and books on marine biology dating as far back as 1554. The Southward Reading Room was opened in 2016 by Eve Southward, in dedication to her husband Alan. Both of the Southwards were highly regarded researchers at the MBA, with Eve being involved in creating new methods of dealing with oil spills as part of the response to the Torrey Canyon environmental disaster in 1967.

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L: Rare books room (top) and Southward Reading Room (below) and R: the oldest book in the collection 'Libri de piscibus marinis' by Guillaume Rondelet, 1554

Due to its importance to the marine biological community, the library was designated the National Marine Biological Library in 1996.

As technologies have progressed, so has the library – the [online catalogue](#) was made available to all in 2013. As well as this development, the Journal of the Marine Biological Association UK (JMBA), which was first published in 1887, is now available in a digital format.

The MBA is also a membership organisation and along with its staff and students, members have access to more than 15,000 books and 4,000 journal titles in the NMBL's collection and have the support of a Library Services Manager (Carol Giles) and a Library Assistant (Kristina Hixon) to enable access to a wide variety of online journals for both research and publishing.

The library staff, also, manage and administer the process of Open Access publishing for researchers both at the MBA and its partner organisation, the Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML), as well as subscriptions for online journals and databases and other services, such as document supply and copyright advice.

The main research groups of the MBA are:



Coastal Ecology – particularly focused on ecosystem changes as a result of climate change and invasive species. A recent open access article looked at the [diversity and structure of faunal assemblages in kelp forests](#)

Marine Microbiome – increasing knowledge on the biology and ecology of various microbial groups, including viruses and fungi. A recent OA article focused on the effect of [nitrogen availability on yeast](#) in the open ocean

Ocean Ecology – studying the effects of climate change and human impacts on marine life, such as this article [on the impacts of ship strikes on whale sharks as a result of climate change](#)

The NMBL also houses the archives of the MBA - a collection of material relating to the governance of the Association, as well as material collected and created by a number of well-known marine scientists. Some fascinating stories have been discovered within our archives, including information for a [project on Maude Delap](#), an influential amateur marine biologist, which was run by University College Cork

The metadata records for some of these ‘personal collections’ has recently been made available to view online at [The National Archives Discovery pages](#) – making our long and pioneering history available to all with an interest. Archival material has also been used, for example, in recent PhD research to study the historical trends in seaweed communities. Other collections held in the library include rare books, objects, expedition reports and personal libraries, as well as a very impressive Herbarium, containing seaweed and lichen specimens dating as far back as the 1850s. These all help to contribute to the rich history of the MBA and allow current researchers access to historical data and information, which can be used as evidence to inform future research.

As with many libraries, the NMBL is moving from a print to a digital world and changes to the collection and use of space are constant. However researchers access our knowledge and information, whether by using our archive and historic print collections, or by accessing our digital collections to study and publish cutting edge marine research, the NMBL will remain at the centre of this vibrant community for many years to come.



The Marine Biological Association, Citadel Hill, Plymouth UK



**Events of Interest in 2025**

Sofija Konjević  
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**INTERNATIONAL OCEAN DATA CONFERENCE – III**

The third International Ocean Data Conference will take place at the [Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras José Benito Vives de Andreis \(INVEMAR\)](#), **Santa Marta-Colombia, 10-11 March, 2025**

The themes of the conference: Ocean Biodiversity; Capacity development facilitating data, information, and knowledge exchange; Working towards a federated Global Ocean Data Ecosystem; application of Ocean data for sustainable Ocean Planning and Management.

<https://oceandataconference.org/>

Call for abstracts is open until 24 January 2025 (midnight CET)

**35TH ANNUAL CYAMUS MEETING**

**Monterey Bay, USA, 5-7 March, 2025**

<https://guides.library.stanford.edu/cyamus-2025>

## **54TH LIBER ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**Lausanne, Switzerland, 2-4 July, 2025**

Theme: Engage, Collaborate, Innovate: Libraries Working to Address Global Challenges.

The deadline for submitting a proposal is **3 January 2025**

<https://liberconference.eu/>

## **IFLA WLIC**

### **89TH WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS**

**Astana, Kazahstan, 18-22 August, 2025**

<https://2025.ifla.org/>

Invitation to Volunteers is open, Volunteers receive free registration

<https://2025.ifla.org/home/become-a-volunteer/>

## **IAMSLIC CONFERENCE 2025**

**Woods Hole, Massachusetts, USA, 5-11 October**

<https://iamslic.wildapricot.org/event-5958868>

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Editorial staff of the Newsletter expresses its gratitude to all contributors to this issue. There is nothing more authentic and exciting than the information presented firsthand. We would like this to encourage everyone to not hesitate sharing the events you were involved and personal professional experience, because sharing is a source of knowledge and maintains the integrity of the community.

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**