

SARChI ME&F researchers' participation at the IMBeR FutureOceans2 conference, in Brest, France (17-21 June 2019)

Louise Gammage & Marieke Norton



Louise (left) and Marieke (right) enjoying the conference

The International Marine Biosphere Research Programme's (IMBeR) FutureOceans2 conference took place in Brest, France from 17-21 June 2019. The conference theme was centred around *"ocean sustainability for the benefit of society: understanding, challenges, and solutions"*. Specifically, Future Oceans 2 aimed to foster inter-and trans-disciplinary discussions and to provide forums to strategically map future research directions based around three themes (see (<https://tinyurl.com/yyazx525>)).

Several researchers from the SARChI ME&F research group presented their research at the conference – notably Dr Lynne Shannon was invited to present a keynote which placed the focus climate change and fishing effects on the oceans as major drivers of ocean change. Using the metaphor of navigating a ship to describe how progress is made in marine research, Lynne asked (and answered) the question: "who is doing the navigating and what are we navigating through?" Importantly, Lynne highlighted that although there are 'rough seas' to navigate, we do have the innovation, technology and methods available to us. To make a difference in the long run, she concludes, all it requires is for people to 'come onboard' and not 'jump ship'. You can access the talk here - <https://tinyurl.com/yxuuben9>

Both Marieke Norton and Louise Gammage presented aspects of their PhD research in the Marine Governance: Challenges for Sustainability session, chaired by Marion Glaser and Anna Zivian. Marieke's talk focussed on her work on including marine compliance inspectors into frameworks that evaluate the efficiency of marine resource law enforcement, while Louise provided an overview of the use of structured decision-making tools in a scenario-based approach to change in fishery systems. Both Marieke and Louise talks were well received and

resulted in some interesting and constructive conversations which have the potential to result in some future collaborative work, including a paper based on the session that is currently being written.

Our group paper, “Resource limitations, uncertainty & power plays: lessons from a systems-based approach to ocean governance” (Astrid Jarre, Lynne Shannon, Marieke Norton, Louise Gammage & Rosemary Ommer) was presented in Robert Stephenson et al.’s session on “Weaving the quilt of sustainable ocean governance”, and Pierre Bourdaud presented some of his postdoctoral research on purse sein fleet modelling in the southern Benguela, in Carey McGilliar et al.’s session on “Investigating and modelling linkages between biology and fleet behavior in multi-species fisheries and ecosystems”.

The conference had a diverse and interesting programme. Notable was the emphasis on involving and supporting Early career researchers. IMECaN – IMBeR’s early career researcher network was formally launched at the early career researcher’s session the day before the official start of the conference. The programme as a whole strove to focus on early career researchers. For example, a conference mentorship programme, launched at a lunch on the first day, was an opportunity for ECRs to interact with established researchers in their field of expertise who they had been paired with. A diverse, interesting programme created an atmosphere of friendly engagement, with much time and space for animated conversations.

In the other sessions that we attended, we were able to contribute to the discussions as social scientists from the Global South, and from the feedback received on these comments, it was clear that a different perspective on the various issues in questions, contributed in bringing a more nuanced collective understanding of the issues under discussion about – as (usual for a conference hosted in, for example Europe) the conversation tended to be dominated by perspectives from socio-political contexts very different from what attendees from the Global South describe in our work, or work under.



Louise (left) and Marieke (right) presenting at the conference