



Newsflash

ECR Monthly Newsletter

24 OCTOBER 2025
ISSUE 44

WELCOME

Welcome to the MARIS ECR newsflash where we share information that will be of use and interest to the broader MARIS ECR community. In this newsletter, you will find the latest news, opportunities and events. Enjoy the read!

LATEST NEWS INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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Give MARiS a follow on social media



Highlights of recent events

MARIS ECR Conference 2025



The 2025 MARiS Early Career Researcher (ECR) Conference brought together nearly 70 ECRs from UCT, UWC, CPUT, University of Pretoria, Wits and Stellenbosch, and beyond for a day of knowledge sharing, collaboration, and inspiration in marine and polar sciences. With engaging presentations, keynote talks from Dr Leigh McGaughey representing the River Institute, Canada, and Dr Riesna Audh representing SAPRI and a dynamic all-woman panel discussion, the event celebrated the power of interdisciplinary research. A huge thank you to all of our sponsors, exhibitors, speakers, and attendees for making this conference a resounding success and strengthening the MARiS ECR Community.



Reflecting on the day, delegates of the ECR Conference shared their highlights:

"Seeing all the different research ideas come together was inspiring – my highlight was the diversity of research and perspectives presented by ECRs across different disciplines."

"I felt a sense of belonging with this research community. The small group of people and the relaxed atmosphere made the networking opportunities meaningful."

"What stood out for me was the supportive atmosphere in the room. It reminded me why creating these kinds of safe and inclusive spaces for young researchers is so important."

The conference concluded with a prize-giving ceremony, celebrating excellence in research communication and creativity:

Oral Presentations

- 🥇 1st place – Tristyn Ferreiro (UCT Electrical Engineering)
- 🥈 2nd place – Leischen Natus (UCT Biological Sciences)
- 🥉 3rd place – Magata Mangatane (UCT Oceanography)

Poster Presentations

- 🥇 1st place – Zaahid Khan (University of the Witwatersrand)
- 🥈 2nd place – Gregoire Maniel (UCT Biological Sciences)
- 🥉 3rd place – Ethan Smith (UCT Oceanography)

Photo Competition

- 🏆 Best submission – David Sephton-Poultney (UCT Electrical Engineering)

These awards recognised the hard work, innovation, and creativity of our ECRs and added a celebratory note to an inspiring day.

MARIS ECR Conference 2025 cont.

Reflection from MARIS ECR Representatives, Dayna Collins and Hayley Swait;

"We are so honoured to have spearheaded the Inaugural MARIS ECR conference, offering a deep dive into the diverse research from ECR's in marine and polar spaces. The conference was a reflection of the collaborative spirit that drives research in these captivating environments. We hope that this event provided a safe harbour for ECR's to connect, a wave of inspiration to carry into future research journeys and a current strong enough to carry these connections and ideas far beyond the conference."

On behalf of the MARIS ECR community at the University of Cape Town, we would like to thank all contributors and participants of the conference. We also wish to thank the organisers, presenters, panellists and the members of the research committee for their invaluable efforts in making our inaugural MARIS ECR Conference a huge success. **For more information on the programme of the day, check out the [MARIS Website here](#). See some highlights of the day in the collage below.**

A special thanks to our MARIS ECR Conference Committee for planning and organizing such an incredible event:

Humeshni Pillay, Dayna Collins, Sarah Hutton, David Sephton-Poultney, Natalie Le Roux, Hayley Swait and Leila Nefdt, including the support of the Previous ECR Reps, Magata Mangatane and Safiyyah Moos, Dr Emma Rocke, Robyn Verrinder, Nopinkie Tom and Siwapiwe Lamfiti.

A special thanks to those individuals who made this ECR Conference possible.



UCT SPRING GRADUATION – September 2025

We are excited to hear that several of our ECRs graduated last month, where they received their degrees in recognition of their dedication and hard work.

Please note you can watch the recordings of the graduation ceremonies that took place in the Sarah Baartman Hall, UCT Upper Campus and look out for our wonderful graduates:

- **Engineering & the Built Environment** (all qualifications) on Monday 2 September at 14h00pm
- **Science** (all qualifications) on Tuesday 9 September at 18h00pm.



Spring 2025 Graduation

Thank you for celebrating with us
and congratulations to our graduates

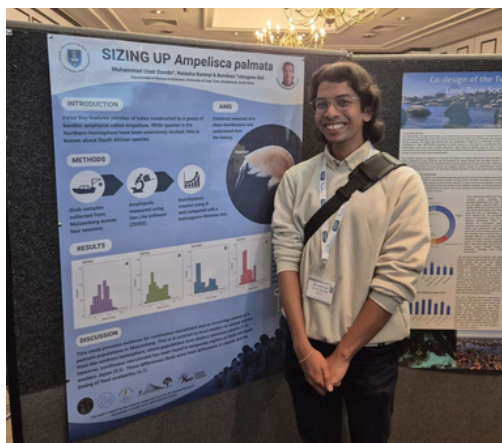
#UCTGrad2025

On behalf of UCT-MARiS, we want to wish you a massive congratulations on achieving this incredible milestone. Thank you for contributing to this exciting field of marine and polar research. We look forward to seeing you continue to flourish and grow in your professional careers!

Reflections of SAMSS Conference: 8-12 September 2025

The Southern African Marine Sciences Symposium (SAMSS) 2025 was hosted in Cape Town from 8-12 September 2025 at the Southern Sun Cape Sun in the Cape Town City Centre. The symposium welcomed hundreds of marine and coastal community experts, academics and students within Southern Africa. This year's conference celebrated the theme: "The triple planetary crisis – resilience and conservation of ocean and coastal ecosystems".

Muhammad Uzair Davids, Honours Marine Biology Student in the Biological Sciences Department reflects on his experience attending SAMSS 2025:



"I had the privilege of attending my very first conference, the Southern African Marine Sciences Symposium (SAMSS) 2025! I was honoured to present a poster on my Honours research which looks at the seasonal size-class distributions in tube-building amphipods. Beyond presenting, one of the most rewarding aspects of the conference was the opportunity to network and engage with fellow scientists and students. Hearing about the wide range of research being conducted across southern Africa was both inspiring and motivating, and it was invaluable to exchange ideas, ask questions, and build connections with others in the field.

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisors, **Dr Natasha Karenyi** and **Mrs Bomikazi Tshingana-Bali**, for their encouragement and constructive feedback throughout this process. I am also grateful to my lab mates and colleagues for their support, as well as to my HOD, **Dr Colin Attwood**, for generously funding the Marine Biology Honours students' attendance at SAMSS. Lastly, a huge thank you to CPUT for hosting and making such an enriching experience possible." Photo on right with the Marine Benthic Ecology Lab group: Buyani, Silke, Collin Attwood, Mari-Lise, Stephanie, myself, Natasha Karenyi, Ralph, Ndamona and Jessica.



WAM Kick-Off Meeting

Led by Assoc Prof Sarah Fawcett, the West African Margin (WAM) Kick-Off Meeting took place at the UCT GSB Conference Centre, in Cape Town from 14-17 October 2025. Researchers from across the WAM teams from USA, Namibia and South Africa gathered to share insights on oxygen and biogeochemical dynamics along the West African margin. Supported by Schmidt Sciences (OBVI), the meeting brought together researchers across disciplines to share ideas, strengthen partnerships, and plan the next steps for advancing our understanding of oxygen and biogeochemical dynamics along the West African margin.

A week of energy, collaboration, and meaningful discussions defined the week, all against the stunning backdrop of Table Mountain. The WAM team had several keynote talks, breakout sessions across the modelling and observations teams, aligning upcoming cruise plans and strengthening model synergies along the West African margin. There were many other exciting talks on educational outreach and science communication, including initiatives to connect WAM research with local schools. A key theme throughout the week was skills development and training opportunities for early career researchers, reinforcing WAM's commitment to building capacity across disciplines and regions.

[Stay tuned to the WAM socials to find out more!](#)

The Great Southern BioBlitz is an opportunity for all Southern Hemisphere countries to record organisms during Spring and showcase our beautiful biodiversity to the world. The event is run by a grassroots network of keen citizen scientists from across the globe. The event will run from October 24th–27th. Participants in the event will then have a further 14 days to upload and identify all of their observations made during this period to the iNaturalist platform.

Become a participant

Anyone in the world is eligible to take part in the event. All you have to do is upload observations of wildlife to the iNaturalist platform. Observations, however, must be made somewhere in the southern hemisphere during the event time frame. Register as a participant here to be kept informed and to qualify for a certificate.

[FAQ's and more information on becoming a participant.](#)



OXYGEN & BIOGEOCHEMICAL
DYNAMICS ALONG THE

**WEST
AFRICAN
MARGIN**



A sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to such a productive and engaging week, we look forward to the next phase of the WAM project.



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIKHOKO SASAKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2025

FREE ENTRY TO CITY NATURE RESERVES FOR GREAT SOUTHERN BIOBLITZ

The City of Cape Town is offering four days' free entry to its nature reserves during the Great Southern Bioblitz taking place from Friday, 24 October to Monday, 27 October 2025. Cape Town is participating in the annual Great Southern Bioblitz challenge alongside other cities in the southern hemisphere to record the local diversity of plant and animal life.



The Great Southern Bioblitz is a citizen scientist event that takes place annually, and encourages people to record and identify wildlife in the southern hemisphere. Anyone can participate by uploading their nature observations onto the iNaturalist app.



'Each year, cities across the southern hemisphere go head-to-head to see who can capture the widest range of plant and animal species, and Cape Town is always in the running to lead the way. Once again, we're opening our nature reserves to residents, free of charge, so that everyone can join in the fun of discovering and recording our city's incredible biodiversity. I have no doubt that Cape Town will shine, and I encourage residents to bring their smartphones or cameras and help showcase the unique wildlife that makes our city so extraordinary,' said the City's Deputy Mayor and Mayoral Committee Member for Spatial Planning and Environment, Alderman Eddie Andrews.



Residents can join by simply entering their plant and animal sightings on the iNaturalist app or website. Each observation taken on one of the four challenge days will automatically be included in the challenge. To join in and also see how Cape Town is doing, visit the Cape Town project page on the iNaturalist website.

Importantly: the free entry to the nature reserves does not include recreational or other permitted activities, these will be charged as per normal.

www.capetown.gov.za     @CityOfCT 0860 103 089



Dates to diarize

MARiS ECR Monthly Coffee Talk

Join us for our next ECR Coffee Talk during lunchtime for a chat over coffee and snacks.

- **Date:** Wed, 05 November 2025
- **Time:** 12h45 - 14h00
- **Venue:** UCT HW Pearson Back Garden Deck
- Bring a mug along, and let's chat about some of the amazing plans we have planned for 2025!

Stay tuned for more information on our upcoming MARiS ECR planned events.



SANCOR Vacancies

October - November 2025

Looking out for the next step in your career path?

The South African Network for Coastal and Oceanic Research (SANCOR) has listed some recent vacancies available within the marine and coastal environment.

Here are a few posts available:

Marine Biology Assistant

SAEON Elwandle Coastal Node

Gqeberha, Eastern Cape

Closing Date: [25 October 2025](#)

Find out more information [here](#).

Staff Research Associate 3 (Technical Post)

University of California, Santa Barbara, USA

Closing Date: [29 October 2025](#)

Find out more information [here](#).

Ocean Science Digital Communications Consultant

UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (Remote)

Closing Date: [31 October 2025](#)

Find out more information [here](#).

Scientist Production Grade A: Aquaculture Innovation and Technology Development

DFFE, Gariep Dam, Free State

Closing Date: [03 November 2025](#)

Find out more information [here](#).

Senior Administrative Officer: Pelagic and High-Seas Fisheries Management

DFFE, Cape Town

Closing Date: [03 November 2025](#)

Find out more information [here](#).

Senior Administrative Officer: Pelagic and High-Seas Fisheries Management

DFFE, Gariep Dam, Free State

Closing Date: [03 November 2025](#)

Find out more information [here](#).

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer

WWF-SA, Hybrid in Cape Town

Closing Date: [03 November 2025](#)

Find out more information [here](#).

Officer: Science Liaison

Cape Research Centre, SANParks, Cape Town

Closing Date: [04 November 2025](#)

Find out more information [here](#).

To view the rest of the vacancies, check out the SANCOR website using this [link](#). Other job opportunities can be found on [International Science Council Job Alerts and Opportunities](#) as well as [here](#) too.

Funding Opportunities

Check out UCT's current funding opportunities [here](#) and other student research grants [here](#).

Funding opportunities have also opened up through the Early Career Ocean Professional (ECOP) Network Programme or you could have a look at the NRF [website](#) and [Proposals for Funding in 2025](#).



2025 Opportunities

ATAP/SOSF Call for proposals – transmitter grant

Closing date: 10 Nov 2025

We are pleased to announce the call for applications for an acoustic transmitter award, funded by Save Our Seas Foundation and administered by the Acoustic Tracking Array Platform (ATAP). The award comprises 20 acoustic transmitters (standard internal coded transmitter; V13 or V16 or a combination of both, specifications in the application form) only and will not cover running costs or the purchase of any capital equipment. The transmitters must be used in an elasmobranch (shark, skates, rays, chimaeras) study, within the ATAP array (St Helena Bay to Santa Maria in southern Mozambique). [Click here](#) for detailed conditions of the award and application form. Applications are to be emailed to TS.Murray@saiab.nrf.ac.za and close on 10 November 2025. Please feel free to get in touch with the ATAP should you have any queries. We look forward to receiving your applications. The application form will also be uploaded to our website: <https://saiab.ac.za/platforms/acoustic-tracking-array-platform/>.

Webinar: Launch the Ocean Panel’s “Handbook on Sustainable Ocean Plans: A practitioners’ guide.”

A webinar will be held on 30 October 2025 at 4:00 PM GMT to launch the Ocean Panel’s “Handbook on Sustainable Ocean Plans: A practitioners’ guide.” This new technical manual provides a step-by-step framework to help governments develop Sustainable Ocean Plans (SOPs)—comprehensive, strategic blueprints for achieving 100% sustainable ocean management, vital for addressing the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. The event will feature a presentation by the lead authors and a discussion with Ocean Panel member countries about their experience implementing SOPs.

Webinar: Implementing the new Western Indian Ocean Regional Ocean Governance Strategy”

The Nairobi Convention Secretariat is hosting a webinar on 4 November 2025 at 12:00 noon EAT to introduce ocean accounting as a vital tool for implementing the new Western Indian Ocean Regional Ocean Governance Strategy. Organized in collaboration with the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership and other partners, the webinar aims to raise awareness, build capacity, and identify regional priorities for using ocean accounts to track progress on the sustainable blue economy and enhance ocean governance.

Call for 2026 SCOR Visiting Scholars

Closing date: 15 Dec 2025

The 2026 SCOR Visiting Scholar program invites ocean scientists from both developed and developing countries to apply for a \$2500 USD scholarship to travel to developing country institutions for a minimum of two weeks. The core purpose of the visit is knowledge exchange and capacity development through teaching short courses and providing mentorship, not conducting joint research. Applicants must submit a detailed working plan developed with the host institution, and proposals will be evaluated based on the expected benefits to students and the potential for new scientific collaborations.

2026 Opportunities

Webinar: ENSO and Tropical Basin Interactions: Conceptual Insights on Dynamics and Predictability

The CLIVAR Tropical Basin Interaction Research Focus invites you to a webinar on **4 November 2025 at 04:00 UTC**, presented by Dr. Sen Zhao. Titled "ENSO and Tropical Basin Interactions: Conceptual Insights on Dynamics and Predictability," the talk will explore how interactions between tropical ocean basins modulate the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO). Dr. Zhao will introduce the new eXtended nonlinear Recharge Oscillator (XRO) model as a simplified framework to quantify this influence, assess ENSO's predictability, and discuss how climate model biases affect these crucial relationships.

E5 Doctoral Training Partnership | Southern Ocean carbon uptake, cycling and export in a changing climate

[The University of Edinburgh | Apply by 14 Dec 2025](#)

This project addresses a key question in marine and climate science by constraining carbon uptake, cycling and export in the Southern Ocean using a combination of novel and established methods. A comprehensive training programme will be provided comprising both specialist scientific training and generic transferable and professional skills. Project-specific training will be provided in the required laboratory techniques and data management, as well as additional training in quantitative and programming skills as required. Any further specific training that is required will be provided by the supervisory team on an ongoing basis, as well as through collaborators where necessary.

MADRAS 2026 Workshop

[5-8 January 2026 | Zanzibar, Tanzania](#)

The MADRAS 2026 workshop, titled "[Air-Sea-Land Interactions: Modelling and Observations](#)," is a four-day event focusing on the complex system of geophysical flows that influence the Earth's weather and climate, specifically the Upper Ocean and Atmospheric Boundary Layer dynamics in coastal regions. Hosted by the IIT Madras Zanzibar Campus in Tanzania from 5-8 January 2026, the workshop brings together experts and early career researchers to discuss key themes including ocean biogeochemistry, remote sensing, and fine-scale modelling, promoting academic collaboration and research.

Workshop on Polar Heat: Transports, Mechanisms and Global Linkages

[28 Feb - 1 Mar 2026 | Central Glasgow, Scotland](#)

The CLIVAR/CliC/SCAR Oceans Region Panels are hosting a two-day workshop titled "[Polar Heat: Transports, Mechanisms and Global Linkages](#)" in Central Glasgow, Scotland, from Saturday 28 February to Sunday 1 March 2026. The objective is to synthesise understanding of polar ocean heat dynamics and its global implications, uniting Arctic and Southern Ocean communities through keynote talks and breakout sessions focused on heat transport and regional processes in a warming climate. Early Career Researchers can attend for free and may apply for limited travel funding through the registration form, with a final registration deadline of 30 November 2025.

Podcasts:

What to listen out for?



There are so many new amazing podcasts available online so we thought we would share some of those that might interest you. Have a listen to them in your spare time, you might learn something new from various people's stories or from the array of environmental topics discussed.

[Climate Frontiers](#)

A podcast series exploring the latest thinking, approaches and debates in climate science, hosted by the Climate System Analysis Group, or CSAG, at the University of Cape Town.

[The Root of the Science Podcast](#)

Hosted by Anne Chisa. This show has interviews with guests involved in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

[Ready or Not, Change is Coming](#)

A 12-part Climate Podcast Series, dedicated to breaking down climate change into chewable elements to help us all understand it better, dispel the myths and remove the ambiguity. Tracey Thomas is the host of the the RONCIC series.



[The AtlantECO podcast](#)

A science popularisation show, revolving around conversations between the host and a guest to discuss aspects of AtlantECO, a marine science project which focuses on the Atlantic Ocean.

[BEPSII Podcast: Sea Ice Research, Studies, and Scientists](#)

the official podcast of BEPSII brings you the research studies and work, stories and resources by the members of BEPSII (Biogeochemical Exchanges Processes at Sea Ice Interfaces) – scientists from all over the world and at all career stages.

[Iceworld podcast - British Antarctic Survey](#)

From polar scientists to plumbers, ICEWORLD is a series of interviews with ordinary people who are doing extraordinary jobs in Antarctica. The team talk climate science, extreme living, expeditions and becoming a community. Iceworld is hosted and recorded by Nadia Frontier, and produced in partnership with Boffin Media.

Call for ECRs to join the Working Group for 2026

The **UCT-MARiS ECR Working Group** is looking out for volunteers to assist us in putting ideas and actions together to better the ECR community, to build relationship and foster a spirit of community-led research. We aim to have representation from each of the MARiS-related departments, so that we can have a balanced set of ideas and planning throughout the year.

We have several portfolios that each of us contribute to in the working group, see as follows:

1. Events
2. Transformation and Outreach
3. Integration and Sustainability
4. Communications
5. Finances

The ECR working group meets bi-monthly and usually dedicates a couple hours a week to make sure to get the necessary work done in preparation for an event or the next WG meeting. If you are interested in getting involved and committing to assisting the ECR Working Group for the next year, we would love for you to mail us at ecr.maris@uct.ac.za and let us know which portfolio you would prefer to work with. We're especially looking for enthusiastic ECRs from the Electrical Engineering and Chemical Engineering departments to ensure a well-balanced group, but everyone is welcome to join! **[Sign the form here too!](#)**

If you are interested in generating content for MARiS, please email comms.maris@uct.ac.za directly. We want to share marine related content, involving interdisciplinary research, whether it may be fun facts, opportunities available, or sharing your current research, fieldtrips, cruises, conferences, workshops, events, etc. You let us know!



We want to know what is happening in the marine and Antarctic sphere and share it with our networks.

Follow us and feel free to tag us on social media and we'll be happy to repost what you get up to with your research:

Twitter: [@MARIS_UCT](https://twitter.com/MARIS_UCT)
Instagram: [@maris_uct](https://www.instagram.com/maris_uct)



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Because you are part of our MARiS ECR network.



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If you'd like to sign up for the [ECR mailing list](#) or you'd like to include an event or opportunity in our next newsflash, please email ecr.maris@uct.ac.za.