

# Newsletter



November - December 2014

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## 1. Candidate MARS Board Members

In the previous MARS newsletter we announced that the MARS network was looking for new board members. Until now we have had several nominations for candidates, the following persons were nominated:

Christos Arvanitidis	(HCMR, Greece)
Ferdinando Boero	(DISTeBA, Italy)
Alexander Ereskovsky	(IMBE, France)
Matt Frost	(MBA, United Kingdom)
Herman Hummel	(NIOZ, The Netherlands)
Jan Mees	(VLIZ, Belgium)
Alf Norkko	(Tvarminne, Finland)
Jesus Souza Troncoso	(UVIGO, Spain)
Jan Marcin Weslawski	(IO-PAN, Poland)

In the next MARS newsletter we will announce the candidates that have accepted our invitation to become a MARS board member.

## 2. Merry Christmas and a happy new year!

The MARS secretariat wishes all MARS members a good Christmas holiday. We hope you enjoy the time spend with family and friends.

Also, already, we would like to wish you a very happy, prosperous and successful new year. We hope 2015 will be a productive year in which MARS members together will help to maintain and strengthen the important position of Marine Stations in marine sciences and also science at large.

Due to the Christmas holidays, the MARS secretariat will not be present from 23 December until 7 January.

Happy holidays!  
The MARS secretariat

### 3. MARS Travel Awards for Young Scientists 2015

We are proud to announce the MARS travel awards for young scientists. For 2015 two awards of **maximum 750 €** will be granted to promising young scientists or students at MARS member institutions to study a research topic at another MARS member institute. Both institutes must be full members who have paid their membership fee for 2014, or have announced their intention to become a member in 2015.



The research topic should fall into one of the following themes:

- Marine biodiversity, including taxonomy, ecosystem functioning, observatories, indicators
- Marine genomics and molecular biology
- Marine model organisms and natural products
- Climate change problems
- Sustainable ecosystems and human factors
- Preservation and sustainable exploitation of marine ecosystems

After completion of the project an abstract of the results will be published in the MARS Newsletter.

Proposals should include a maximum 2 page outline of the intended research, the addresses of the sending and receiving MARS member institutes, a letter of support from the sending and the host institute, and a CV of the applicant (who may not be older than 35 years).

Proposals can be sent to the MARS Secretariat, at [christiaan.hummel@nioz.nl](mailto:christiaan.hummel@nioz.nl), or [MARS@nioz.nl](mailto:MARS@nioz.nl)

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### 4. MARS poster prizes at the Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems Conference 2015

The Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystems meeting is a conference for aquatic scientists with a focus on evolution, interactions and long-term change - particularly how these shape patterns of biodiversity and the relationships between biodiversity and ecosystem functioning. The conference will be held at the University of Liverpool 30th August – 4th September 2015. For more information see: [www.aquaticbiodiversityandecosystems.org](http://www.aquaticbiodiversityandecosystems.org).

The topics of the conference are:

- Global Environmental Change
- Fisheries & Aquaculture
- Evolutionary Biology
- Conservation, Management & Policy
- Biodiversity, Ecosystem Functioning & Services
- Dispersal & Connectivity
- Food webs & Trophic Dynamics
- General Aquatic Biology

For the best two posters, 2 MARS awards for Poster Presentations by young researchers (max age about 35 years) will be given. A first prize of 200 Euro, and a second prize of 100 Euro.

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## 5. Report of the 2014 MARS student travel awards

This year's MARS student travel awards have been awarded to Alessia Dinoi, a Master student from the University of Salento, Italy, and Daniel Crespo, a PhD from the University of Coimbra, Portugal. By now, they have both finished their travels. In this newsletter is the second report, by Alessia Dinoi, of research that was enabled by the MARS student travel award.

### **Genetic connectivity patterns in a bivalve: *Donacilla cornea* (wedge clam)**

Alessia Dinoi

Sending MARS member: University of Salento, Italy

Hosting MARS member: Centre de Recherche Insulaire et Observatoire de l'Environnement (CRIOBE), France

Population connectivity has become an important issue for the understanding of the factors regulating the abundance and the distribution of marine species and therefore to establish conservation actions to manage fisheries and stocks. The use of genetics allows to evaluate gene flow between different populations and so as to know their connectivity level. It is therefore a support tool for the management of



Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This study is part of the EU CoCoNet project, aimed at understanding the connectivity at marine level and at implementing it in the design of MPAs networks. The wedge clam (*Donacilla cornea*) is one of the model species chosen in CoCoNet, it isn't a species of commercial interest, but it is suitable to the aims of the project since it is present both in the Mediterranean and in the Black Seas. The main goal of this thesis is to study the genetic structure of this species to see if there is a genetic differentiation between Black Sea and Mediterranean populations. 11 microsatellites were tested on 672 samples from 11 sites in the Black Sea and 3 sites of Mediterranean Sea. The performed analyses showed that the Mediterranean populations are quite distinct from those of the Black Sea. Inside the Black Sea there is a good connection and gene flow between the sampled sites present. In particular, the site of Romania appears to have a high gene flow due to the great number of individuals who migrate in and out of this site. The site of Turkey has the lowest connectivity among all the studied sites of the Black Sea. These results, in the first case might be explained by the presence of an extensive MPA of 5000 ha, whereas in the second case the connectivity patterns might be due to the complete absence of MPAs along the entire Turkish coast, and also to the particular geographic position in respect to the Black Sea currents. To get a more complete view on the connectivity of the Black Sea, it may be appropriate to implement the obtained results with data from more survey sites along the Turkish and Russian coasts.

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