

INTERNAL NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2025 - ISSUE #3

INTRO

Our Project continues to move forward at pace, sparking fresh insights, collaborations, and opportunities. In this edition, you'll find the latest project updates, upcoming events, suggested reads, and can't-miss webinars. Catch up on what's happening at the Demonstration Sites and more.

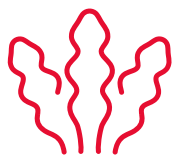
Happy reading!



★ HIGHLIGHT

The 2nd GA is coming up! Get ready for two half-days of online sessions (12-13 June) to catch up on updates from our Work Packages and Demonstration Sites. Then we'll dive deeper in person during two days of interactive, hands-on sessions in Arendal, Norway (17-18 June), hosted by SALT — including a boat tour through Raet National Park!





WP UPDATES

WP1

Thanks to input from PP, we now have a clear overview of the project's Financial Status, including partner-specific cost breakdowns. To strengthen collaboration between Demonstration Sites and tool developers, bilateral meetings will be scheduled — starting at the GA.

Preparations for the BLUE CONNECT General Assembly are in full swing! Please review the Agenda and prepare your sessions using the provided templates. We're pleased to welcome our Project Officer, Alberto Zocchi, for day one, and EAB members will join online. EAB Member Iryna Makarenko (Bucharest Convention Secretariat) will also attend the in-person meeting in Arendal. Don't forget to add discussion points for the EAB session!



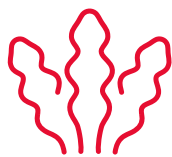
WP2

A Workshop for the development of the BLUE CONNECT Framework took place on 26-27th of May in Brussels (project partners: RBINS, UTARTU, DELTARES).

Collaboration between T2.1, 2.2 & 2.3 was essential for the development of the first complete structure of the BLUE CONNECT Framework for the definition of ecological goals and targets.

In addition, a first operational guidance for addressing the modelling and assessment of connectivity and ecosystem functioning (T2.2 & 2.3) in the project Demo Sites was developed.





WP UPDATES

WP3

Task 3.1: Meetings with DS are ongoing to define their involvement. Session planning for the GA is progressing in collaboration with Tasks 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

Tasks 3.2 & 3.2.2: Literature reviews are underway, and preparations for GA sessions are in full swing.

Task 3.2.1: A stakeholder survey has been launched, with a follow-up phase planned. Initial results reveal a gap between perceived and actual ocean literacy — a topic that will be further explored during the GA. A session concept note will be shared soon.

Task 3.4: Kick-off is planned for June.

WP4

One major achievement was performing the screening on the existing management and co-ownership schemes at global and national scale. Based on that, a common Methodology for adjustment of the screened co-management and co-ownership schemes will be developed by CCMS, consulted with LSWGs and applied in each of the Demo Sites.



WP5

Task 5.1: All partners are assessing MEE tools, with individual reviews (3–4 tools each) due by 23 May. Criteria were refined after an initial round, and newcomers have received support.

Task 5.2: Discussions with several DSs are underway to finalise Milestone 10 (selection of innovative monitoring techniques). Progress is on track.





WP UPDATES

WP6

Following the review of existing sources, the writing of D4.2 has started, and the initial MPA Financing document has been drafted. First feedback is gathered from partners and comments are being integrated. WWF Med thanks all partners who volunteered to take responsibility in the process! Partners were asked to provide feedback on the structure of the Blue4ALL database. Timelines for tools, outputs, hosting needs and deliverables are being aligned across WPs and with Blue4ALL. An agreement was reached to ensure continued collaboration between BLUE CONNECT and Blue4ALL Blueprints.

A mayor achievement for WP6 will be defining the structure of the Blue Print with the integration to the Blue4All and MPA CN platforms in the WP6 interactive session at the general assembly in Arendal.

WP7

BLUE CONNECT is contributing to the development of the MPA Corridors Game for the UNOC 2025 side event.

The MPA-Community Network was launched, and the BLUE CONNECT webpage is now live.

News articles have been published (thanks to SUBMON, BBF, UAc, and UMA). The "[Blue Horizons Newsletter](#) " was distributed in April.

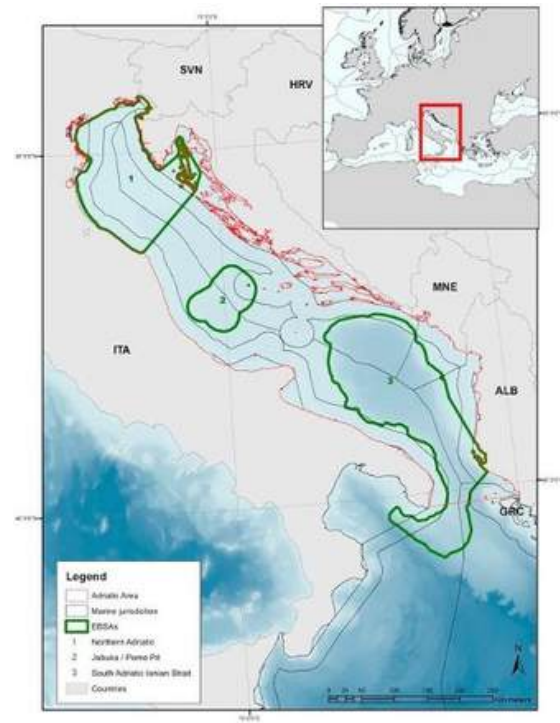




NEWS & UPDATES FROM OUR DEMO SITES

SAIS EBSA

Bilateral meetings are being planned for setting objectives for the DS SAIS EBSA LSWG. Secondary theme of these high level meetings will be communicating to align efforts with synergistic initiatives. A trans-boundary best practice review will be done in preparation to contribute to parallel efforts we can piggy back on.

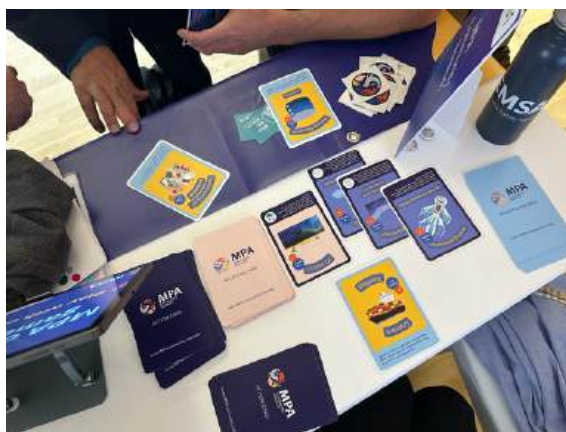




PAST EVENTS

BLUE CONNECT AT THE EUROPEAN MARITIME DAYS IN IRELAND

BLUE CONNECT was presented by Margarita Stancheva (CCMS) at the Mission Ocean Workshop and also was part of the booth for the newly created MPA Community Network, where the MPA Card Game was played by a lot of people who loved it; many wanted to purchase it. BLUE CONNECT was promoted through the game and the slides on screen.



BLUE CONNECT AT THE HELCOM WORKING GROUP ON BIODIVERSITY, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

Discussions took place in May as part of the 5th informal consultation of the HELCOM Working Group on Biodiversity, Protection and Restoration, as a follow up to the dedicated session on strict protection held in February, which included participation from Blue Connect members. A guiding document supported the discussions, referencing Blue Connect's work under WP2 and indicating potential alignment with future work and discussions related to the designation and establishment of strict protection areas in the Baltic Sea region.





PAST EVENTS

ONE OCEAN WEEK IN BERGEN

In April, SALT attended and contributed to One Ocean Week in Bergen by organising and promoting the seminar "Hvor er oppsynsmannen under vann?" (Where is the underwater nature ranger?) held on 9 April 2025. The event explored challenges related to strict marine protection and enforcement. Malin Jacob presented the BLUE CONNECT project approach in a presentation titled "BLUE CONNECT: "Fair and effective marine conservation in Europe." The event gathered a relevant audience of approximately 30 attendees and emphasized key messages such as the importance of fair and effective conservation, trust-building and integrating local voices in marine management

Check out here the [Facebook Post](#) & [Facebook Reel](#) that the SALT Team produced!



Photo: Malin Jacob giving the presentation/ Credit: Marte Haave/Salt





PAST EVENTS

“BLUE INNOVATIONS: COMMUNITIES AND TECH FOR CETACEAN MONITORING ON A BUDGET” WORKSHOP AT 36. EUROPEAN CETACEAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE

On 13th of May UHI, RBINS, UAc, HELCOM and UMA co-organised a workshop that showed another way forward, where community science and collaboration turn local action into meaningful impact. Case studies from around the world from New Zealand to Iceland showed how observations by passionate non-scientists helped cetacean conservation efforts.

- 💡 During the workshop, participants shared insights on
 - ◆ How to sustain momentum on the long term in citizen science initiatives;
 - ◆ Pros and cons of using citizen science apps and social media websites to collect information;
 - ◆ How observations by communities contribute to mitigate the risk of collisions between whales and ships on busy waterways.





OUTREACH ACTIVITIES BY PARTNERS



CCMS

BLUE CONNECT was featured in the Mission Ocean article and published and communicated on the [Mission Ocean website](#) and social media (posts [X](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)).

Check our another [nice post by CCMS on BLUE CONNECT](#) & here on [X](#)

SUBMARINER

BLUE CONNECT joined the [MPA Community Network](#)!

We're excited to be part of the newly launched MPA Community Network — a collaborative space bringing together Europe's marine conservation community.

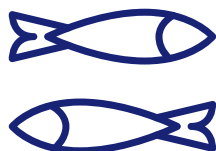
This is a great opportunity to showcase BLUE CONNECT tools and results, exchange knowledge, and promote our work across a wider network of MPA managers, researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders.

 The platform offers:

Cross-initiative collaboration

A shared hub of tools, resources & best practices

A space to stay informed, inspired, and connected



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WEBINARS

UPCOMING

MSP4BIO Webinar: How Can Marine Spatial Planning Help Achieve Europe's 30×30 Targets?

6 June 2025 | 🕒 12–2 PM CET | 💻 Online

🎓 Hosted by [PAP/RAC](#)

👉 Register [here](#)

The webinar will explore:

- The current status of marine protection across Europe
- Barriers and opportunities for integrating biodiversity in MSP
- Real-world examples from national contexts
- Policy recommendations and next steps for the EU MSP Directive

Nature-Inclusive Approaches of the Blue Economy in MPAs: Good Management Practices and Orientations

📅 20 June 2025 | 🕒 2–3:30 PM CET | 💻 Online

🎓 Hosted by the [University of Cadiz \(UCA\)](#)

👉 Register [here](#)





INTERESTING NEWS

At 99, David Attenborough shares strongest message for the ocean, [read it here](#)

More than 80% of world's coral reefs hit by worst bleaching event in history. The mass bleaching, which began in early 2023, has impacted reefs in at least 83 countries and territories, including biodiversity hotspots like Australia's Great Barrier Reef, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, and reefs across the South Pacific and Southeast Asia.

Deep-Diving Whales Mistake Plastic for Prey – PBS North Carolina

The Destruction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Op Ed by Gary Griggs

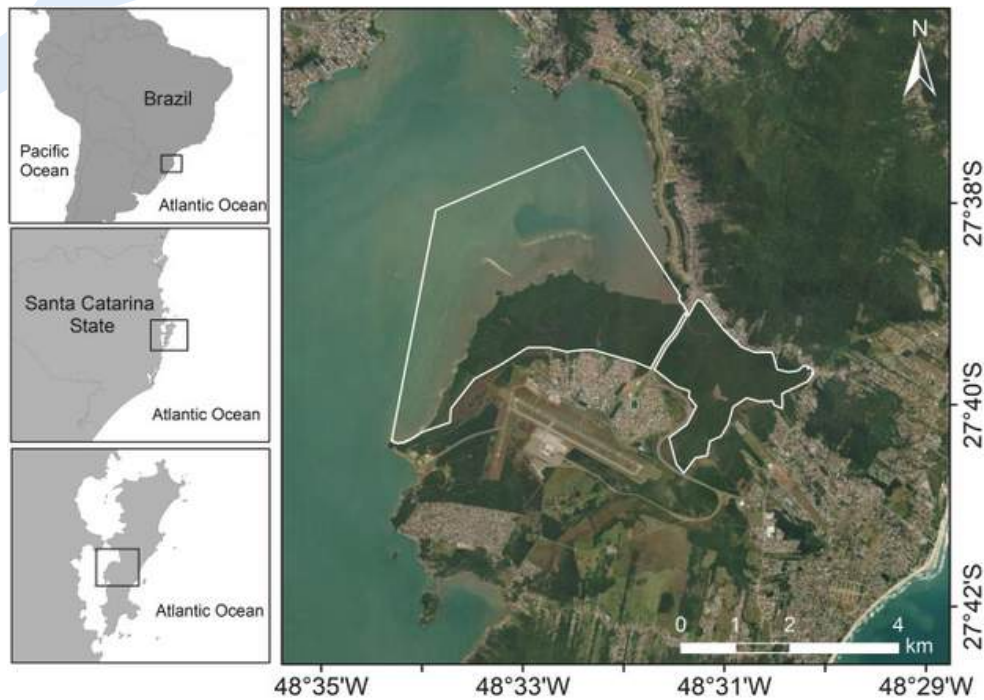
Sand groomers vs. turtles: how wildlife is falling foul of the demand for Insta-perfect beaches, The Guardian

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PUBLICATIONS /RECOMMENDATIONS

Sereno D. Diederichsena,* , Carlos V.C. Weissa,b,** , Francisco A.V. Limaa, Bruno A.Q. dos Santos a , Josselin Guyot-T´ ephanyc, Jean-Baptiste E. Thomasd, Ivana Lukice, C´ eline Reboursf , John Patrick Walshg, Jennifer McCannng, Elea Juell-Skielsed , Fredrik Gr¨ ondahld , Marinez E.G. Scherera. **Exploring the contribution of multi-use approach in fostering local blue economy: Insights from the Global South, 2025.** Ocean & coastal management, 2025-07, Vol.266, p.107689, Article 107,



Depiction: Case study in Pirajubaé Marine Extractive Reserve (PMER) location (white polygon), in Florianópolis Pirajubaé Marine Extractive Reserve (MPA) in Brasil.



UPCOMING EVENTS

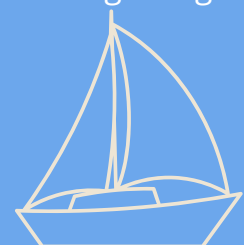
BLUE CONNECT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

-  PART 1: Date & Time: 12.06. (14:00) CET & 13.06. (13:30 CET), ONLINE
-  PART 2: Date: 17–18 June 2025  Location: Arendal, Norway

The 2nd General Assembly (GA) of BLUE CONNECT will take place in two parts: an online component and in-person sessions in Arendal, hosted by SALT. The online GA will feature updates on progress, upcoming milestones, and challenges from our Work Packages and Demonstration Sites. The in-person meeting will focus on interactive, collaborative working sessions — and we'll also enjoy a boat tour through Raet National Park!

SKAGERRAKSEILASEN 2025


Helene Skjeie Thorstensen (SALT) will participate in Skagerrakseilasen 2025, a sailing event promoting knowledge and cooperation for ocean and fjord health across Skagerrak, Oslofjord, and Kattegat. The voyage takes place from 9–22 June aboard S/S Sørlandet, visiting Kristiansand, Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Oslo, Arendal, and Farsund, with public science events in each port. Helene will be on board for the Kristiansand–Farsund and Farsund–Copenhagen legs, alongside participants from research institutions across Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. Activities during the voyage include networking and creating communication content, including a planned video on the Raet Demo Site for BLUE CONNECT. In Farsund and Copenhagen, Helene will represent BLUE CONNECT at public events similar to a science fair, organised by local institutions and targeting the public.



UPCOMING EVENTS

BLUE CONNECT AT UNOC SIDE EVENT

 Date and Time: 11.06, 13.00 – 15.00 CET

 Location: Port Lympia, at Quai Île de Beauté, Nice, France.

Representing the MPA Community Network and its Projects, including BLUE CONNECT, SUBMARINER will be hosting the MPA Game in a different version: as a board game, where participants will be able to jointly design an MPA corridor

You can find more details, the agenda and registration link here:

<https://mpacommunity.network/mapping-for-the-future-interactive-design-of-mpa-corridors/>

MSP4BIO FINAL CONFERENCE

 Date: 2-4 July  Location: Venice, Italy

CCMS will be presenting results from the Black Sea test site solution on how to improve integration of MPA and MSP utilizing PW4B Cumulative effect assessment tool and trade-offs/participatory mapping.

Present and validate the final recommendations, transferability and scale-up of effective biodiversity mainstreaming in MSP (D5.4).

ARENDALSUKE EVENT BEVAR RAET

 Date: August 11-15  Location: , Arendal, Norway.

NIVA & SALT are joining forces to present BLUE CONNECTs involvement in the Raet National Park during this event. More info coming soon!



Thank you for reading