

Sea for yourself!

With our coasts and ocean changing faster than ever before, Citizen Scientists will play a huge role in helping science to protect them.

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Surveying the scene, Credit: Institute of Marine Research (IMR), Norway

What animals live along our shore? Where do dolphins go? How can we protect this reef? Why not go and see for yourself! Marine Citizen Science projects in Europe and beyond are already answering these questions. Marine Citizen Science is where members of the general public collaborate with scientists to gather and analyse data on the marine environment and its many inhabitants. It is a powerful tool.

A new Policy Brief, published by the European Marine Board, answers the question “Why Marine Citizen Science?”, and presents the wide scope of applications

in marine science research. It also looks at the range of opportunities for engaging citizens – and ways to develop scientifically sound methods for using the data. It also features future opportunities with regard to the use of technology, as well as highlighting the potential for Marine Citizen Science to be a tool for marine policy.

The coastal and ocean environments are vast, and there are still many creatures to discover and many questions to answer. Approximately 95% of the sea floor is still to be surveyed in detail, and there could be between 500,000 and 2 million marine species still to discover. It would take many lifetimes for scientists to explore them alone. This is where Marine Citizen Scientists come in. The data collected and analysed by willing and interested volunteers is invaluable to the development of scientific knowledge, and in return, can provide many benefits to the volunteers. And with knowledge comes power. The new knowledge generated will be essential for a more sustainable use of these precious environments in the future.

“Marine Citizen Science has the potential to not only influence the environmental impacts of society through behavioural education and knowledge, but also to empower citizens to engage constructively in the development and implementation of truly fit-for-purpose and evidence-based marine policy” says Jan Mees, Director General, Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ).

The Policy Brief finishes by presenting recommendations going forward, as both short- and long-term action areas, to ensure that Marine Citizen Science can continue to progress in Europe.

So what might you find at the sea shore? Hopefully Marine Citizen Scientists!

You can find out more on our website: www.marineboard.eu

Notes to editors

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The European Marine Board (EMB) is a leading European think tank in marine science policy. EMB is a network with a membership comprising major national marine/oceanographic institutes, research funding agencies and national networks of universities from countries across Europe. The Board provides a platform for its member organizations to develop common priorities, to advance marine research, and to bridge the gap between science and policy to meet future marine science challenges and opportunities.

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