

International Association of Biological Oceanography (IABO)

Meeting at the World Conference on Marine Biodiversity, Aberdeen October 2011

Present:

IABO Executive Committee members: Mark Costello (New Zealand, President), Annelies Pierrot (The Netherlands, Past President), Dave Patterson (UK, host WCMB), Charles Griffith (South Africa, Past General Secretary), Patricia Miloslavich (Venezuela, Census of Marine Life), Carlo Heip (Belgium, convenor 1st WCMB, Chair marine GEO BON), Sun Song (China, host next WCMB).

Others present: Sun Xiaoxia and Li Xinzheng (China); Anne-Helene Prieud-Richard (DIVERSITAS); Laura Airoidi (Italy); Isabel Sousa-Pinto (Portugal); Renuka Badhe (Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research); Heino Fock (Germany); Suchana Apple Chavanich (Thailand); Menachem Gorem (Israel); P. A. Vikas (India); Claire Goodwin (Ireland); Camino Liguele (EC JRC); Shannon Hampton (South Africa); Agnes Muthumbi (Kenya); Monty Priede, Naomi Jordan, Flora Kent, Virginia Echavarrri, and Helen Findkay (UK); Sibel Zeki and Nazli Demirel (Turkey); Mustafa Yucel (France); Josuke Onishi (Japan); Jose Valdazo (country not recorded).

Report

Current activities

The meeting began with the President and Past President outlining some of the current IABO activities and challenges.

SCOR

One of the most important activities is that IABO is a member of the Executive Committee of the Scientific Committee on Ocean Research (SCOR). SCOR is a 50-year old organisation. Like IABO it is established under the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) and International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU). The members of these organisations are country's national academies. Thus SCOR is an academic counterpart to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) which it helped establish. SCOR coordinates marine science globally through endorsing global science initiatives and financially sponsoring international Working Groups. There is an annual call for WG proposals with a deadline in April. IABO participates in the evaluation of proposals and attends the annual SCOR meeting where they are discussed and approved.

SCOR also provides an opportunity for IABO committee members to meet leaders in related marine sciences, notably its sister organisation the International Association for the Physical Sciences of the Oceans (IAPSO). IAPSO invites IABO to lead special sessions (symposia) at its General Assembly. This is a large conference with several thousand delegates held every two years.

IUBS

IABO is also invited to nominate members for election to the committees of IUBS and participate in international initiatives and policy in biological sciences through IUBS. In addition to IABO having the opportunity to nominate people to IUBS committees, IABO may also be eligible to apply for funding when IUBS makes calls for proposals.

Membership

Conventionally IABO members were limited to individuals nominated by national academies or Royal Societies who are members of IUBS. Over the past 3 years the academies have been contacted to renew their nominees. The following countries have done so: Albania, Belgium, Bosnia, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Guatemala, India, Norway, New Zealand, Palestine, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, The Netherlands, UK, USA. Thus many countries with strong marine biology activities have not responded, e.g. Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Chile, China, Denmark, Egypt, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Mexico, Lebanon, Poland, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine. It was noted that academies no longer had the coordinating role

they had some decades ago, and science had become more open and informal. IABO needed to adapt to the changing situation.

The members of the Executive Committee are not limited to national representatives but are approved by them following an election at the General Assembly. The Executive Committee members are proposed by a nominating committee led by the Past President.

The past conventions for IABO membership warrant change to increase participation. IUBS does not mind if IABO should change how it is organisation but would wish to be informed. To that end, the IABO Executive Committee has been expanded to include representatives of past, present and future WCMB, and the Census of Marine Life. Suggestions for additional members are welcomed.

Potential future activities:

WCMB – IABO has engaged closely in the organisation of the 2nd WCMB. It is proposed that the WCMB and IABO integrate such that the WCMB becomes the General Assembly and main international event of IABO. Thus past, present and future WCMB convenors will join the IABO Executive Committee.

Census of Marine Life - assist global engagement with follow up to Census of Marine Life (to be discussed after the end of this conference).

Endorsement of scientific meetings: IABO can endorse scientific workshops, conferences and meetings. This may be beneficial to organisers to indicate that the event has support from a global marine biological sciences organisation.

Endorsement of research funding proposals – IABO could also support proposals that will contribute to the advancement of marine biological sciences, either through research, communication and networking, or other activities.

Nominations

IABO could nominate scientists to international activities and working groups, especially when these are global but lack marine expertise (e.g. DIVERSITAS, IPBES, GEO).

Awards or medals

IABO could instigate one or more annual awards or medals to recognise significant achievements within its community. IAPSO already has such a programme with the biennial (1) Prince Albert I Medal to somebody “who has made outstanding contributions to the enhancement and advancement of the physical and/or chemical sciences of the oceans”, and (2) Eugene LaFond Medal “awarded to an ocean scientist from a developing country making a presentation (poster or oral) in a IAPSO-sponsored or co-sponsored symposium at the IUGG or IAPSO assemblies”.

Funding

IABO could seek donors to sponsor young scientists and scientists from developing countries to attend conferences or have visiting fellowships. SCOR already provides IABO some funds for scientists from developing countries to attend its main conference. POGO provides visiting fellowships to young scientists from developing countries worth about €5,000.
