



## Ecomarine has been concluded!

### The ECOMARINE Info Days

During May and June 2024, **three Ecomarine Info Days** were organised in India, by the University of Kerala and Andhra University, and in Malaysia, by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. The aim of these three Info Days was to promote and raise awareness about the **project's results and objectives**, the important work of the three respective **Marine Monitoring Labs**, as well as their findings on Blue Carbon Emissions, Habitat Mapping, and Plastic Marine Debris. The participants and local communities responded favourably to the activities of the Info Days, which drew sizable attendance.

#### INFO DAY @ KERALA UNIVERSITY

The **University of Kerala** organised the first of the three Info Days on the International Day for Biological Diversity, **May 22<sup>nd</sup>**, 2024, at the Senate Chamber of the University of Kerala, in Thiruvananthapuram, India. During the Info Day, the pivotal role of the Ecomarine Project and the Marine Monitoring Lab at the University of Kerala in addressing pressing issues such as climate change, biodiversity, and pollution was highlighted. Public lectures on the research outputs of the ECOMARINE project initiated by the University of Kerala's Department of Aquatic Biology & Fisheries were presented under three themes:

- Marine Plastic Pollution: Case Studies from the Southwest Coast of India and Lakshadweep
- Marine Life in the Rocky Reefs and Shipwreck Sites of the Kerala Coast
- Blue Carbon Estimation of Mangrove Ecosystems

A total of **84 participants**, representing academia, research institutions, civil society organizations, and media attended the event, which successfully increased awareness about marine pollution, blue carbon ecosystems, and marine biodiversity among its attendees.



*Info Day @ the University of Kerala, India*

#### INFO DAY @ ANDHRA UNIVERSITY

**Andhra University** hosted its Info Day on **June 8<sup>th</sup>**, 2024, coinciding with the World Ocean's Day, in the Department of Marine Living Resources, Visakhapatnam, India. The Info Day was attended by a total of **73 participants**, including students and academics, research scholars, research scientists from organizations such as NIO, CMFRI and CIFT, media and civil society organization representatives, as well as the public of Visakhapatnam.

Esteemed professors highlighted the importance of the established Marine Monitoring Lab and the work carried out so far, along with the need for research on plastics, marine ecology and climate change.



*Info Day @ Andhra University, India*

## INFO DAY @ UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA TERENGGANU

The third Info Day was organised by **Universiti Malaysia Terengganu** on **June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024**, in Kuala Nerus, Malaysia, once again on the occasion of the World Oceans Day. A total of **44 participants** (students, academics, researchers, media



*Info Day @UMT, Malaysia*

representatives, wider public) were able to attend the one-day event and get informed on the operation of the **UMT Marine Monitoring Lab**, as well as the **substantial research carried out on Blue Carbon, Habitat Mapping, and Plastic Marine Debris**. Positive comments were received from all attendees, who described the project as inspiring, educational, and stimulating, and expressed a desire for the initiative and its outcomes to be sustained in the University's regular operations.

## The ECOMARINE Final Conference

The **Final Conference** of the ECOMARINE project was held on **June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**, in the Everly Putrajaya Hotel, in Malaysia, organised by **Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia**. More than 100 people attended the conference in person and online, including professors and lecturers, researchers, students, and representatives from the EU, the media and local authorities.



The Final Conference had a strong research orientation, featuring more than 20 keynote speeches and presentations, as well as a plethora of poster presentations on the subjects of **Marine Debris** (e.g., Dissolved Plastic Polymer Chelates in



the Coastal Water of Visakhapatnam; Time- and Space-Varying Microplastic Contributions from A Tourism Area to River Sediments; Microplastics Prevalence in Marine Fish Species from Mersing, Johor, Malaysia), **Habitat Mapping** (e.g., Sonar-based Mapping of Subtidal Marine Habitat around Pulau Mertang, Johor; Mapping of Seagrass Habitats in Andhra Pradesh State, East Coast of India), and **Blue Carbon** (e.g., Carbon Stock Assessment of Setiu Lagoon Mangroves and Its Relation to the Environmental Parameters; Climate Downscaling).

Participants noted how well-organized the event was and how satisfied they were with the project outcomes, while expressing their interest in the research findings with regards to the topics at hand and in the continued cooperation and collaboration amongst the HEIs and research teams.

## Final Transnational Partners Meeting

Right after the project's Final Conference, all the project partners had the opportunity to meet for one last time face-to-face and discuss the project implementation and concluding activities and to reflect on the work undertaken during the last 3.5 years of the project's duration, the lessons learnt, and the experience and knowledge gained.

During this final partners' meeting, attendees also had the chance to discuss future cooperation possibilities, as well as the Marine Monitoring Labs' sustainability.



## Project conclusion – what's next?

Even though the ECOMARINE project is technically over, the participating Asian HEIs in India and Malaysia have greatly benefited from it. For this reason, the partners will work to sustain the project results beyond the funding period. More specifically the four Marine Monitoring Labs in each of the four HEIs from India and Malaysia will continue to operate in the future, capitalizing on the trained staff that was upskilled in the framework of the project and on the strategic and operational documents that were developed by the consortium. Their goal is to promote marine conservation and research at the local and regional level by utilizing approaches, methods and techniques developed in the framework of the project.

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