

# STUDENT PRESENTERS ANNOUNCEMENT



## Melanie Stock

Melanie is a German gone to Iceland and fresh into her second year of a PhD at the University of Iceland and the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute. Her work focuses on by-catch of marine mammals and seabirds in Icelandic gillnet fisheries. Melanie is hoping to better understand where, why, and how bycatch occurs so we can work on solutions to mitigate this incidental catch. Further, she wants to understand how by-catch affects fishers, their daily work and their profitability. The goal is more sustainable and efficient fisheries.

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## Mar León Salmerón

Mar is a marine biologist currently working as a whale-watching guide with WWF Italy's "Le Vele del Panda" project. At the symposium, she'll share how this citizen science initiative brings together research, education, and public engagement to monitor cetaceans across the Mediterranean. By combining visual surveys, acoustics, and photo-identification, they've collected long-term data on eight species, helping improve knowledge of their distribution and support conservation in understudied areas.

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## Lavinia Mitchel

Lavinia is an early-career independent researcher focusing on killer whales in the Salish Sea and pilot whales across the North Atlantic and Tenerife. In collaboration with GVI, she is advancing research on resident short-finned pilot whales in Tenerife, with plans to further develop analyses from their long-term dataset. At the symposium, Lavinia will present work exploring how emotional responses during whale-watching encounters shape conservation attitudes. She is expanding her work on long-finned pilot whales and will present research suggesting post-mortem genetic sampling to clarify population structure at the Society for Marine Mammalogy Biennial Conference 2026.

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## Ricardo Mendes

Ricardo is an intern at the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO), where he works with marine mammal management and conservation. He has a Master's degree in marine biological resources and specialises in marine megafauna conservation. At the symposium, Ricardo will present his thesis research, where he used sighting records collected by dedicated cetacean surveys and citizen science to model the spatial distribution of cetacean species in Cabo Verde, West Africa. His study helps identify important areas for conservation in a region where knowledge on cetacean populations is still scarce.

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## Malena Mogwitz

Malena's work focuses on marine conservation and environmental philosophy. With an academic background in the natural and social sciences, she holds a multidisciplinary perspective, seeking to build bridges between different kinds of knowledge, disciplines, and between human and other species. Malena is currently a research associate at

Whale Wise, a charity devoted to marine mammal conservation based on engagement and research. At the moment, she is participating in a collaborative research project about humpback whale entanglement in fishing gear in Icelandic waters, from which she will present excerpts and discuss additional perspectives on human-whale-entanglements.

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## Juliette Gard

Juliette Gard is a marine scientist and postgraduate student at the University of Wollongong, researching coastal dolphin ecology in Australia. Her work focuses on Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*) in Jervis Bay, where she is establishing the first updated population baseline in over two decades. Using photo-identification, behavioural observations, and citizen science data, her research aims to understand population structure, habitat use, and responses to human activity. At the symposium, she will present how baseline data can support the detection of anthropogenic impacts and inform effective, evidence-based conservation in multi-use coastal ecosystems.

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## Gordon Maguire

Gordon Maguire is a student at the College of the Atlantic working with collaborators from Allied Whale and the Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company. Over the past four years, he has completed extensive fieldwork; his most recent work was assisting the Northern Bottlenose Whale Project. For the symposium, he'll present a reanalysis of injury prevalence in North Atlantic fin whales using decades of photo-identification records from the North Atlantic Fin Whale Catalogue. Gordon's end goal is to produce an updated baseline to inform mitigation and conservation efforts in the Gulf of Maine.

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## Marie- Laure Veys

Marie-Laure's love for the ocean began as a child, collecting shells on the shore. Up until an internship in Gansbaai, South Africa, where she fell in love with cetacean behaviour, and never looked back. She recently completed her MSc through IMBRSea (June 2025), with a thesis studying group decision-making and social interactions in killer whales in Hardangerfjord, Norway. Marie-Laure is currently extending this work through the Institute of Marine Research (IMR) in Norway, and looking to pursue a PhD in cetacean behaviour. At the symposium, she will be sharing key findings from her thesis research.

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## Caroline Falkner

Caroline Falkner is a Canadian Master's student in the IMBRSea (International Master's of Marine Biological Resources) program. She is completing her thesis at the Institute of Marine Research in Norway, where she studies nutrient pathways in baleen whales. By comparing the nutrient content of whale prey with measurements of nutrients in whale feces and urine, her work will help quantify how much whales retain versus release back into the ocean. This research sheds new light on the role of baleen whales in marine nutrient cycling and highlights their importance for ocean productivity and ecosystem health.

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