

Annual activity report 2024

2024: Advancing Ocean Literacy, Marine Conservation and Small-Scale Fisheries Resilience with *Mundus maris*

In 2024, *Mundus maris* continued its work championing ocean literacy, conservation, and regeneration. The activities during the year showcased our integrated approaches using advocacy, research, and action, bringing together diverse stakeholders to create impactful change.

We regularly reported on major events relevant to learning more about the ocean and its regeneration. We provide summaries of selected meetings for broader access.

In the same vein, we continued the dissemination and development of the FishBase Guide app for Android which provides selected key information to help protect juvenile and threatened fish. The data come from the global fish info system FishBase and can be searched by common name in any language, anywhere. It's free – supporting fish lovers or buyers taking informed decisions.

As every year, World Ocean Day, June 8, was a great occasion to celebrate our life-support system with educational and cultural events and clean-up drives across three continents. These activities were great opportunities for promoting ocean literacy and collective action.

In the context of our support to small-scale fisheries (SSF) across the globe, we continued our engagement with the Vulnerability to Viability (V2V) Global Partnership focused on efforts to strengthen the resilience of SSF. These efforts align with the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable SSF. In the same vein, we participated actively the global SSF Summit in Rome in July 2024.

Our collaboration with the ‘Too Big To Ignore’ global research platform further amplified these efforts in favour of SSF. We presented a contribution on Mediterranean SSF to recover depleted resources at a regional workshop in Cyprus.

Mundus maris actively participated in a range of events emphasizing the critical connection between ocean health and climate action. We participated in several climate marches, alongside movements like Fridays for Future, and drew attention to the need for socially just action when working on the ocean-climate nexus and its underlying policies.

We extend big thanks to our supporters and partners, whose generosity and collaboration made 2024 a year of meaningful progress. Despite working with a modest budget, we achieved respectable strides in raising awareness, advocating for practices that are socially equitable and in line with planetary boundaries, always with a focus to connect local and global action for a healthy ocean. Yet, many trends indicate harmful directions so that we are fired up to continue our mission, confident in the knowledge that collective efforts can create a healthier, more equitable future for the ocean and the communities that depend on it.

Cornelia E. Nauen
and the entire
Mundus maris team



2024 Budget

Total income from donations (including carry over from 2023) and membership fees was **36,569.47 EUR.**

Our investments / financial costs beyond the very substantial value of volunteering time and cooperative cost-effective logistics borne mostly by partners were:

Total ACAD	310.00 €
Total YOUTH	4,412.66 €
Total EDUC	3,021.78 €
Total INFO / COMMS	8,877.45 €
Total STOB / OPER	2,150.99 €
Total expenses	18,772.88 €

We transferred 17,796.59 EUR to our 2025 budget.

ACAD = academic work
YOUTH = youth work
EDUC = education
INFO / COMMS = information & communication
STOB / OPER = statutory obligations & operational costs

Recent Highlights from different places

NB: To expand the information of the annual report, move the cursor over the bold underlined text and click to link to the related webpage.

Section 1 – Information, Communication, providing resources

Here comes a small selection of activities focused on information, providing knowledge resources and exploring routes to better ocean, climate and public health outcomes.

Mundus maris at the international BOOT Fair 2024

Our participation on the 'Love your Ocean' platform during the international water sports fair BOOT in January 2024 is becoming a tradition with several presentations on stage and 9 days non-stop at our booth. We focused again on ocean literacy and protection with good response. The ocean game was again very popular and almost 1000 visitors picked up the QR cards of the FishBase Guide app for core sustainability info. We also supported the fish sound quiz of our partner Quantitative Aquatics in the Philippines. It's part of the most comprehensive scientific fish information system. **See more.**



Kids flogging to the Ocean Game at the Boot fair
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Ocean protection and gender equity are cornerstones of human security

Several webinars showing the intricate connections between ocean protection and gender equity to advance human security were spearheaded by our group in Nigeria. Mobilising eminent expert speakers and teaming up with local partners the events at International Women's Day (8 March) and other occasions were rich in insights and learning.

Event at Gare Maritime in Brussels

Entirely organised by citizen volunteers with the support of businesses or organisations acting on a voluntary basis, the H.O.M.E event at the Tour and Taxis maritime station welcomed families and other visitors on May 25 and 26, 2024. H.O.M.E. stands for House Of Mother Earth and is an initiative of the non-profit Climattitude. Our friends of COREN and **Mundus maris** asbl were invited to provide animation for the 'kitchen'. What better to propose than protecting baby fish to let them grow and reproduce for healthy food for ever! **Read more.**



Mundus maris team at the H.O.M.E. event - Copyright: Mundus maris

Baltic Fisheries Emergency Meeting, Brussels, 26 June 2024

The emergency closure of the Baltic cod fishery in 2019 was the sad low point of mismanagement of Baltic fisheries. The Low Impact Fishers Europe (LIFE) apex organisation of small-scale, coastal fishers had invited managers, NGOs and other interested parties to a consultation to explore how to stop the disastrous downward spiral. Since 2019 things have not improved. On the contrary. The collapse of cod in the Western Baltic has also been followed by that of herring and sprat as major food of cod. The hosts questioned the wisdom of allowing industrial fisheries to be let loose on herring and sprat for reduction to fish meal for Norwegian salmon fattening, while the same fish, if it were allowed to grow and be caught with less impact gear in lower quantities for direct human consumption, would provide jobs and income for thousands of families and start restoring ecosystem functions for water birds and mammals too. **Read more.**

SSF Summit in Rome celebrates 10th anniversary of the SSF Guidelines

Upon invitation of the organising committee at the FAO, Cornelia E Nauen of *Mundus maris* attended the second SSF Summit taking place in the premises of FAO from 5 to 7 July 2024. The first day was exclusively reserved for members of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) Working Group on Fisheries with a thematic focus on customary tenure rights for small-scale and indigenous fisheries. During the weekend, with some 300 participants admitted, the emphasis shifted towards sharing recent experiences and regional group discussions focused on translating these experiences into next steps of implementation to be carried for the ensuing meeting of the Committee of Fisheries (COFI36).

It was a memorable gathering enabling good networking and joint learning. It brought home the message that artisanal fisheries are the hope of the future, even as official country representatives had not foreseen them in the agenda of COFI.

[Read more.](#)

and productive ocean. It identifies 50 concrete cross-cutting and sectoral policy asks, thus providing a clear roadmap towards a healthy ocean by 2030. The event 'Rethinking fisheries' convened in a big tent in front of the Parliament on 1 October was an excellent opportunity to cast light on the changes urgently needed to rebuild resources and enable prosperous low impact fisheries. [Read more.](#)



Rethink fisheries: an appeal to the European Parliament, the Commission and EU Member States · Copyright: *Mundus maris*



A moment in the discussions in the Africa group
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Mundus maris participates in the Ocean Week focused on European institutions

From 30 September to 4 October 2024 it was Ocean Week in and around the European Parliament organised by 'blue NGOs' in Brussels. Led by Seas At Risk, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, ClientEarth, Oceana, Surfrider Foundation Europe, and WWF the initiative was supported by some 140 organisations, including *Mundus maris*. Central was the launch of the new 'Blue Manifesto' for a healthy

Maritime Security 2024: Innovations and Partnerships for the Future

The event 'Maritime Security 2024: Innovations and Partnerships for the Future' was a 2-day meeting from 8-9 October, 2024, hosted by the Government of Cape Verde in the capital Praia as part of a wider process of exchange of experiences under the Yaoundé Architecture of cooperation. *Mundus maris* representative, Prof. Stella Williams, Nigeria, offered a whistle stop tour through some activities of the organisation in the sub-region addressing the challenges fishers, coastal populations, women and youths face. As in previous occasions she emphasised the importance of investing in social and economic opportunities particularly for women and youths so that they would have a good future ahead and not be prone to fall in the hands of unscrupulous gangs. [Find out more.](#)



Prof. Stella Williams representing *Mundus maris*
Copyright: *Mundus maris*

Miscellaneous other activities

Throughout the year, *Mundus maris* was involved in a large number of other activities focused on information sharing, networking and moving the agenda for improving ocean health and promoting small-scale, low impact fisheries as the future.

Among them were the events to mark the launch of the EU Mission Protecting Our Ocean and Rivers, or 'Mission Starfish', that bundles resources from the Research Programme 'Horizon Europe' and many other EU programmes. It aims to engage organisations and institutions across the EU from local to regional levels in concrete restoration measures. [We reported.](#)



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Another initiative was our contribution to the **public consultation** ahead of the UN Ocean Conference scheduled for June 2025 in Nice, France.

We also supported the meeting in Ghana organised by the Canoe and Fishing Gear Owner Association of Ghana to mark World Fisheries Day. The theme for 2024 was "Upholding SSF Guidelines: Investing in Social Protection for equitable development in the fishery sector". [Read more.](#)



Elders at the gathering in Ghana · Copyright: *Mundus maris*

Across the large variety of activities throughout the year 2024 our focus was on blending knowledge, organisational capacity and experience of different groups and contexts to foster a fresh look at old problems. We found that these exchanges were very conducive to orienting minds and activities to mending our often broken connection to the ocean – and gain new energy for collaborations towards solutions.

Launch of the new website

And last but not least, in the second half of 2024, we launched the new website following a major facelift to how we present our many activities. The old one remains available as an [archive](#).

The new look, accessible on the already well-known url www.mundusmaris.org, immediately attracted positive feedback.



Section 2 – Youth

Journées Eco-teens in Brussels

Invited by COREN, Comprendre et Agir pour l'Environnement asbl (Understand and take action for the environment), *Mundus maris* participated in the inspiring Eco-Teens Day in Brussels on Friday, 12 April 2024. Some 180 secondary school students from 16 schools in Brussels showcased what concrete environment friendly activities they had carried out throughout the school year ending soon. An exhibition space showcased their demands for more youth involvement in environment protection. We drew attention to the role play 'Protecting Blue Horizons' as an opportunity to expand engagement also for marine biodiversity. [Find out more.](#)



Eco-teens crafted their own posters · Copyright: *Mundus maris*

World Ocean Day again with *Mundus maris* in three continents

Mundus maris and its partners pulled off again a range of activities to contribute to the world-wide celebrations of the ocean, this year under the UN motto 'Awaken New Depths'. Starting in **Belgium**, activities continued with several events in **Nigeria**, a conference in **Argentina**, a concert in **Spain** and roles plays to make a marine protected area work in practice in Argentina and Cameroon. Additional events took place in Argentina, Germany, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal.

Engaging with hundreds, mostly young people, was inspiring and kindled the motivation of many to do more for ocean health. Find out more about all 11 celebrations. [Find out more about all 11 celebrations.](#)



Excursion of the Kawabati Yasunari School, Senegal
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Role play in Cameroon for World Ocean Day
Copyright: *Mundus maris*

Solidarity with Senegalese Youths – Addressing Migration Challenges

The article discusses efforts to create better opportunities for Senegalese youths to deter migration, focusing on sustainable livelihoods and education. *Mundus maris* joined local and international actors in supporting initiatives to improve the socio-economic conditions of youths, emphasizing education and sustainable resource use. Care should be taken not to reduce migration primarily or exclusively to a criminal act that needs foremost police or military responses. [Read more.](#)

Section 3 – Education

Developing the role play 'Protecting Blue Horizons' – to make a marine protected area (MPA) work in practice

With international experts flocking to the EU Ocean Days together we could interview lots of people with management knowledge of MPAs or being affected by MPAs. Online interviews further afield and literature research allowed us to construct more than 11 profiles of stakeholder and rights holders for the role play. We also developed a support for a moderator and tested the play at a conference for young marine researchers and students. This experience already allowed for some adjustments that give much freedom to local adaptations. [Read more here.](#) If you want to play, contact us at [info\(at\)mundusmaris.org](mailto:info(at)mundusmaris.org) We are happy to share.



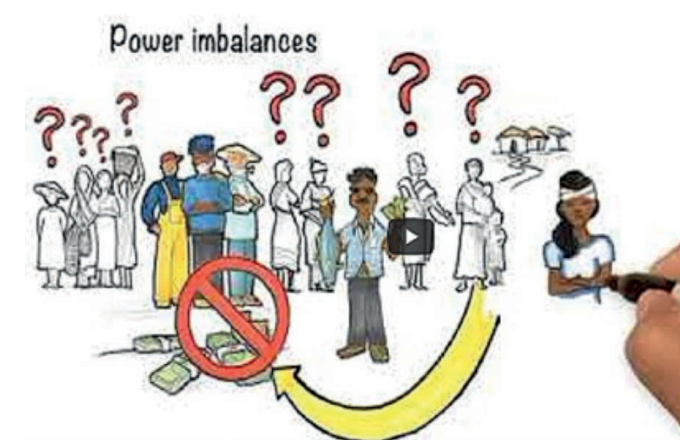
Role play at the YouMaRes conference in Hamburg
Copyright: *Mundus maris*

Celebrating World Fisheries Day in Nigeria

After a series of successful webinars to address key issues throughout the year, the team in Nigeria decided with their long-term partner Fish Party, led by Idowu Hunyinbo, to stage an in person event for joint learning. It took place in collaboration with the leadership of the Nigerian Institute of Oceanography and Marine Research (**NIOMR**) in Lagos State. Captain Prof. Abiodun Sule, Executive Director of NIOMR, contacted by Prof. Stella Williams of *Mundus maris*, gracefully accepted to host the event in the premises of his institute.

Mundus maris released two explanatory videos intended to inform women and men in small-scale fisheries to know their rights in local languages. It

was an excellent occasion to celebrate the 10 years anniversary of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries.



Copyright: FAO

Improving Fisheries Governance (IFG) in Ghana and the Wider Subregion, Accra, 22-24 October 2024

The major point of learning for participants from countries of the Fisheries Commission of the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) was how to improve fisheries by building on the IFG experience in Ghana. Ghana is pointing, among others, to technical measures like the use of electronic devices to track trawlers and encouraging other FCWC countries to follow suit. *Mundus maris* was invited among the other representatives of public administrations and civil society organisations, keen to explore how our members with their professional competencies can learn and also contribute to this larger ambition of transparency, good governance and law enforcement in the sector. [Find out more.](#)

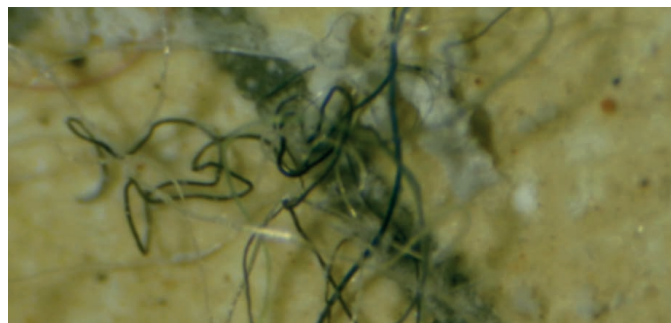


Visit of a fish landing area · Copyright: Hen Mpoano

Section 4 – Academic work

Microplastic, a public health issue, April 2024

Research was reported as carried out within the framework of an academic collaboration supported by *Mundus maris* with the University of Belgrano, Argentina. It aims to document the environmental problems represented by microplastics in aquatic ecosystems, with a particular focus on the Buenos Aires coast of the Río de la Plata. The samples were taken at the Buenos Aires Fishermen's Club. Microplastics, defined as plastic fragments smaller than 5mm, include a variety of particles. The most frequently found in fish were microfibers released from clothing during wash cycles, fragments of degraded plastic products, and microbeads from cosmetic products. [Read more.](#)



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EGU Sessions Focused on Geoethics and Blue Economy, 16 April 2024

At the European Geosciences Union (EGU) Annual Assembly in April 2024, *Mundus maris* contributed to sessions on geoethics and cautioned that the Blue Economy narratives must not do away with concerns for social justice and marine protection. This year, it was an online participation to keep up the conversation on ethical practices in environmental research and policy.

Ambivalent role of Market and Technology in the Transitions from Vulnerability to Viability: Nexus in Senegal SSF

The international fish market demand and technological advances are among the main drivers that have damaged marine ecosystems. This situation has resulted in the vulnerability of Small-scale fishing (SSF) communities, who depend on these same ecosystems for various functions and services, including cultural services, the supply of fish for income and food, etc. However, fishers are managing to navigate through

some of the twists and turns offered by the market and a range of technologies in a perpetual search for ways to ensure a transition to guarantee viability of SSF, including its cultural dimensions. This thematic webinar by Aliou Sall recorded on 26 April 2024 aimed to share insights into the initiatives by small-scale fishers from a socio-anthropological angle drawing on examples from Senegalese fishing communities. [Read more.](#) *Mundus maris* participated in the V2V Global Partnership's activities throughout the year, contributing to discussions on addressing vulnerabilities in small-scale fisheries.

SSF Regional Symposium for Europe, Bright Spots, Hope Spots, Cyprus, 1-3 July

As part of the preparations for the next global small-scale fisheries congress, regional gatherings are convened by the research platform 'Too Big To Ignore' (TBTI) and its partners. *Mundus maris* presented two cases of Mediterranean hope spots where small-scale fisher groups in Italy and Greece have taken the initiative to protect spawning grounds and seagrass meadows from destruction from bottom-trawling. But hundreds of alien Indo-Pacific species, including some highly invasive ones, enter the semi-enclosed sea through the Suez Canal and wreak havoc to already struggling local species and their ecosystems. [Read the workshop account.](#) The full paper on the hope cases is [here](#).



A typical artisanal fishing boat in Cyprus · Copyright: *Mundus maris*

FishBase – SeaLifeBase Symposium in Thessaloniki, 2-3 September

Given our use of and support to the global biodiversity information systems hosted by Quantitative Aquatics in the Philippines, we are happy to participate in the annual symposium hosted in turns by Consortium members. Day one was focused on new findings in conjunction with the Gill Oxygen Limitation Theory (GOLT), day two gave room to a broader cross section of biodiversity related topics with a focus on the Mediterranean. Our contribution this year was titled 'Bridging the gap: Connecting biodiversity research with stakeholder action for more sustainable solutions'. [Find out more.](#)

Environmental history in the Medieval and early modern Low Countries, 25-26 October 2024

Delving into days past can often help to make better sense of today. The symposium hosted by the University of Leiden cast the net widely on different aspects of managing and using natural resources in the pre-industrial Low Countries always marked by their relationship to the marshy delta of the Rhine, the Meuse and other rivers. The relatively young 'discipline' of environmental humanities blends approaches using written sources typical of the historical methods with archeological investigations and sources from geology, biology, hydrology and more. [Find out more.](#)



Herring fishing

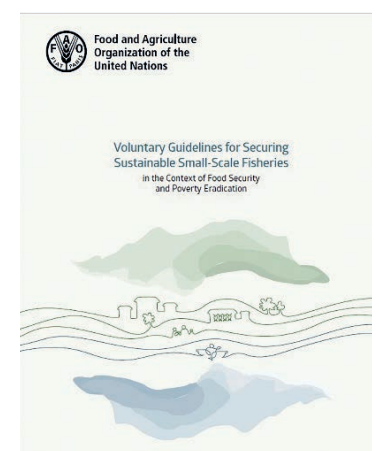
More information for you

You can also follow our work in the social media and [subscribing](#) to our monthly newsletter.

Contact us at info@mundusmaris.org for collaboration or any question about our programme.

We welcome any support towards moving ocean protection and the future of sustainable artisanal fisheries forward. Your time, your experience, your financial contribution make a difference! Be part of the change wave for a healthy ocean and healthy planet.

FishBase Guide App
as support for fishers
and fish lovers and
consumers



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