



**Mundus
maris**
*Sciences and Arts
for Sustainability*

Annual activity report 2023

2023: Advancing Ocean Literacy, Marine Conservation and Small-Scale Fisheries Resilience with *Mundus maris*

In 2023, *Mundus maris* achieved remarkable milestones, championing ocean literacy and conservation and supported sustainable small-scale fisheries (SSF) across the globe. The activities during the year showcased our commitment to 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 protection. Many people don't have the opportunity or time to attend, so we provide summaries for broader access.

In the same vein, we developed in collaboration with others the FishBase Guide app for Android which provides a few key infos to help protect juvenile and threatened fish. The data come from the global fish info system and can be search by common name in any language, anywhere. It's free – great stuff.

World Ocean Day, June 8, was another momentous occasion, marked by a range of educational events and clean-up drives across three continents. These activities reaffirmed our dedication to promoting ocean literacy and fostering collective action.

A significant achievement was our continued engagement with the Vulnerability to Viability (V2V) Global Partnership focused on efforts to strengthen the resilience of SSF. These efforts align with global priorities such as the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable SSF.

Our collaboration with the 'Too Big To Ignore' global research platform further amplified these efforts in favour of SSF.

Mundus maris actively participated in global events emphasizing the critical connection between ocean health and climate action. Our involvement in the September 2023 global climate marches, alongside movements like Fridays for Future, demanded urgent shifts to renewable energy.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our supporters and partners, whose generosity and collaboration made 2023 a year of meaningful progress. Despite working with a modest budget, we achieved significant strides in raising awareness, advocating for sustainable practices, and driving local and global action for ocean and fisheries conservation. These successes inspire us 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 them.

Cornelia E. Nauen
and the entire
Mundus maris team



2023 Budget

Total income from donations (including carry over from 2022) and membership fees was **29,859.57 EUR**.

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

Total ACAD	1,980.18 €
Total YOUTH	3,152.37 €
Total EDUC	3,339.06 €
Total INFO / COMMS	2,367.60 €
Total STOB / OPER	2,252.88 €
Total expenses	13,092.09 €

We transferred 16,767.48 EUR to our 2024 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

A significant number of our activities were dedicated to sharing information, such as making key findings of on-site or online conferences and workshops more widely available. Here is a selection of such reports, including on activities where we had roles as speakers or (co)organisers.

EP Committee of Fisheries discusses the role of China in fisheries

In January 2023, the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee held a hearing about China's influence on global fisheries given that it has the biggest fishing fleet. The country exerts its influence globally through fishing operations in the high seas and the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of countries with which China entertains fishing and other collaborative agreements. Its accounts also for a significant share in international trade in fisheries and aquaculture products. [Read on](#) for details and the background reports.

Mundus maris at the international BOOT 2023 Fair

After two years interruption due to the pandemic the international water sports fair BOOT was back in January 2023. So was *Mundus maris* on the 'Love your ocean' platform where we promoted ocean literacy and protection. We were several times on stage to inform about a range of our activities and had players almost non-stop at our ocean game. We supported the fish sound quiz for more fun learning too. It's part of the scientific fish information system hosted and continuously developed by Quantitative Aquatics in the Philippines. The interest of visitors gave hope for more public engagement. [See more.](#)



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Celebrating the Adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

The webinar was conducted in March 2023 with a key negotiator of the KMGBF, which was adopted in December 2022. He provided important explanations to an agreement, if ratified and implemented, is believed to have the potential for halting the 6th mass extinction of biodiversity. The strong emphasis on the capacity building, science and on benefit sharing among all countries had enabled consensus on the agreement that obliges all countries to cooperate, whether they are parties to the treaty or not. [Read on.](#)

High Seas Treaty for Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

Mundus maris actively supported the negotiation process of the historic High Seas Treaty, finalized in March 2023. This agreement aims to safeguard biodiversity in international waters. Through public engagement and information campaigns, *Mundus maris* emphasized the treaty's importance for recovering marine biodiversity by helping to protect 30% of the ocean from extractive activities.

[Read more.](#)

Stop the trade in shark fins! Successful EU Citizen Initiative

Mundus maris attended the hearing on 27 March 2023 about the successful citizen initiative, one of few that were successful. It took place in the European Parliament with the European Commission and other representatives of relevant bodies in attendance. More than 1.1 million people signed for a stop of the shocking extent of mostly illegal fishing and trade of shark fins. Europe accounts for a shocking 45% of the export of shark fins to Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan. While EuroPêche representatives tried to minimise the scale and assume the role of the victim, the evidence from experts having worked with customs and coast guards in fisheries surveillance e.g. in West Africa and trade monitoring in ports and airports overwhelmingly pointed towards significant levels of fraud, including by European companies.

[Read the full story.](#)

Solidarity with artisanal fishers in Senegal and Mauritania

When gas discoveries of 425 billion cubic meters were confirmed in 2015 for the coastal areas shared between Mauritania and Senegal, it spawned hope, such as providing electricity to the roughly 30% of the estimated 18 million Senegalese without access. At that time, the local artisanal fishers who had brought money into the communities of Guet Ndar in St Louis and others, were already struggling with many hardships such as coastal erosion of their villages and loss of life at sea. Worst of all was, however, the competition by foreign industrial vessels and gradual loss of access to the most productive fishing grounds reachable with their open boats, locally called pirogues. The open crisis erupted in April 2023. [Find out more.](#)

Beyond Growth – Conference at the European Parliament, May 2023

From 15 to 17 May 2023 the European Parliament welcomed more than 2000, mostly young, citizens for extensive exchanges with a broad spectrum of thematic and political speakers. At the centre of the conference was the challenge how to turn our backs on the illusion of eternal growth on a finite planet and stop plundering and wasting resources destroying our home in the process. How can we share the world's resources in ways that provide the basic living conditions for all. 'Sufficiency' and focus on well-being were concepts put forward as participants were unhappy with measuring 'progress' through deeply misleading and simplistic GDP. They left the event elated and charged up to work towards using better people and nature-based systems and indicators. *Mundus maris* attended and reported. A big win for civil society. [Find out more.](#)



Beyond Growth Conference in Brussels · Copyright: *Mundus maris*

Mundus maris Celebrates World Ocean Day 2023 in Three Continents



Celebrating in Kiel, Germany · Copyright: *Mundus maris*

As every year, *Mundus maris* celebrated World Ocean Day, 8 June, across three continents, organizing clean-up drives, educational events, and community engagements. Activities aimed to raise awareness about ocean conservation and the importance of sustainable practices. The organization's international participation highlighted its commitment to promoting ocean literacy and stewardship together with partners and sympathisers in Africa, Europe and Latin America.



Celebrating in Cameroon · Copyright: *Mundus maris*



Celebrating in Senegal · Copyright: *Mundus maris*



Celebrating in the Canary Islands · Copyright: *Mundus maris*



Event organisers in Buenos Aires · Copyright: *Mundus maris*



A much acclaimed concert in Ostende, Belgium
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WOD activities had a very significant impact engaging more than 500 people in three continents. Additionally, Prof. Stella Williams, from Nigeria, visited Universidad de Belgrano, Argentina, bridging both cultures and continents. **[See all 12 events.](#)**

[Mundus maris Supports Climate Marches, 15 and 17 September 2023](#)

Demonstrating its commitment to environmental advocacy, *Mundus maris* supported global climate marches on September 15 and 17, 2023. The organisation mobilised members and partners to participate in demonstrations demanding urgent action against fossil fuel dependency and promoting renewable energy. This involvement underscores the importance to address climate change as a critical factor affecting ocean health and fisheries. **[See here.](#)**

[The Appropriation by Modern Humans of the Earth and the Oceans](#)

On September 2, 2023, Prof. Daniel Pauly, the most prolific living fisheries scientist, delivered a lecture at the Naturalis Biodiversity Center in Leiden, discussing humanity's historical impact on Earth's ecosystems. He traced the expansion of *Homo sapiens* and the consequent extinction of megafauna, emphasizing the need for sustainable practices. *Mundus maris* aligns with these insights by advocating for the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic ecosystems, recognizing the importance of historical context in current environmental efforts. **[Get the highlights.](#)**

[World Food Day 2023 with FAO in Brussels](#)

We produce globally enough food for all humans on the shared planet. Yet, according to latest estimates by the World Food Programme (WFP), conflicts, economic shocks, climate extremes and soaring fertilizer prices are combining to create a food crisis of unprecedented proportions. As many as 783 million people are facing chronic hunger. Europe has been active in supporting the fight against food insecurity and more, both short-term through ECHO and more long-term, primarily with FAO, WFP and other UN agencies. This was the backdrop for the World Food Day event organised by the FAO Office in Brussels on October 16, 2023. It showed how being prepared ahead of time reduces food shortages. **[We reported.](#)**

[Webinar: Nigeria's Fisheries challenges and opportunities](#)

The new President of Nigeria has created a Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy as one of the innovations to social and economic development of Nigeria. However, fisheries and associated issues of healthy and productive aquatic environments remain so far under the Ministry of Agriculture, even though they are very important to a sustainable Blue Economy. The webinar organised on 26 September 2023 by *Mundus maris* and Fish Party with educational and research partners in Nigeria was intended to cast light on this sector and what was needed to enhance its resilience. Special attention was paid to "Gender and Youths' Economic Sustainability in the Decade of the Ocean Dialogue" as noted in the subtitle. **[Read more.](#)**

Section 2 – Youth

Sharing Life Experiences with Students

At Texas State University in San Marcos, *Mundus maris* Vice President Professor Stella Williams delivered a guest lecture in April 2023. She shared her vast experience in promoting women’s and youth leadership in agriculture, with a particular focus on Nigeria. She inspired students to reflect on their future roles as change agents and highlighted the importance of World Oceans Day (June 8). Her message resonated with hope, stemming from recent global agreements to safeguard biodiversity and marine life, emphasizing *Mundus maris*’ advocacy for educational outreach and global stewardship. [Read more.](#)

Accra Maritime Career Fair 2023

On April 4, 2023, the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Institute (GoGMI) hosted a Maritime Career Fair in Accra, Ghana, targeting high school students. *Mundus maris* participated with a booth by offering free ocean literacy workshop, other information about ocean health and protection. Members engaged young participants in career discussions to spark their interest in maritime careers. The event underscored the organization’s dedication to bridging knowledge gaps and empowering the next generation of ocean advocates in Africa. [See more.](#)



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World Ocean Day Launch – ‘Book of the Marine World’

Launched on World Ocean Day to a wider public in several events seeking particularly to reach young people (see the previous section or [click here](#)), The ‘Book of the Marine World’ features essays, stories, poems, videos and drawings submitted by young people between 2014 and 2020 to *Mundus maris* Awards in response to the UN World Ocean Day motto of the year. The book aims to inspire global audiences to act for ocean love, restoration and protection. *Mundus maris* made a selection from the many entries but acknowledged all contributors, teachers, and coaches. [Be inspired.](#)



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Maritime Security Awareness in Africa: Elevating Youth Voices

Africa remains the world’s youngest continent with a median age of 19.7 years. By 2050, one in three young people will live in Sub-Saharan Africa. On August 10, 2023, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, in collaboration with the African Union’s Youth4Peace Africa Program, organized a webinar to analyze the role of youth in promoting ocean health and sustainability. Speakers discussed the challenges of education access, unemployment, and the importance of engaging youth in maritime security. *Mundus maris* emphasizes the importance of involving young people in sustainable practices and policies, recognizing their crucial role in the future of maritime security and environmental stewardship. [Find out more.](#)

Section 3 – Education

Keynote at the ‘Feed the Future – Innovation Lab for Fish’

The ‘Feed the Future – Innovation Lab for Fish’ is a USAID supported project based at the Mississippi State University in Starkville, Mississippi. It had invited Stella Williams of *Mundus maris* as a keynote speaker on 27 February 2023 at day one of its last annual project meeting in New Orleans. Fittingly, the day’s key programme topics were gender, youth, and advancing human and institutional capacity development. Stella titled her talk ‘Action research for sustainable fish food security through gender equality and other innovations’ sharing encouraging examples.

Find out more.



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Legal Tools for Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in Nigeria

During the March 2023 V2V webinar, Foluke Omotayo Areola, with whom *Mundus maris* has repeatedly cooperated highlighted key challenges facing Nigeria’s small-scale fisheries. The discussion revolved around gaps in federal, state, and local governance, as well as conflicts between customary and formal laws. Recommendations for revising legal frameworks and capacity building showcased commitment to sustainable fishery governance and empowering vulnerable communities, a concern shared by *Mundus maris*. **Read more.**

Presenting the FishBase App at the Symposium in Tervuren

On September 4, 2023, the Royal Museum for Central Africa hosted the annual FishBase-SeaLifeBase Symposium. The event featured presentations on global biodiversity data systems. *Mundus maris* contributed by reporting on its collaboration



with Quantitative Aquatics with co-funding from Fair Fish International in developing the FishBase Guide app, which includes key features like minimum reproductive size and conservation status. It can be searched with common names in all languages. The app is freely available in Google Play Store and usable by fishers, fish sellers, educators, managers and anybody interested in fish biodiversity.

Read more.

Webinar: Nigeria’s Fisheries Challenges and Opportunities

On September 26, 2023, *Mundus maris* and Fish Party organized a webinar focusing on Nigeria’s fisheries sector, particularly on “Gender and Youths’ Economic Sustainability in the Decade of the Ocean Dialogue.” Distinguished speakers, including ambassadors, fisheries experts, and academics, discussed the challenges faced by artisanal fishers, the importance of implementing the FAO’s Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, and the need for good governance. *Mundus maris* facilitated this dialogue to highlight the sector’s challenges and opportunities, emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices and inclusive policies. **Find out more.**

Pampa Azul, Argentina looking to the sea

Argentina has one of the largest continental shelves on the planet, an important marine food supplier and carbon dioxide sink through abundant primary productivity. On 7 and 8 November 2023 an assessment was presented of what has been done so far in terms of marine sustainability in the context of the “First Congress of the Pampa Azul Initiative” in Mar del Plata, Argentina’s fishing city par excellence. The Blue Schools programme part of the initiative aims to raise awareness among young people who are doing their secondary studies about the importance of all disciplines related to the sea.

Find out more.

Section 4 – Academic work

Vulnerability to Viability (V2V) Global Partnership

Mundus maris is a partner in the V2V Global Research Platform and shared its activities throughout the year, contributing to discussions on addressing vulnerabilities in small-scale fisheries. The organization focused on promoting sustainable fishing practices, strengthening policy frameworks, and engaging local communities to build resilience. *Mundus maris* emphasized the importance of knowledge-sharing and capacity-building to transform vulnerable fishing systems into viable, sustainable livelihoods. We reported on almost all monthly webinars and contributed to the V2V newsletter. A particularly noteworthy presentation was by Nicole Franz of FAO about the report 'Illuminating Hidden Harvests' summarising fresh evidence on small-scale fisheries around the globe. [Read more.](#)



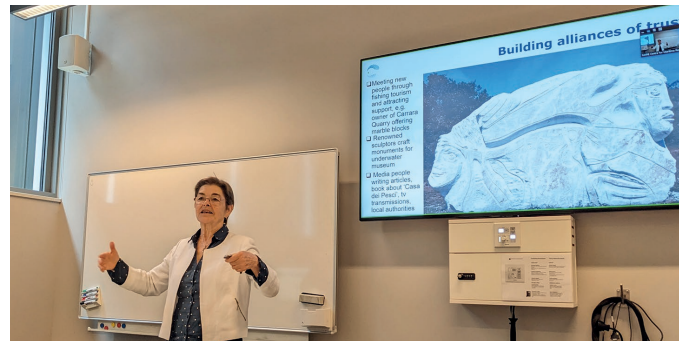
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EGU Sessions Focused on Geoethics and Joint Learning, 23-28 April 2023

At the European Geosciences Union (EGU) Annual Assembly in April 2023, *Mundus maris* contributed to sessions on geoethics and collaborative learning speaking about art of hosting technologies to enable dialogue between people with very diverse backgrounds. This participation reflects the organisation's dedication to promoting ethical practices in environmental research and policy. The presentation was well received and triggered interesting exchange. [See here.](#)

MARE Conference on Blue Fear

The MARE Conference convened from 26 to 30 June 2023 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, explored the concept of “Blue Fear”. Many sessions reflected on how climate change and socio-economic pressures affect communities relying on marine ecosystems. But they did not only dwell on the fear these changes or even disruptions instill, but also emphasized strategies to overcome vulnerabilities in coastal areas and small-islands. *Mundus maris* chaired two sessions and presented research on small-scale fisheries and their response to ecological and socio-economic challenges. It advocated for policies fostering resilience and empowerment through capacity strengthening in marine-dependent communities. [Find out more.](#)



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Science and how to use it in a changing world

On October 27, 2023, fisheries biologist Cornelia E. Nauen delivered the 7th Environmental Humanities lecture at Leiden University, discussing her work with *Mundus maris*, the NGO she co-founded in 2010. The organization promotes the restoration, conservation, and sustainable use of aquatic ecosystems, emphasizing support for small-scale fishers and their traditional cultures. Nauen addressed the disconnect between scientific findings and their societal impact, especially concerning climate and biodiversity crises. She critiqued the over-reliance on technological solutions without proper implementation and highlighted the importance of empowering local communities. *Mundus maris'* Small-Scale Fisheries Academy in Senegal exemplifies this approach, supporting learners in developing their capacities and implementing sustainable practices with emphasis on collective action. [See more.](#)

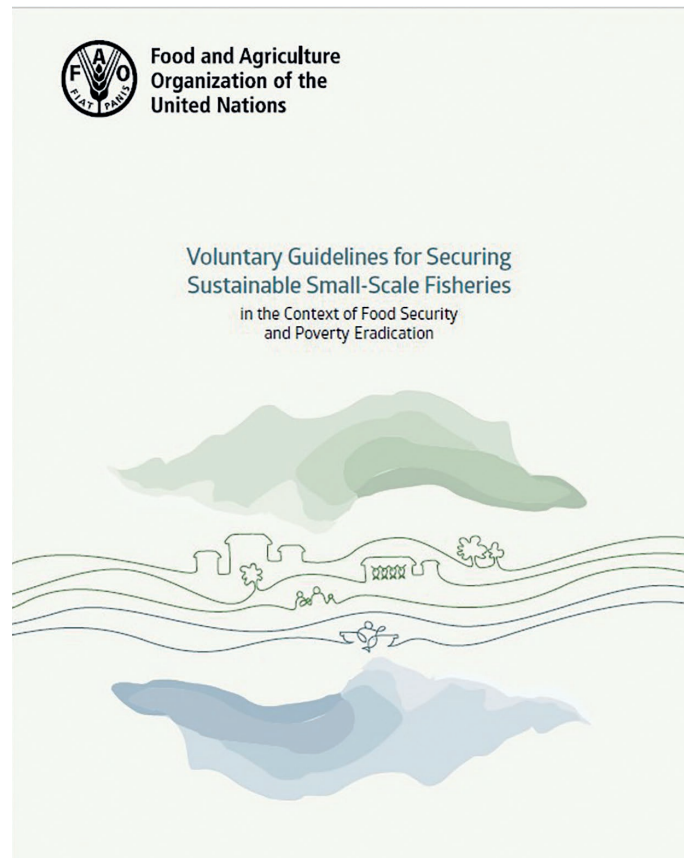
More information for you

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
consumers**



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