

OMA - The Open Marine Archive: free and permanent access to the digital collection of marine research in Belgium

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The Open Marine Archive is the central repository for all publications from Belgian marine researchers and marine scientists affiliated to Belgian institutes. The purpose of this online collection is to give immediate, complete, and permanent access to all the published results of Belgian marine research.

The OMA repository is indexed and distributed by various so-called harvesters (web-based tools that search and retrieve specific open-access content on the internet), of which the most important one is Google Scholar. The result of this harvesting is that references to online available publications are almost always found in the top-10 result list of a typical search action in Google, the most widely used search engine today. In this way, Belgian marine research receives extremely important extra exposure on the web.

OMA, and by extension the entire Belgian Marine Bibliography (BMB), is the primary source of information to a range of projects and bibliographies within the Belgian marine community. Examples are Scheldemonitor (www.scheldemonitor.be) with more than 1500 OMA literature records, the list of Belgian marine theses, and numerous taxonomic papers on the Belgian marine fauna and flora, available through BeRMS (www.marinespecies.org/berms) and WoRMS (www.marinespecies.org). Further projects coming up, which are largely based on the BMB and OMA-literature will focus on the Zwin area, on marine paleontology of the Belgian area, and on documenting the various cooperation agreements of VLIZ with other institutes and organisations.

Although OMA has been a success story so far, continued attention, contribution and cooperation of the entire Belgian marine community is needed to keep OMA the flag ship of information on marine research in Belgium.

All marine publications can be posted on oma@vliz.be.