

A century of marine citizen science

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In November 2015, whilst walking along a beach in Germany, a retired postal worker became part of a 108-year-old citizen science initiative launched by George Park Bidder of the Marine Biological Association (MBA). She found what transpired to be the world's oldest message in a bottle. Released by Bidder into the North Sea in 1906 to help map ocean currents and predict the natural dispersal of fish larvae.

Established in 1884 the MBA is one of the world's longest-running societies dedicated to promoting and undertaking research into our oceans and the life they support. Throughout its history, the MBA has involved the community in its research, and carried out what is now commonly called citizen science.

Initiatives such as the Shore Thing Project, BioBlitz, Crab Watch, Sealife Survey and others continue to engage the public in collecting data to support scientific study and the management of marine activities. We present the journey from early MBA 'citizen science' initiatives to recent and current projects. Focusing on scientific outputs and how approaches have responded to a rapidly changing world.

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