

## BICEpS wants you!

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ICES or the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea is an intergovernmental scientific organization established in 1902, that brings together 20 Member States bordering the North Atlantic, Baltic and Arctic Circumpolar Zone. Through strategic partnerships, the work of ICES extends into the Arctic, Mediterranean, Black Sea and North Pacific. ICES develops science and advice to support the sustainable use of global seas and oceans. ICES answers to the needs of managers and society in their search for credible, salient and legitimate evidence to understand the broad range of risks and opportunities.

In 2020, 84 Belgian scientists participated in 57 expert Working Groups across all priorities of the ICES Science plan. We are active in Working Groups on: Shipping Impacts in the Marine Environment, Open Ocean Aquaculture, Cumulative Effect Assessment Approaches in Management, Benthos Ecology, Application of Genetics in Fisheries and Aquaculture. Economics, Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour, Marine Litter, Machine Learning in Marine Science, Recreational Fisheries Surveys, Seabirds, Marine Mammal Ecology, Oceanic Hydrography, Integrative Physical-Biological and Ecosystem Modelling, Social indicators, Marine Planning and Coastal Zone Management, Marine Habitat Mapping, Effects of Extraction of Marine Sediments on the Marine Ecosystem, Assessment of Demersal Stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak, Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities, Eels, Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Waters Ecoregion, Biodiversity Science, Technology Integration for Fishery-Dependent Data, Commercial Catches, Biology and Assessment of Deep-sea Fisheries Resources, Ballast and Other Ship Vectors, Introductions and Transfers of Marine Organisms,... Additionally, Belgian experts are (co-)chairing six scientific working groups: Electrical Trawling, the Celtic Seas Ecoregion, Marine Chemistry, Fisheries Benthic Impact and Trade-offs, Marine Benthic and Renewable Energy Developments, Methods for Estimating Discard Survival. Since 2020, we also chair the Ecosystem Processes and Dynamics Steering Group. Each year, our experts (co-)chair several workshops and we are active throughout the whole advisory process, with representatives in several Advice Drafting Groups and in the above laying Scientific and Advisory Committees of ICES.

So far, our scientists represent nine Belgian institutions, including Federal, regional and governmental research institutes, universities and agencies (i.e. ILVO, RBINS, UGent, VLIZ, KULeuven, UAntwerpen, ULiège, INBO and FPS Mobility).

BICEpS was launched in 2018 as a joint ILVO – RBINS initiative (both institutes represent 70% of the Belgian researchers involved in ICES) to reinforce the Belgian ICES people. The BICEpS community is progressively growing and now encompasses about 100 junior and senior members from different horizons, including PhD students, researchers, administrators and advisers. The general aim of BICEpS is to offer a platform to the Belgian ICES community to get to know each other better, to improve collaboration, to share information, and to promote ICES to the wider Belgian scientific community.

Through the ICES network, BICEpS envisages (1) to be the marine science broker in Belgium, and (2) to support ICES as a world-leading organization on and beyond marine fisheries science. Our mission is (1) to contribute to sustainable seas, (2) to unite Belgian marine scientists, (3) to catalyse “extended collaborations”, and (4) to strategically position Belgian marine sciences. BICEpS will promote ICES activities and voice the BICEpS community to ICES by e.g. organizing interactive annual colloquia, promoting the Belgian membership to the diverse ICES expert groups, communicating about ICES to

Belgian scientists and vice versa. We are also investigating opportunities for fund raising to host an ICES Annual Science Conference during the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

BICEpS WANTS YOU! We are considering the possibilities of launching a mentoring programme for early career marine scientists. Do not hesitate to contact us at [biceps@naturalsciences.be](mailto:biceps@naturalsciences.be) if you want more information on how to join an ICES expert groups or meeting or if you simply want to join the BICEpS community and receive our newsletter. Please have a look at the compilation of Mini CV's of our BICEpS members, browse through our webpage and for sure watch our YouTube video (<http://ices.dk/community/groups/Pages/BICEpS.aspx>).

In social media, we use #ICESbelgium.

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