

IASC Marine Working Group (MWG) Annual Meeting, 2026

March 26th, 2026

Aarhus University Conference Centre, room: Richard Mortensenstuen, Denmark

UK delegates: Claire Mahaffey (Online), Geraint Tarling (In person)



Presentation from new members and fellows

i) Presentation from Turkey, a new IASC member country (Atilla Yilmaz) – 15 min

Turkey became a member of IASC at the ASSW 2025 in Boulder, Colorado, USA. We welcomed Atilla Yilmaz PhD as the first representative of Turkey in the MWG. He presented an overview of Turkey's marine research activities and scientific interests in the Arctic. In particular, he talked about the TASE programme of expeditions from Longyearbyen to Tromsø (covering Marine Ecology and Genomics, Anthropogenic Impacts, Physical Oceanography, and Atmosphere–Ice Dynamics). In total, five expeditions have already been completed in the Svalbard region, and this year they are preparing a new expedition. There is also a Turkish Polar Data Centre to which data from TASE is submitted (polardata.tubitak.gov).

ii) Presentations by MWG fellows 2026

The 2026 MWG-IASC FPA2 Indigenous fellow, Margaret Rudolf (PDRA at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks), and MWG fellow, **Monica Ogawa** (Hokkaido University, Japan), provided short summaries of their research interests and visions for their involvement in MWG activities in the coming year. Margaret Rudolf has a monitoring programme with Indigenous communities. Monica Ogawa worked in Greenland on whale stomach contents, focusing on narwhals, together with whale hunters. She was able to understand the feeding

dynamics of these animals and verified that they preferentially feed near glaciers (tidal glaciers), Pugginarq. She also identified new behaviours in narwhals.

Main Discussion Items

i) MWG Strategic Plan

Laura Ghigliotti provided an update on the status of the MWG Strategic Plan and its alignment with the ICARP IV Research Priorities, including a brief update on the overall ICARP IV process.

ii) Development of the IASC Strategic Plan for 2027-2036

Anna Olafsdottir (MWG chair) talked about IASC hosting a closed strategy workshop during ASSW 2026 to gather perspectives and visions from all IASC committees. IASC working groups chairs, vice-chairs, and fellows have been invited to participate. The new IASC Strategic Plan will be presented at ASSW 2027 and will cover the period 2027-2036. The outcomes of this process will need to be reflected in the MWG Strategic Plan and may require an update of the MWG Work Plan, which was last revised in 2017.

iii) Planning for the Fifth International Polar Year (IPY-5) – 60 min

Delegates provided brief updates on national initiatives and activities towards planning for IPY5. The purpose of including IPY5 on the agenda at this early stage was to establish communication among member countries during the ramping up of IPY project phase and to facilitate international collaboration in the planning process.

Updates were provided on national activities towards IPY by Benjamin Rabe (Germany), Arild Sundfjord (Norway), Martine van den Heuvel-Greve (Netherlands) and Claire Mahaffey (UK). There was much interest in white paper produced by the UK after their Arctic IPY workshop to produce recommendations for science to be carried out as part of IPY.

There followed a Roundtable discussion on the potential role of the MWG network during the ramp-up phase of IPY (2026-2031), including how it can connect the marine research community and foster a collaborative research initiative leading up to IPY5 (2032-2033). Some pertinent comments during this discussion were as follows:

1. There needs to be better international connectivity in building up to IPY so that there are coordinated scientific activities. We now have enough lead time to do this well, unlike IPY4 where preparations were at too short notice. MOSAIC is a good example of where this has been done well.
2. Nevertheless, there are good points to emulate from IPY4 in terms of the very effective outreach activities that took place
3. Cross-consultation is required with ICARP IV where there guidelines for funders and national programmes

4. We need to place importance around telling the public and policy makers why we do IPY every ~10 years

MWG Activities during ASSW 2026

Claudia Hauri made MWG aware of a workshop, “*Strengthening the implementation of the MWG strategic plan through Indigenous Knowledge and Equitable Co-Production*,” at ASSW on March 27th. There was also a workshop on “*Enhancing Research Quality and Societal Relevance Through Indigenous Knowledge, Co-Production, and Equitable Community Engagement*” on March 30th. Both sessions were well attended

Projects supported by MWG in 2025

11 Applications were received of which 8 were funded in 2025. The following reported back to the MWG during the meeting:

i) Early Career Researcher Workshop for the Synoptic Arctic Survey 2

Clare Gaffey talked about the international Synoptic Arctic Survey (SAS), which conducts decadal “snapshot” assessments of the Arctic’s ocean, atmosphere, and cryosphere to monitor long-term change. In preparation for the next survey (SAS2), around the year 2030, the project will include developing a coordinated ECR strategy, hosting a hybrid workshop at ASSW 2026, and organizing a training cruise to prepare ECRs for active participation in SAS2 data collection. Clare further reported that, during the ASSW workshop, new ideas were discussed on the kinds of training that ECRs would like to develop, and on writing a white paper on the funding strategy for ECR training activities (leadership, sampling campaigns, etc.).

ii) Arctic Pulse

Julia Macpherson introduced Arctic Pulse, which is a Canadian-led international science initiative designed to support coordination and solutions-based research during the ramp up period to IPY (2024-2030). Between 2024-26 the initiative will be co-developed with Indigenous rightsholders and national and international experts, and three focused field seasons are planned for 2027- 29

iii) Saroma Sea Ice School 2026

Bruno Delille reported on Saroma Sea Ice School, which was designed for early-career scientists interested in exploring the complex interactions between sea ice, snow, clouds, and aerosols in polar regions. The goal was to prepare next generation scientists for the International Polar Year. It was organized by BEPSII, Clce2Clouds, and CATCH working groups

Other Marine Activities

i) The 2026 CCGC Amundsen Expedition in Greenlandic waters and the Canadian Arctic

Alexandre Forest reported on the diverse research activities of the Canadian icebreaker CCGS Amundsen during its 139 days long expedition in 2026 into waters of west Greenland and the Canadian Arctic. There are 5 legs planned for 2026 between July and November. Alexandre also spoke about a more holistic project in connection with Indigenous communities. The vessel is also equipped with an ROV for deep-sea research. One project being undertaken is the Cascades Expedition Project – www.cascades-expedition.science

ii) ICES/PICES/PAME working group for the Central Arctic Ocean

Martine van den Heuvel-Greve provided an update on the status of the ICES/PICES/PAME working group for the Central Arctic Ocean and its work plan for 2026-2028. One aspect is to take a semi quantitative approach of identifying human pressures, human activities and other components and develop them into maps

iii) New database for the freshwater tracer delta-O-18 data

Geraint Tarling introduced a new database for freshwater tracer delta-O-18 data, which will shortly be made openly accessible to the science community for research into the fate of freshwater across the Arctic Ocean.

iv) Arctic Ocean 2050 project (Arild Sundfjord) – 10 min

Arild Sundfjord introduced the Norwegian research project Arctic Ocean 2050, a national ten-year research program (2026–2036) that unites 18 Norwegian research institutions to address how the Arctic Ocean will change in the near future.

v) Beyond Arctic PASSION project

Also introduced by Arild Sundfjord, this new Horizon Europe-funded project Beyond Arctic PASSION (2026-2030) is to accelerate the implementation of a sustainable, integrated, advanced and inclusive AOSS. This enhanced system will deliver accessible and interoperable observations, combining cutting-edge science, IK, LK, advanced technologies, and transparent governance.

vi) The Northern Oceans Regional Panel (NORP)

Benjamin Rabe spoke about NORP, sponsored by CLIVAR/CliC, which is an international platform that coordinates research on how the Arctic Ocean interacts with and influences the global climate system. It advances new observation methods, supports standardized data collection and archiving, and builds on the achievements of the Year of Polar Prediction beyond 2019.

New IASC MWG chair: Arild Sundfjord (Norway) is to become the next MWG chair

Next meetings

An on-line meeting will be organised for the autumn

Next in person IASC MWG will be in Japan in spring 2027