

REFLECTION

Where's the Marine in Environmental History? This summer, two major events in the field of Environmental History took place in different parts of the globe. First, the **3rd World Congress of Environmental History (WCEH)** convened in Florianopolis, Brazil, in the middle of July. Second, the 10th biennial conference of the **European Society for Environmental History (ESEH)** was held in Tallinn, Estonia, in late August. I attended the WCEH, with colleagues attending the ESEH. At both conferences, we could easily identify the main currents of research and future directions of global Environmental History scholarship - but I had my eyes specifically on Marine Environmental History and Historical Marine Ecology.

WCEH's programme (<https://www.3wceh2019.floripa.br/>) included around 300 papers and posters, with impacts on nature, outcomes of human use and (over)exploitation, altered landscapes, contested territories and spaces, relationships between humans and organisms within natural and artificial environments, and climate changes as key topics. I did the math: about 21% were 'aquatic' (e.g. marine environments, rivers and other water basins, climate change, water management, hydrography), and **only 8% exclusively 'marine'** (e.g. marine animals, whales and whaling, fishing, impacts on and changes in seas, shores and the open ocean). As for ESEH (<https://www.tlu.ee/en/eseh2019/programme>), marine papers were even harder to find; indeed, they were almost absent.

I keep wondering: *where is the 'marine' in environmental history these days?*

On the eve of the **UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030** (<https://en.unesco.org/ocean-decade>), the past of marine ecosystems, animals, and related human activities is ever more relevant – to us as scientists and to stakeholders and policy-makers. The humanities and social sciences supply much new and relevant information to that acquired by the natural sciences – and we need to keep adding the oceans to environmental history. All the information and data we need is in the objects and heritage left behind: documents, maps and iconography, correspondence and literature, logbooks and diaries, natural history treaties, as well as in the archaeological and material remains. We can engage the wealth of information more effectively by working together, and together we can more effectively engage in current debates and provide needed policy guidance.

Many venues host researchers and students active from both sides of marine historical ecology and maritime history. Conferences are further vehicles for communication and dissemination that can't be disregarded – one we are not taking advantage of. **We need to step out of our comfort zones.** ~ *Cristina Brito (NOVA FCSH, CHAM – Center for the Humanities, Portugal).*

RESEARCH NEWS

Learning from history: A historical record of *Squatina* spp. from Corfu, Greece. Angel sharks (*Squatina* spp.) are one of the most threatened families of chondrichthyans in the world. Once abundant throughout the Mediterranean, the three species in this region; the Sawback Angelshark (*Squatina aculeata*; Cuvier, 1829), the Smoothback Angelshark (*Squatina oculata*; Bonaparte, 1840) and the Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*; Linnaeus, 1758), are now listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, due to their steep population declines and several local extinctions. Within the Greek waters, angel sharks were historically distributed both in the Aegean and Ionian coast. However, reports from the Ionian Sea have always been extremely limited – just five reports are known



Tile mural at the Santa Catarina Federal University Campus, Florianopolis, Brazil: myths, monsters and animals from the sea.