

TASTING THE WEALTH OF SEAFOOD BIODIVERSITY IN EUROPE – A MARBEF OUTREACH INITIATIVE

The MarBEF-consortium and others^{1,2}

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MarBEF, an EU network of excellence, is a platform for integration and dissemination of knowledge and expertise on European marine biodiversity. The network involves 94 European marine institutes with links to researchers, industry, stakeholders and the general public at large. MarBEF supports challenging research which is exploring the relationship(s) between biodiversity and the functioning of marine ecosystems throughout Europe. European marine systems are currently under threat from overexploitation, habitat destruction, pollution, introduction of alien species and global climate change. However, the consequences of such biodiversity loss for marine systems remain largely unknown to the general public. Outreach projects within the MarBEF network aim to create awareness of the aesthetic, economic and ecological values of marine biodiversity in order to gain support from society to protect and sustain our living marine resources.

“The way to people’s heart is through the stomach...”

One of the outreach initiatives of MarBEF is to produce a marine biodiversity cookbook. Its aim is to illustrate to the public the variety of marine life (seafood) which is eaten daily and how this rich marine and coastal biodiversity is seen to be the life blood of traditional cooking. This cookbook takes the reader and the amateur cook on a journey along our European coasts, beginning at the northern seas and travels south to the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the Celtic Sea and the Irish Sea, through to the Bay of Biscay and the Iberian waters, the Mediterranean Sea and east to the Black Sea. The cookbook also ventures off the beaten track to include recipes from the remote islands of the Azores, Canaries and the Madeira Islands. We further include seafood delights prepared with non-indigenous species, provide recipes for conventional soups and stews, illustrate the tradition of eating eggs and roes, and the banqueting of raw seafood. The book presents scientifically based, but ‘ready-to-digest’ information on the distribution, ecology, fisheries or aquaculture of a fine selection of European seafood species.