

SOFI Workshop Report WS 08 01

SAMS Conferences on Seaweed Genomics Model and Algal Culture Collections

SAMS attracted around 100 delegates from around the world (from as far as Japan, Australia, Malaysia, the USA and India, besides the majority of EU countries) for 3 algal-related meetings which were held back-to-back at Dunstaffnage from June 2-11.

The series kicked off with a 2-day workshop of the genome annotation consortium of the first fully-sequenced seaweed, *Ectocarpus siliculosus*. Led by French scientists at the Roscoff marine lab, a partner institution of SAMS, the genetic material of this filamentous brown alga, an important marine fouling organism, has been sequenced in a 3-year effort. An international consortium of scientists has been working over the last year to decipher this vast amount of data, looking both for genes known from other organisms and for others which make *Ectocarpus* special.

This was followed by a more general conference on *Ectocarpus* and algal biology, open for general attendance. Topics covered areas such as biodiversity, taxonomy, algal-microbe interactions, as well as a synopsis of the genomics effort. The *Ectocarpus* genome annotation meeting and subsequent conference were supported by a €3,000 grant for which the organizers would like to thank the EU Network of Excellent Marine Genomics Europe.

The weekend gave opportunities to delegates for collecting algal specimens around Dunstaffnage and an excursion to the Taynish National Nature Reserve.

The conference series was concluded by a 2-day conference on algal culture collections (which attracted the largest number of delegates), constituting “living libraries” of algal diversity around the world. Besides an important role in fundamental research, such collections have a growing importance to provide reference strains for the biotech industry, fish farming, and the development of biofuels. This meeting had received £ 4000 in funding support from the Strategic Ocean Funding Initiative (SOFI) conference fund. This support, which is most gratefully acknowledged, made a substantial contribution towards the success of this meeting and helped to reach a very large and diverse audience. In particular, the funds enabled and supported the participation of scientists from UK universities and institutions other than the Oceans 2025-funded marine laboratories. The meeting also provided excellent international exposure of CCAP, which is funded through the NERC Oceans 2025 core strategic programme, thus contributing to its use by a worldwide community and to knowledge transfer activities of this NERC-funded UK national facility. Sessions covered bioinformatics, the development of DNA barcodes, algal / protistan taxonomy, knowledge transfer and applied phycology including natural products discovery and algal biofuels. Delegates represented the major algal / protistan collections in the world, bioinformatics and genomics research groups, nucleotide sequence databases such as the European Bioinformatics Institute (EBI), taxonomists covering major groups of protists, natural products chemists and drug developers.

During the last evening, a dinner at the SeaLife Centre in Barcaldine with bag piping and Highland dancing honored Dr. Michael Droop of Taynuilt, the first person to culture algae at the SMBA (as SAMS was then known) – even before its move from Millport to Oban.

There was a general feeling that the meetings were very successful and, holding them together, enabled beneficial synergies between different communities of scientists and users of scientific resources such as CCAP and nucleotide databases such as the EBI

Conference participants

Ana	Amorim	Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal
Erica	Benson	Damar, UK
Susan	Blackburn	CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research, Australia
Christina	Bock	Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries, Germany
Christopher	Bolch	University of Tasmania, Australia
Eileen	Bresnan	FRS Marine Laboratory, UK
Juliet	Brodie	Natural History Museum, UK
Wan-Loy	Chu	International Medical University, Malaysia
Eileen	Cox	Natural History Museum, UK
Camilla	Corneliusson	NIVA, Norway
Tatyana	Darienko	M.H. Kholodny Institute of Botany, Ukraine
Mayumi	Erata	Global Environmental Forum, NIES, Japan
Pniewski	Filip	Gdansk University, Poland
Santiago	Fraga	Instituto Español de Oceanografía, Spain
Thomas	Friedl	SAG, Germany
Priscillia	Gourvil	Station Biologique de Roscoff, France
Muriel	Gugger	Pasteur Institute (PCC), France
Keith	Harding	Damar, UK
Alan	Harvey	Strathclyde Innovations in Drug Research, UK
Elizabeth	Haworth	Freshwater Biological Association, UK
Sebastian	Hess	University of Bonn, Germany
Ian	Jameson	CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research, Australia
Marcel	Jaspars	University of Aberdeen, UK
Maria	Jutson	Plymouth Algal Culture Collection, UK
Fumie	Kasai	NIES Microbial Culture Collection, Japan
Hiroshi	Kawai	Kobe University Research Center for Inland Seas, Japan
Lothar	Krienitz	Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries, Germany
Anna	Kynčlová	Charles University Prague, Czech Republic
Adam	Latała	Gdansk University, Poland
Markus	Latvala	Bionova, Finland
Florence	Le Gall	Station Biologique de Roscoff, France
Phaik Eem	Lim	University of Malaysia
Meredith	Lloyd-Evans	Bioscience for Business, UK
Juliane	Metzner	Cyano Biofuels GmbH, Germany
Tatiana	Mikhailyuk	M.H. Kholodny Institute of Botany, Ukraine
Mukhamad	Misbakhun	Jl. Raya Purwosari, Indonesia
Dieter	Müller	University of Konstanz, Germany
Helga	Müller	University of Konstanz, Germany
Lisa	Nguyen	UTEX, USA
Linda	O'Higgins	OSU Hatfield Marine Science Centre, USA
Pekka	Oivanen	University of Helsinki, Finland
Marie	Pažoutová	Charles University of Prague, Czech Republic
Subhash	Pingle	Padmashri Vikhe Patil College, Pravaranagar, India
Richard	Pipe	Plymouth Algal Culture Collection, UK
Pavel	Příbyl	Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic
Ian	Probert	Station Biologique de Roscoff, France
Pierre	Rouzé	Ghent University, Belgium
Daniela	Schmid	MPI for Chemical Ecology, Germany
Elliot	Shubert	The Natural History Museum, UK
Pavel	Škaloud	Charles University of Prague, Czech Republic
John	Small	Mindoro Marine Ltd, UK
Barbara	Surek	Universität zu Köln, Germany
Ergun	Taskin	Celal Bayar University, Turkey
Vera	Veloso	Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal
John	West	University of Melbourne, Australia