

Cooperation

New Helmholtz Institute for Functional Marine Biodiversity

Alfred Wegener Institute and University of Oldenburg to intensify cooperation in marine biology

[13. October 2016] Marine ecosystems provide us with food and raw materials, they have an impact on air quality and global climate, they break down harmful substances and serve as places of recreation and tourism. The functioning of these ecosystems - and thus also the basis for human well-being - depends on the biological diversity of the oceans. The way climate change and human influences change marine biodiversity will in future be examined by scientists in a new institute: as was recently decided by the senate of the Helmholtz Association, the Helmholtz Institute for Functional Marine Biodiversity will be set up next year in Oldenburg. The new institute will pool and expand the research excellence in this field of the University of Oldenburg and the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI) in Bremerhaven.

Joint press release: Alfred Wegener Institute and University of Oldenburg

During the development phase from 2017 to 2020, the state of Lower Saxony is planning to finance the new institute with 23 million euros; among other things, the funds will go towards a new building in Oldenburg. From 2021 the institute will be primarily supported by the Helmholtz Association, and other partners from within and outside the association will join the research activities at the Oldenburg site.



"We are delighted to be able to take our research into the impact of global change on the marine environment to the next level with the new Helmholtz Institute," says AWI director Prof. Karin Lochte. "By pooling together the outstanding expertise of our scientists, we are able to uniquely focus our research in marine biodiversity with national and international impact," explains Prof. Hans Michael Piper, president of the University of Oldenburg.

Our aim is to gain an even better understanding of what climate change and anthropogenic - i.e. human-induced - influences mean for biological diversity in marine environments. The researchers of the University of Oldenburg and the Alfred Wegener Institute are planning to jointly look into the resulting consequences for the functioning and performance of marine ecosystems. Another task is the development of appropriate nature conservation and management strategies. The future Helmholtz Institute will bring together existing research groups as well as appoint new professors and set up groups of junior scientists.

Researchers of the two institutions have been successfully cooperating in numerous projects for some time. The new institute now enables them to jointly explore important aspects of biodiversity - from the genetics of individual marine animals, algae and bacteria to the functional analysis of entire ecosystems.




"How can we effectively protect our marine environment even though many species that live there are mobile and the territories often do not belong to any country? This is just one of the challenges of marine nature conservation, which is still in its early stages and for which we are planning to develop new concepts," explains the biodiversity expert from Oldenburg and the institute's future director Prof. Helmut Hillebrand. Research at the new Helmholtz Institute is very interdisciplinary in nature and thus also covers aspects of social science.

Downloads






Contact



Science

 Thomas Brey
 +49(471)4831-1300
 Thomas.Brey@awi.de



Press Office

 Folke Mehrtens
 +49(471)4831-2007
 Folke.Mehrtens@awi.de

Science (University of Oldenburg)

Prof. Dr. Helmut Hillebrand
 +49 (0)4421 944102
 Helmut.Hillebrand

Press Office (University of Oldenburg)

Dr. Corinna Dahm-Brey
 +49 (0)441 798-2892
 Corinna.Dahm-Brey

Abo/Share

AWI biologist Prof. Thomas Brey, who together with Hillebrand plays a leading role in the application process, adds: "Since the details of our scientific strategy have already been developed we will be able to start doing research immediately in 2017. We will also establish new professorships, are preparing to recruit additional staff, and we are looking forward to the new building in Oldenburg."

For information about the existing Helmholtz institutes, please visit:

https://www.helmholtz.de/en/about_us/networks_and_cooperation/helmholtz_institutes/ 



Subscribe to AWI press
release RSS feed



The Institute

The Alfred Wegener Institute pursues research in the polar regions and the oceans of mid and high latitudes. As one of the 18 centres of the Helmholtz Association it coordinates polar research in Germany and provides ships like the research icebreaker Polarstern and stations for the international scientific community.