



future ocean  
KIEL MARINE SCIENCES

INTEGRATED SCHOOL OF OCEAN SCIENCES

## ISOS Alumni- Newsletter

### Dear Alumnus,

We have received very positive feedback for our first newsletter that encouraged us to publish a second one. For this edition, we have interviewed an ISOS alumnus and prize winner who finished her PhD in Polar Ecology in 2010 and we have compiled some news from ISOS alumni.

Remember, we'd like to welcome you back when you are in Kiel: for a lecture, a career evening, or for a coffee...

Best wishes,  
Kerstin Hoffmann & Avan Antia

### ISOS Alumni

Since summer 2011, the ISOS Alumni has grown to a group of 49 in total. In the last months, 17 ISOS PhDs have successfully finished their doctorate. Congratulations!

### Where are ISOS Alumni now?

To get an answer to this, we had a closer look at our alumni data bank. We found out that some of you have left Germany for other parts of Europe and North America, and many of you are in science - which is not surprising giving that many have finished just recently. If you don't find yourself in this statistic, just let us know.

We would like to know where you are heading. Please take a moment and keep us informed about where you are and what you are doing.

#### Which fields ?



#### Where ?



### Get involved - Share your Experience!

There are lots of ways for ISOS alumni to get involved. In particular, we would like to know if you could offer an **internship or short study stay** at your current group or affiliation for PhDs or Master students.

### News from ISOS Alumni

João Canning Clode on a "Nature Research Highlight": Canning-Clode J, Fowler AE, Byers JE, Carlton JT, Ruiz GM (2011). 'Caribbean Creep' chills out: climate change and marine invasive species. PLoS ONE. 6(12): e29657.



## Interview with Maike Kramer

**Congratulations! You have received the Annette Barthelt Prize that is awarded to outstanding dissertations in memory of a group of young marine scientists who lost their lives in a bomb attack in Djibouti in 1987. What does this award mean to you?**

The prize is a great appraisal of my work and it means a lot to me for two reasons: first, because the prize is connected to an expedition to the Indian Ocean in which the young researchers were participating. My expeditions to the Polar Oceans were very important forming experiences in both my scientific and personal development. Second, the societal dimensions are very important: personally, I have always tried to live and to communicate non-violence and therefore feel honoured to have received this award.



**You did your PhD in polar ecology and finished in 2011. What have you been up to since then?**

I have been working for the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) in the section Marine and Coastal Conservation for more than one year now. I coordinate research projects in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ, 12 to 200 nautical miles off the coast) most of which deal with implementing European Directives for Nature Conservation, e.g. the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the Habitat Directive (HD) or the Bird Directive. Among them are, for example, projects that monitor marine species and habitats to assess the conservation status.

**What is your daily work like?**

Of course it's a desk job first of all. Every day, I am in touch with scientists from universities, research institutes and consultancies who carry out our research projects. They report on their work, on progress and the problems that occur. I am the link between the scientists on the one hand, the subject specialists in the BfN, and the agency's administration who's handling the budgets of the projects on the other hand. Currently, my main task is in project procurements: writing project specifications, preparing documents for the procurement procedure such as the competitive dialogue, evaluating applications and tender offers, negotiating with tenderers and finally deciding together with my colleagues with whom we will cooperate.

**Where is the connection between your PhD and your current job?**

There are comparatively few connections. In my dissertation, I have looked at small ice-associated animals (sympagic meiofauna) and their role in polar food webs. Since my research was part of a DFG project I learned what it means to write project proposals, I had coordinating tasks and I gained experience in cooperating with different scientists. These skills have been helpful in my current job. Of course, the scale was much smaller then, and I was on the side of the applicant – whereas now I coordinate a number of projects and have to evaluate not write the proposals.

**How did you come to work with marine conservation and the Federal Agency?**

I took a deliberate step to the marine conservation area. Originally, I began my studies because I wanted to protect the oceans. But very early I got in touch with basic research, enthusiastically dived into it and enjoyed it for a long time. However, towards the end of my doctorate it came back to me that what was driving me originally was my wish to protect the oceans. So I was looking for an adequate job and I took up the most interesting position.

**So, do you believe you make a difference, do you protect the ocean?**

Yes, I do believe I do my bit. In doing everything to make our projects work smoothly I ultimately contribute to the protection of the ocean. For example right now, we have to develop management plans for Marine Protected Areas. That is the point where marine protection is put into practice. So we developed a research project, found partners in the University of Rostock and now I have the impression that Marine Conservation is taken a step forward. Highlights are for me, when there are first results from projects, just last week for example from a project on sea-bird monitoring. These are the little rewards that one needs because otherwise Marine Conservation requires a bit of perseverance.

**What is the biggest difference to your time as PhD candidate?**

As a PhD candidate, I was much more free with regard to how I organised my day and my work. In a government agency, a lot is predetermined mostly from politics but I could deal with that right from the beginning. What took a little longer to get accustomed to is the way communication is organised in an agency. That really is different. In a university, you can basically talk to everyone who is in one way or the other connected to your research - whether it is the university dean or a famous sea ice scientist. In an agency you have to use official channels. That means you only talk to your direct superior. If you want information from other levels or areas in the hierarchy you have to take it up the chain of command. It took a while until I got used to it but meanwhile I have learnt to whom I can talk directly and in which way I need to respect the hierarchy.

### **For your new job you moved further east along the Baltic coast to Rügen and are working on a very small island off Rügen – how is life there?**

Well, Rügen is wonderful with its great landscape and nature. The island of Vilm is one of the most protected areas in Germany, covered by an almost primeval forest that has not been cut for more than 200 years. No one is permanently living there; it is just an academy with a guest house and the agency offices - that is a great working environment. Every morning I take a boat to go there, and in winter the ice breaker for the ten minute trip. It sounds romantic but there are two sides of the medal: one is really bound to the ferry schedule. When you miss a boat back to Rügen even if it is for one minute you will be late one hour for your appointment and if it's the last boat you even have to stay overnight.

### **Is there anything you miss from your time in Kiel?**

The expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic I miss most. They have meant a lot to me because it was always very intensive time; I learnt an incredible lot, worked very hard - at times at minus 30°C for eight hours without a break - and I enjoyed the unique environment and made really good friends, too. There's not much to compare that and that's what I really miss.

### **How did you benefit from your participation in ISOS?**

A very useful skill I got out of the course on Science Communication (Populärwissenschaftliches Schreiben): I learned to explain my research in an understandable and even interesting manner. I use that skill almost every day in the agency. I am talking to many people and some of them are no experts in my field but we still have to communicate. Secondly, I benefited a lot from the seminar on international law of the sea that gave me as a non-lawyer an understanding of the international legal framework. This makes my current task a lot easier because a big part of it is directly linked to international law and international treaties such as the European legislation, the Helsinki and OSPAR conventions.

And what really helped me was talking with people from outside academia e.g. on Career Evenings and discuss their career paths in the context of how they got there.

That gave me the courage to leave academia (for a while) to try out another field and to see how marine protection would suit me.

### **What have you learnt in the Agency which you didn't learn in Science?**

I have learnt to better separate the professional life from private life. If one day I return to science – what is not completely out of the question – I will balance this better than before.

### **What are your plans for the future?**

My long term goal is to find ways to connect polar research – a topic that is dear to my heart – with protection. In my research it was important to me personally always to think one step ahead, to always ask myself, how this can be of use for society. In the Arctic for example, climate change is currently leading to an increased use and subsequently increasing danger for the marine environment and nature. We will get urgent environmental problems in those regions unless adequate measures of protection are taken in the very near future. That is an important field where I hope to be able to take action.

**Thank you very much and all the best for you!**

### **Get back in touch**

Give us a short review of what you've been up to after you left the ISOS.  
If you change your mailing address or job, please keep us informed.

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