

NEWS RELEASE

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UNITING SCIENCE AND STORIES

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Oct. 20) –

Our world is changing, and scientists are some of the first to witness those changes from the front lines. Their research tells us what is happening now, how things may be in the future, and what we can do to chart a course to sustain all species—including our own. But while the work is relevant to all, typically only scientists themselves have access to academic journals and conferences where discoveries are shared. To help open the information gates, scientists and communication specialists from Oregon State University (OSU), COMPASS, and the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) banded together with a common purpose: empower scientists to hone and use the skill of storytelling.

Stories are universal for sharing knowledge across cultures, backgrounds, and ages, but for many it has become a lost art. So the three partner organizations came together to conduct an experiment to help scientists unite stories and science. They developed and led a workshop at the 3rd International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC) that helped SCB scientists describe their research with vivid imagery, lively characters, and even gut-wrenching suspense. Pushed far from their comfort zones, the intrepid participants rose to the occasion, taking to the stage to share their carefully crafted stories during the international conference, which is typically attended by more than 1,000 colleagues.

The product of this science storytelling experiment is now available online for all to share. Here, eight marine scientists tell tales of adventure, discovery, success, and hope for the ocean's future, which they first told live at IMCC. Their stories take audiences around the globe: from a night dive full of glowing plankton in the Philippines, to a reef rescue mission in the Seychelles, to inside the developing relationships between local fishers and scientists working together to preserve a coral reef system in Columbia.

“Telling a good story is a skill that can help us better share our research findings and explain why they matter”, says Kirsten Grorud-Colvert from OSU, who co-founded the ‘Tales from the Sea’ workshop at IMCC with OSU colleague and Smith Fellow Stephanie Green, and Erica Goldman and Heather Mannix from COMPASS.

“Conferences like this one gather scientists from all over the world who have witnessed some of the biggest changes on our planet. They have stories that everyone should hear, but we have to tap into them”, says Stephanie Green, “We hope that more workshops like this one will support scientists in getting their messages out beyond their usual networks”.

The group hopes that other scientist storytellers will add to the virtual library so anyone can tune in to learn about cutting-edge research on oceans, how it impacts them, and what they can do about it. They’re asking that these stories are told and shared on social media using the hashtags [#SciStories](#) and [#IMCCstories](#).

“Stories are one powerful way for scientists to tap into their passion and bring the “why” of what they do to diverse audiences,” says COMPASS’ Erica Goldman. “As empowered communicators with robust skills, scientists can make critical contributions to the broader public discourse on the environment.”

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The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) website of marine conservation stories can be found at: <https://conbio.org/groups/sections/marine/stories>

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