

Underwaterfront - An interactive laboratory on harbor biodiversity

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The Institute of Marine Sciences of the Italian National Research Council (CNR) has recently proposed an interactive scuba diving approach for several science communication events. This new scientific entertainment strategy has proved to be an extremely successful and promising technique to create innovative educational laboratories dealing with marine science.

Thanks to this underwater audio-video signal transmission technology, a scuba diver was allowed to transmit in real time images of the main benthic and fouling organisms from the Genoa harbor to a fully equipped education room located 3 km far away. Furthermore, the participants, supported by scientific entertainers (marine biologists) were able to directly interact with the scuba diver, creating a real "live documentary" on Harbor biodiversity.

The laboratory gave the opportunity to show to the visitors how, contrary to what they might imagine, even at few meter depth, the "Sea in the city" contains not only pollutants but a surprisingly very high biological diversity that deserves to be known and well-documented.

The innovative approach of the educational laboratory and the possibilities of this new outreach technique will be analyzed and discussed by proposing additional application scenarios.