



PhD School in Marine Science Technology and Management

Department of Environmental and Earth Sciences

Seminar Announcement

Plastics in Coral Reef Environments: Research in Hawai'i, (USA) and Tetiaroa (French Polynesia).

Speaker: Katherine Lasdin, MS

University of Washington – School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences

Date: Friday, 20 March 2026

Time: 10:30 – 11:30

Location: Aula Marchetti

Abstract: Coral reefs are among the most biodiverse and productive ecosystems on Earth, yet they are increasingly threatened by multiple anthropogenic stressors, including climate change and plastic pollution. In recent years, microplastics have emerged as a pervasive contaminant in marine environments, raising growing concerns about their interactions with reef organisms and their potential effects on reef ecosystem functioning. This seminar will explore current research carried out at The University of Washington on the occurrence and impacts of microplastics in coral reef systems, focusing on how corals and associated reef organisms interact with these particles. The seminar will provide an overview of recent field and laboratory studies and discuss emerging research directions at the intersection of coral reef ecology, global change, and marine pollution. Katherine will discuss how she is combining exposure experiments, long-term field experiments, and snap-shot organism collections to understand the impacts, degradation and presence of plastics two tropical location: Hawai'i and French Polynesia.

This seminar is organized within the PhD School in Marine Science and Technology and is open to all interested students and researchers.



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Katherine Lasdin is a third year PhD student at the University of Washington, in Seattle, WA, USA. Her research investigates how plastics degrade, the impacts of plastic leachates to coral reefs and the presence and abundance of plastics marine systems. Her research is completed in proximity of the Pacific Ocean, with field sites in Washington, USA, Hawai'i USA and Tetiaroa, French Polynesia. Katherine is currently visiting The University of Milan Bicocca, on an ERASMUS+ grant, under Prof. Francesco Saliu.

