



Ollscoil  
Teicneolaíochta  
an Atlantaigh  
Atlantic  
Technological  
University



## PhD Postgraduate Research Opportunity

PhD Project Title:	Improving knowledge on the conservation status of small cetaceans P230085
Project Duration:	4 years
Organisation:	Atlantic Technological University
Location:	ATU Galway City, Co. Galway
Stipend:	€18,500 per annum
Responsible to:	Dr Sinéad Murphy, Dr Cólín Minto (ATU)

**Funding:** This PhD is funded under the EU Horizon European programme, funding awarded to the multi-partner MarineBeacon project (number 101135237).

### Description:

MarineBeacon which commenced in early 2024 aims to monitor and eliminate bycatch of endangered and conserved species in the NE and high seas Atlantic region. Bycatch is deemed to be a significant pressure to common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) and harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) assessment units in the North-east Atlantic, where all assessment units exceeded thresholds devised for OSPARs marine mammal bycatch indicator. Updated assessments of demographic parameters are required to consider the likely impacts of incidental mortalities on the overall status of these assessment units, taking on board the cumulative impacts from other (non-lethal) stressors.

For this work, laboratory analysis will be undertaken on life history samples collected from stranded and bycaught individuals, including ageing cetacean teeth samples and gross and histological assessments of reproductive tract tissues.

Using mortality data, modelling will assess survival, total and cause-specific mortality and temporal variation in biological parameters employing both deterministic (time-period specific) and stochastic models for key life history relationships that consider multiple stressors. Mortality data will be further explored to derive population projections within the region.

Work undertaken within the PhD will enable the provision of information required on demographic parameters for determining anthropogenic mortality thresholds for evaluation of good environmental status under the MSFD. As well as aiding cumulative effects assessments for marine mammals by identifying the importance of (individual and multiple) stressors as contributors to risk.

**Requirements/Qualifications:** The successful candidate will hold an Honours Degree with a minimum award classification of 2:1 or equivalent in a cognate discipline (Marine Biology, Oceanography, Fisheries Science, Aquatic Ecology, or a related discipline). Demonstrated experience in scientific programming (R programming language) and familiarity with a variety of common laboratory techniques will be an advantage, as well as evidence of contributions to scientific publications.

A full clean EU driving licence is desirable. The candidate will be expected to work on their own initiative and be willing to acquire the broader skills necessary for the successful completion of a PhD project.

**Project Duration:** 48 months

**Conditions:**

- €18,500 Stipend per annum.
- Postgraduate fees for EU/EEA students will be covered by the project.  
**Please Note:** Candidates from outside the EU/EEA are eligible to apply, but will be expected to provide evidence of sources of additional funds to cover excesses associated with Non-EU fees.
- In addition, any necessary travel and material costs incurred during the project will be covered.

If either English or Irish is not the applicant's first language, evidence of English language proficiency is required for registration. Please refer to web link [English Language Requirements | ATU - Atlantic Technological University](#) view the minimum English language proficiency standards for entry to ATU

**Project Start Date: April 2024**

**Application Closing Date: Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Interviews will be held the week of 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

Applicants should submit their:

- Curriculum Vitae (to include details of 2 referees)
- A copy of transcript of results
- A Personal Statement to:

The Personal Statement should not exceed 1 page and must include details on:

- How your qualifications and experience have prepared you for this PhD research programme
- Why you would like to pursue this PhD research programme.

***Applications must be submitted to [ResearchOffice.galwaymayo@atu.ie](mailto:ResearchOffice.galwaymayo@atu.ie) e-mail address only. Please ensure all documents are emailed as a single Word or PDF file.***

For further information on the project, please contact: Dr Sinéad Murphy ([sinead.murphy@atu.ie](mailto:sinead.murphy@atu.ie)) or Dr Cólín Minto ([coilin.minto@atu.ie](mailto:coilin.minto@atu.ie))

**Data Protection Statement**

ATU takes very seriously its legal obligations as set out in the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR) and the Irish Data Protection Act 2018 to safeguard and protect your personal information in our possession. The personal information which you disclose to us in this form will only be used to assess your suitability; administer and register you for this scholarship. We will not keep your personal information for any longer than is necessary for those stated purposes. **For more details, please refer to ATU's Student Privacy Statement: [Student-privacy-statement](#)**