

Success in Microalgae and Ciguatera Training at the University of San Carlos de Guatemala with the Support of ANCA IOCARIBE

In an effort to enhance knowledge and collaboration in the field of microalgae, algal blooms, and ciguatera, the University of San Carlos de Guatemala, through the Center for Studies of the Sea and Aquaculture (CEMA), conducted a series of activities in January 2024. These initiatives were supported by ANCA, a program of the Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions IOCARIBE).



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During the visit of Dr. Yuri Okolodkov from the University of Veracruzana, Mexico, various activities were organized with the aim of disseminating

information, providing training, and encouraging the participation of students and researchers in crucial topics related to microalgae, algal blooms, and ciguatera.

Theoretical-Practical Course on Marine Microalgae: From January 15 to 17, 2024, a theoretical-practical course titled "Marine Microalgae: Taxonomic Identification and Quantitative Analysis" took place at CEMA-USAC. The event saw the participation of 40 individuals who had the opportunity to acquire knowledge about dominant taxonomic groups of marine phytoplankton, as well as sampling methods, fixation, identification, and counting techniques.

Interinstitutional Links and Conference on Marine Plankton: On January 19, 2024, an additional activity aimed at creating interinstitutional links to strengthen Guatemala's National Red Tide Commission was conducted. The event involved 30 participants and focused on providing basic skills for the proper use of photonic microscopes, recognition of microalgae, and taxonomic determination.

Conference on Harmful Algal Blooms: On January 29, 2024, a conference titled "Challenges and Strategies in the Study of Marine Plankton: Harmful Algal Blooms" was held. The objective was to disseminate the importance of this topic among institutions related to Guatemala's National Red Tide Commission, as well as among students, researchers, and educators.



Ciguatera Identification Training and Didactic Material Donation: Additionally, a training session for the Hydrochemistry laboratory of INSIVUMEH took place on January 30, 2024, where personnel were instructed on techniques, methodologies, and instrumentation in microscopy necessary for the identification and quantification of phytoplankton.



The event concluded with gratitude to ANCA IOCARIBE for the donation of didactic material that strengthened the technical and scientific capacities of governmental institutions, educators, and participating students.



In a call for future collaboration, M.Sc. Karla Evelyn Paz Cordón, ANCA IOCARIBE Focal Point and Professor/Researcher at CEMA-USAC, requested support for the first Ciguatera workshop in Guatemala, scheduled for July 2024, inviting scientists with expertise in the field to contribute their knowledge.

This initiative signifies a significant step towards strengthening research and prevention in crucial marine-related issues in the region, highlighting the commitment of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala and the support of ANCA IOCARIBE.