



NE Atlantic Marine Biological Analytical Quality Control Scheme

Zooplankton Intercomparison Exercise 2026

Marine Biological Association, Citadel Hill Laboratories

The Hoe, Plymouth, PL1 2PB

The NMBQC Scheme was established to provide a platform for quality assurance on behalf of the UK competent monitoring authorities. The Scheme aims to develop and promote best practice across multiple disciplines through a range of training exercises, workshops and literature guides. The Scheme covers several marine taxonomic components, including zooplankton, which serve as indicators of marine health in the UK Marine Strategy, EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and OSPAR reporting. As such, the UK Healthy and Biologically Diverse Seas Evidence Group (HBDSEG) identified the need for a quality control mechanism that guarantees the accurate identification and enumeration of zooplankton taxa to ensure the reliability of datasets used in reporting.

The Continuous Plankton Recorder Survey (part of The Marine Biological Association) has been identifying marine zooplankton from its base in Plymouth for almost 100 years, actively leading the Zooplankton Component on behalf of the NMBQC Scheme for the last ten years.

The next interlaboratory comparison test is planned for Spring 2026, focusing on zooplankton identification through practical tests and additional workshop. With the aim of encouraging consistency amongst specialists involved in the analysis of zooplankton samples, within and between different laboratories, the 2026 Zooplankton Intercomparison Exercise will:

- Improve the quality of marine zooplankton identification.
- Assess current skill levels.
- Provide a venue for taxonomic discussion during the results workshop.

Apply by 23rd January 2026 by completing the registration form overleaf.

Limited to 15 spaces – applications will be processed in the order received.

Successful applicants will be notified on 26th January 2026.

Attendance will need to be confirmed via email by 30th January 2026.

Please note that refunds for cancellations cannot be given after 30th January 2026.

Dates for the Ring Test:

Send out written test: Week commencing March 2nd 2026

Send out specimen tubes: Week commencing March 2nd 2026

Deadline for submission of results: April 24th 2026

Results Workshop: tentative date 21st May 2026, in-person only.

Workshop will be held at the [Marine Biological Association](#), The Laboratory, Citadel Hill, Plymouth, PL1 2PB England

Organisers:

Marine Biological Association on behalf of the [NE Atlantic Marine Biological Analytical Quality Control](#) (NMBAQC) Committee.

Cost:

£650 (+ VAT) for Ring Test and workshop, fee per participant.

Institutes sending up to two participants will be entitled to a 10% discount.

Costs cover the sending out of a three-part test (written test paper, enumeration component and specimen identification test), subsequent analysis of results, a ring test certificate and invitation to a wash-up workshop (including tea/coffee/lunch). Additional costs (travel and subsistence) will be at participants' expense.

Conditions:

Invoices will be issued upon confirmation of attendance received by 30th January and are payable upon receipt. Payment must be received before any materials are despatched.

Whilst all efforts will be made to deliver the above component, revisions to the timetable (including cancellation) and changes to the normal programme might be necessary. An online workshop will be offered in replacement of an in-person workshop. Any changes in relation to this will be communicated as soon as possible.

In the event of cancellation of the intercomparison exercise, a refund of the participation fee will be provided.

If a participant withdraws from the scheme without completing any of the three test components, they will not be able to claim NMBAQC participation.