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#### Your Oral Presentation Abstract

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**Reviewer Expertise**  
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**Title** Back to nature, and for a good cause. The Reef Check Italia experience with diving volunteers

Growing up in a humanised world, we are losing our connection with nature as well as the environmental literacy that used to be part of our shared cultural heritage. This is often regarded as a root cause of the economic and social disparities existing at the global level. Sustainable development can only be achieved when no discontinuity occurs between humans and the environment they ultimately depend upon. Re-connecting people with nature is essential to rise awareness on environmental issues by making them personal, and no longer distant or other from self. SCUBA diving allows people to physically immerse in nature, offering precious opportunities to feel, experience and get back to often lost feelings and knowledge. Engaging divers in participatory science can maximise these opportunities. Reef Check Italia onlus relies on hundreds of volunteers, divers gathering distribution and abundance of 43 marine species easily recognisable, across the Mediterranean Sea. They produce baseline information on species distribution and abundance over regional spatial scales, tracking changes that can be used both as early-warning signals and long-time monitoring. Traditional academic-based approach can't do the same, given logistic, economic and practical constraints. The collaboration between scientists and volunteers produces sound information to feed decision-making processes while increasing the personal fulfillment, knowledge and environmental awareness of participants.

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<b>Topic 1</b>	Participation in marine conservation science (e.g. citizen and indigenous science)
<b>Topic 2</b>	Communicating marine conservation (marine conservation awareness and outreach, social media)
<b>Topic 3</b>	Marine tourism
<b>Question out of 71</b>	48. Marine citizenship - What are the best methods and tools available to engage citizens in marine conservation?
<b>Alternate Format (1)</b>	Speed Presentation
<b>Alternate Format (2)</b>	Poster Presentation
<b>Special Requests/Comments</b>	The for limits the number of authors to 8 but, given the volunteer base our work relies upon, we'd kindly ask you to add the following two names, before current authors 7 and 8: Cristina Gioia Di Camillo (same affiliations as Carlo Cerrano, e-mail: c.dicamillo@univpm.it) Gianfranco Rossi (affiliation as Reef Check Italia - see complete citation as others; e-mail: francodiving@libero.it) Thank you very much for your understanding and help!