

## **Olivier Pasnin**

**PhD thesis:** A genetic approach to the conservation of marine sponges in the western Indian Ocean, with emphasis on the Mascarene Plateau

**About me:** My interests are wide but I try to keep them focus in the field of marine conservation. I did a B.Sc. (Hons) in Biotechnology at the University of Mauritius and a M.Sc. in Applied Marine science at the University of Cape Town. I fell in love with the Ocean since a young age and I currently dedicate my time in finding scientific approaches for proper holistic conservation plans. I strongly believe that well managed MPAs that are properly demarcated are adequate tools that will boost the health of OUR Ocean.

**About my PhD:** I am currently studying the marine sponges in the Republic of Mauritius. The idea is to use the biodiversity and genetic data obtained from sponges for designing a conservation plan for marine sponges in the region using marine spatial planning tools. Why sponges? I really don't know, my supervisor suggested marine sponges as a study specie and I said why not? Why Mauritius as a study site? I am from Rodrigues Island, which forms part of the Republic of Mauritius. With several islands scattered in the middle of the Indian Ocean, the Republic of Mauritius offers a natural laboratory for investigating evolutionary processes and how to integrate those information into systematic conservation planning.

**Interests:** Apart from everything that relates to the sea, I generally enjoy everything that has a relation to nature.

### **Publications:**

Pasnin O., Attwood C. & Klaus R. (2016) "A marine systematic conservation plan for Rodrigues Island: Western Indian Ocean". *Ocean & Coastal Management*, **130**: 213-220.

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