Maria Immacolata Ferrante



Born in Nocera Inferiore (Italy) on 22/12/1974 Tel.: +39 081 5833268

e-mail: [mariella.ferrante@szn.it](mailto:mariella.ferrante@szn.it) Skype: mariella.ferrante

ORCID: 0000-0002-8102-8018

Scopus Author ID: 7006631623

https://scholar.google.com/citations?view\_op=list\_works&hl=en&hl=en&user=fG5ZXFAAAAAJ

**Current Position:** Senior Researcher

## Current Affiliations:

Department of Integrative Marine Ecology, Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn, Napoli, Italy

Associateto the National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics -OGS, Trieste, Italy

# Education/Training/Experience

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Institute and Location** | **Degree / Function** | **Year** | **Field of Study** |
| Istituto Internazionale di Genetica e Biofisica (IIGB), Consiglio Nazionale delle  Ricerche (CNR), Naples, Italy | Master student | 1997-1998 | Molecular biology, regulation of gene expression |
| Università di Napoli Federico II,  Italy | **Laurea in Biological Sciences** | 1998 | Master thesis in  molecular biology |
| Istituto Internazionale di  Genetica e Biofisica (IIGB), (CNR), Naples, Italy | Apprenticeship | 1999 | Regulation of gene expression |
| Telethon Institute of Genetics and Medicine (TIGEM), Milan,  Italy | Fellow | 1999-2000 | Disease gene identification |
| Telethon Institute of Genetics and Medicine (TIGEM), Naples, Italy | PhD student | 2001-2004 | Disease gene identification, mouse models, mouse  genetics |
| Università di Napoli Federico II,  Italy | **PhD** | 2004 | Genetics |
| Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, Cambridge, UK | Wellcome Trust Sanger Postdoctoral  Fellow | 2005-2010 | Zebrafish genetics and developmental  biology |
| Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, Cambridge, UK | Staff scientist | 2010 | Zebrafish genetics and developmental  biology |
| Stazione Zoologica Anton  Dohrn, Naples, Italy | Researcher | 2010-2020 | Diatom biology,  functional genomics |
| Stazione Zoologica Anton  Dohrn, Naples, Italy | Senior Researcher | 2020-present | Diatom biology,  functional genomics |

National scientific qualification (Abilitazione Scientifica Nazionale) to function as associate professor in Molecular Biology (05/E2), Genetics (05/I1) and Applied Biology (05/F1) in Italian Universities, from April 2017 to April 2026.

# Grants and Fellowships

# SENSing. Sensing the Environment: Nitrogen handling Strategies in diatoms. PRIN (Research Projects of Relevant National Interest), Italian Ministry of Research. Partner. December 2023-November 2025.

# OSCAR. Molecular mechanisms controlling algal growth, from the lab to the sea and back. PRIN (Research Projects of Relevant National Interest), Italian Ministry of Research. Principal Investigator. October 2023-October 2025.

# Screening and cultivation of microalgal species of potential interest for the production of hydrogen in bioreactors. Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA), under the PNRR POR H2. Partner. March 2023- February 2026.

JGI 100 Diatoms Genome Project, funded by the Joint Genome Institute. Partner. December 2020-November 2024.

TechOceans – Technologies for Ocean Sensing. EU Horizon 2020 project. Partner. Grant No. 101000858. November 2020-October 2024.

DIsCO (Diatom life cycles, molecular controls and contribution to ecosystem dynamics), funded by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation's Marine Microbiology Initiative. PI - December 2018- November 2022.

Assemble Plus (Association of European Marine Biological Research Laboratories Expanded), EU H2020 project. Partner - October 2017- September 2021.

DiaEdit (Development of genetic tools for the establishment of routine genome editing in the marine diatom *Phaeodactylum tricornutum*), funded by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation's Marine Microbiology Initiative. Partner - November 2015- May 2018.

EMBRIC (European Marine Biological Research Infrastructure Cluster to promote the Blue Bioeconomy). Work Package leader for the WP “Microalgae for blue biotechnological applications”

- June 2015- May 2019.

Marie Curie Career Integration Grant GyPSy- A forward genetic screen in the marine planktonic diatom *Pseudo-nitzschia multistriata*. PI – September 2011- August 2015.

People-MCA-COFUND TuPRE. Supervisor and scientific coordinator of the Marie Curie Cofund fellowship to A. Amato, September 2014-August 2016.

Progetto Bandiera RITMARE – Italian National Project, coordinating an action and a unit focused on the study of marine turbulence– 2012-2016.

Lifewatch-Italy, Call for interdisciplinary research projects at the distributed Laboratory of "Molecular Biodiversity"- *An investigation of the genetic basis of toxin production in the diatom species Pseudo-nitzschia multistriata*, awarded 20.000 euros for sequencing. 2014.

ASSEMBLE Fellowship for a short visit to the Sven Lovén Centre for Marine Sciences in Tjärnö, Sweden, for the project “Gene expression changes in diatoms responding to copepods cues”. August 2014.

- PhD supervisor of six PhD students (director of studies or internal supervisor), supervisor of five Master students and seven Postdoctoral researchers (past and present).

**-** Member of the Stazione Zoologica (SZN)/Open University (OU) PhD Commission, 2010-2014 (organisation of the training activities required by the OU Programme).

# Publications

## Peer-reviewed

* Santin, Anna; Russo, Monia; Martín, Laura; Chiurazzi, Maurizio; d'Alcalà, Maurizio; Lacombe, Benoît; Ferrante, Maria Immacolata\*; Rogato, Alessandra\*. The tonoplast localized protein PtNPF1 participates in the regulation of nitrogen response in diatoms. Accepted in New Phytologist.
* Ferrante, M. I.\*, Broccoli, A., & Montresor, M. (2023). The pennate diatom *Pseudo-nitzschia multistriata* as a model for diatom life cycles, from the laboratory to the sea. Journal of Phycology, 00, 1–7. https://doi. org/10.1111/jpy.13342
* Russo Monia Teresa, Santin Anna, Zuccarotto Annalisa, Leone Serena, Palumbo Anna, Ferrante Maria Immacolata and Castellano Immacolata. The first genetic engineered system for ovothiol biosynthesis in diatoms reveals a mitochondrial localization for the sulfoxide synthase OvoA. 2023 Open Biol.13220309220309. http://doi.org/10.1098/rsob.220309
* Angela Pelusi, Luca Ambrosino, Marco Miralto, Maria Luisa Chiusano, Alessandra Rogato, Maria Immacolata Ferrante, Marina Montresor. Gene expression during the formation of resting spores induced by nitrogen starvation in the marine diatom Chaetoceros socialis. BMC Genomics 24, 106 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12864-023-09175-x>
* Marotta P\*, Borgonuovo C, Santin A, Russo MT, Manfellotto F, Montresor M, De Luca P, Ferrante MI\*. Mate perception and gene networks regulating the early phase of sex in *Pseudo-nitzschia multistriata*. Journal of Marine Science and Engineering. 2022; 10(12):1941. https://doi.org/10.3390/jmse10121941
* Santin A, Balzano S, Russo MT, Palma Esposito F, Ferrante MI, Blasio M, Cavalletti E, Sardo A. Microalgae-Based PUFAs for Food and Feed: Current Applications, Future Possibilities, and Constraints. Journal of Marine Science and Engineering. 2022; 10(7):844. https://doi.org/10.3390/jmse10070844
* Giuseppe Petrosino, Giovanna Ponte, Massimiliano Volpe, Ilaria Zarrella, Concetta Langella, Giulia Di Cristina, Sara Finaurini, Monia T Russo, Swaraj Basu, Francesco Musacchia, Filomena Ristoratore, Dinko Pavlinic, Vladimir Benes, Maria I Ferrante, Caroline Albertin, Oleg Simakov, Stefano Gustincich, Graziano Fiorito, Remo Sanges. Identification of LINE retrotransposons and long non-coding RNAs expressed in the octopus brain. BMC Biol 20, 116 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12915-022-01303-5>
* Monia Teresa Russo\*, Anna Santin, Alessandra Rogato, Maria Immacolata Ferrante\*. Optimized Proteolistic Protocol for the Delivery of the Cas9 Protein in *Phaeodactylum tricornutum*. In: Verde, C., Giordano, D. (eds) Marine Genomics. Methods in Molecular Biology, vol 2498. Humana, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-0716-2313-8\_18
* Rossella Annunziata\*, Bruno Hay Mele, Pina Marotta, Massimiliano Volpe, Laura Entrambasaguas, Svenja Mager, Krzysztof Stec, Maurizio Ribera d’Alcalà, Remo Sanges, Giovanni Finazzi, Daniele Iudicone, Marina Montresor, Maria Immacolata Ferrante\*. Trade-off between sex and growth in diatoms: molecular mechanisms and demographic implications. Science Advances 2022, 8(3):eabj9466. doi: 10.1126/sciadv.abj9466.
* Anna Santin, Monia Teresa Russo, Maria Immacolata Ferrante\*, Sergio Balzano, Ida Orefice and Angela Sardo\*. Highly Valuable Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids from Microalgae: Strategies to Improve Their Yields and Their Potential Exploitation in Aquaculture. Molecules 2021, 26(24), 7697; <https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules26247697>
* Valeria Sabatino, Ida Orefice, Pina Marotta\*, Luca Ambrosino, Maria Luisa Chiusano, Giuliana d’Ippolito, Giovanna Romano, Angelo Fontana, Maria Immacolata Ferrante\*. Silencing of a *Pseudo-nitzschia arenysensis* lipoxygenase transcript leads to reduced oxylipin production and impaired growth. New Phytologist. First published 17 September 2021. https://doi.org/10.1111/nph.17739
* Santin Anna, Caputi Luigi, Longo Antonella, Chiurazzi Maurizio, Ribera d'Alcalá Maurizio, Russo Monia Teresa, Ferrante Maria Immacolata\*, Rogato Alessandra\*. Integrative -omics identification, evolutionary and structural analysis of low affinity nitrate transporters in diatoms, diNPFs. Open Biology 11: 200395. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsob.20.0395>. \*Corresponding authors
* Monia Teresa Russo\*, Maria Valeria Ruggiero, Francesco Manfellotto, Victoria Scriven, Lisa Campbell, Marina Montresor\* and Maria Immacolata Ferrante\*. New alleles in the mating type determination region of West Atlantic strains of *Pseudo-nitzschia multistriata*. Harmful Algae 103, 101995. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hal.2021.101995>
* Rossella Annunziata\*, Cecilia Balestra, Pina Marotta, Antonella Ruggiero, Francesco Manfellotto, Giovanna Benvenuto, Elio Biffali, Maria Immacolata Ferrante\*. An optimised method for intact nuclei isolation from diatoms. 2021 Jan 18;11(1):1681. doi: 10.1038/s41598-021-81238-z
* F. Manfellotto\*, G.R. Stella, A. Falciatore, C. Brunet, M.I. Ferrante\*. Engineering the Unicellular Alga *Phaeodactylum tricornutum* for Enhancing Carotenoid Production. Antioxidants 2020, 9 (8), 757. doi:10.3390/antiox9080757
* Fiorini F., Borgonuovo C., Ferrante M.I.\*, Broenstrup M.\* A metabolomics exploration of the sexual phase in the marine diatom *Pseudo-nitzschia multistriata*. Marine Drugs 2020, 18(6), 313; https://doi.org/10.3390/md18060313 \*Shared corresponding and shared last authorship
* Cristina Maria Osuna-Cruz, Gust Bilcke, Emmelien Vancaester, Sam De Decker, Nicole Poulsen, Petra Bulankova, Bram Verhelst, Sien Audoor, Darja Stojanovova, Aikaterini Pargana, Monia Russo, Frederike Stock, Emilio Cirri, Georg Pohnert, Per Winge, Atle Bones, Gwenael Piganeu, Maria Immacolata Ferrante, Thomas Mock, Lieven Sterck, Koen Sabbe, Lieven De Veylder, Wim Vyverman and Klaas Vandepoele. The *Seminavis robusta* genome provides insights into the evolutionary adaptations of benthic diatoms. Nature Communications. 11:3320, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-17191-8
* Pelusi Angela, Margiotta Francesca, Passarelli Augusto, Ferrante Maria Immacolata, Ribera d’Alcala Maurizio, Montresor Marina. Density‐dependent mechanisms regulate spore formation in the diatom *Chaetoceros socialis*. Limnology and Oceanography Letters. 2020. https://doi.org/10.1002/lol2.10159
* Alessandra Gallo, Marco Guida, Giovanna Armiento, Antonietta Siciliano, Federica Carraturo, Nicolina Mormile, David Pellegrini, Lorenzo Morroni, Elisabetta Tosti, Maria Immacolata Ferrante, Marina Montresor, Flavia Molisso, Marco Sacchi, Roberto Danovaro, Giovanni Libralato. Species-specific sensitivity of three microalgae to sediment elutriates. Marine Environmental Research. Volume 156, 104901. 2020. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marenvres.2020.104901
* Angela Pelusi, Flavio Rotolo, Alessandra Gallo, Maria Immacolata Ferrante, Marina Montresor. Effects of elutriates from contaminated coastal sediments on different life cycle phases of planktonic diatoms. Marine Environmental Research. Volume 155, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marenvres.2020.104890
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* Greta Busseni, Fabio Rocha Jimenez Vieira,Alberto Amato, Eric Pelletier, Juan J. Pierella Karlusich, Maria I. Ferrante, Patrick Wincker, Alessandra Rogato, Chris Bowler, Remo Sanges, Luigi Maiorano, Maurizio Chiurazzi, Maurizio Ribera d’Alcalà, Luigi Caputi, Daniele Iudicone. Meta-omics reveals genetic flexibility of diatom nitrogen transporters in response to environmental changes. 2019. Molecular Biology and Evolution. DOI: 10.1093/molbev/msz157/5525704
* Maria I. Ferrante\*, Laura Entrambasaguas, Mathias Johansson, Mats Töpel, Anke Kremp, Marina Montresor and Anna Godhe. Exploring molecular signs of sex in the marine diatom *skeletonema marinoi*. Genes. 2019, 10, 494; doi:10.3390/genes10070494.
* Lauritano C, Ferrante MI\*, Rogato A\*. Marine Natural Products from Microalgae: An -Omics Overview. Marine Drugs. 2019; 17(5):269. DOI: 10.3390/md17050269.
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* Amato A, Sabatino V, Nylund GM, Bergkvist J, Basu S, Andersson MX, Sanges R, Godhe A, Kiørboe T, Selander E, Ferrante MI\*. Grazer-induced transcriptomic and metabolomic response of the chain-forming diatom *Skeletonema marinoi*. The ISME Journal, 12, 1594–1604, 2018. DOI:10.1038/s41396-018-0094-0
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035119-1-035119-11, 2016, 87:35119. doi: 10.1063/1.4944813

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* Scalco E, Amato A, Ferrante MI, Montresor M. The sexual phase of the diatom *Pseudo-nitzschia multistriata*: cytological and time-lapse cinematography characterization. Protoplasma. 2015. doi: 10.1007/s00709-015-0891-5
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* Russo MT, Annunziata R, Sanges R, Ferrante MI, Falciatore A. The upstream regulatory sequence of the light harvesting complex Lhcf2 gene of the marine diatom *Phaeodactylum tricornutum* enhances transcription in an orientation- and distance-independent fashion. Marine Genomics. 2015. doi: 10.1016/j.margen.2015.06.010
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* Sabatino V, Russo MT, Patil S, d’Ippolito G, Fontana A, Ferrante MI\*. Establishment of Genetic Transformation in the Sexually Reproducing Diatoms *Pseudo-nitzschia multistriata* and *Pseudo- nitzschia arenysensis* and Inheritance of the Transgene. Marine Biotechnology. 2015; 1–11. doi:10.1007/s10126-015-9633-0
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\*Corresponding author.

**Book chapters**

Gust Bilcke, **Maria Immacolata Ferrante**, Marina Montresor, Sam De Decker, Lieven De Veylder and Wim Vyverman. Life cycle regulation. In The Molecular Life of Diatoms. Editors: A. Falciatore, T. Mock. Springer International Publishing, January 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92499-7>, ISBNs 978-3-03-092498-0, 978-3-03-092499-7

Philipp Assmy, Victor Smetacek, Marina Montresor, **Maria I. Ferrante**. Algal Blooms, Editor(s): Thomas M. Schmidt, Encyclopedia of Microbiology (Fourth Edition), Academic Press, 2019, Pages 61-76, ISBN 9780128117378