Who was on the Black Sea MAP expedition?

Maria Pia Birkett – Senior data processor

What is your job?
Senior Data Processor at Marine Measuring Techniques (MMT)

What are the responsibilities of your role?
I work for MMT, a Swedish company. My role involves surveying under the water, looking at how the sea bed looks, mapping it and recording any objects that maybe lying on it from oil drums to unexploded ordinances (UXOs) such as World War Two bombs or even ancient shipwrecks.

My job in the Black Sea MAP is to process the large quantities of data being provided by the surveying equipment onboard survey vessels. I correct the data and reinterpret it in a clear-to-understand format such as 3D models of the sea floor.

What do you enjoy most about your role in the project?
It's similar to work I do all the time for the offshore industry but we are doing scientific research which is really interesting!

What other types of jobs have you done in the past?
We do a lot of commercial projects such as wind farms, inspecting cables that sit on the sea floor and we do a lot of charts, hydrographic surveys. We do a little bit of everything.

> "Problem-solving skills are very important, because if things go wrong you may need to figure out a solution yourself."

What did you study at school?
I went to high school in Sweden and I studied Marine Biology.

What did you go on to do after school?
I went to university and did my first degree in Oceanography and then I did a Master's degree in Physical Oceanography.

What influenced you in deciding your career path?
I've been wanting to work with the ocean for a very long time, since I was 8 years old, but I wanted to be a marine biologist so that is what I studied. Then I studied Physical Oceanography and I really liked the maths and physics part of it.

What skills do you think you need to have to best do your job?
Problem-solving skills are very important, because if things go wrong you may need to figure out a solution yourself. Being quite sociable is helpful as you work with a lot of people and on a boat. It is a small space to live and work together.

How does your job fit in with the other areas of study?
I'm mostly a bridge between getting the information and handing it over to the scientists. I get the not 'easy to understand data' and convert it so it is easier to understand.

Favourite part of career so far
I love the challenge of moving forward in my career and taking on more responsibilities.

MAP MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT BLACK SEA

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