

Updated February 2026

Education

Bachelor's Degree in Biological Sciences (1986, University of Modena);
PhD in Animal Biology (1999, University of Bologna);
Postdoctoral Fellow (1990-91, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, USA);
Research Associate (1991-95, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA).

Teaching and Research

Since November 2000, he has been an Associate Professor of Zoology (SSD BIO05) at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (from 2000 to 2012, in the Faculty of Mathematical, Physical, and Natural Sciences, and from 2012 to the present, in the Department of Life Sciences). From 2000 to 2014, he taught numerous courses (e.g., Zoology, Invertebrate Zoology, Evolution and Phylogeny) for students in the Natural Sciences program. Since 2014, he has taught Zoology for the Natural Sciences (Bachelor's Degree) program and Biodiversity and Animal Phylogeny for the Experimental and Applied Biology (now Biosciences) program. Since the 2019-2020 academic year, he has also taught Principles of Biology for the Science Teaching and Communication (Bachelor's Degree). Since 2022, he has taught the Wildlife Management module for the Management of Bioresources and Ecosystem Services program. All courses have consistently received high student satisfaction (OPIS data).

From 2001 to 2009, he was a member of the teaching staff of the PhD program in Evolutionary Biology at UniMORE, where he taught the course "Data Archiving and Processing Laboratory." From 2009 to 2013, he taught at the UNIMORE PhD program "Earth System Sciences: Environment, Resources, and Cultural Heritage." Since 2013, he has been a member of the teaching council for the PhD program in Models and Methods for Materials and Environmental Sciences. Since 2023, he has been a member of the teaching council for the Doctorate of National Interest (DIN) on Biodiversity. Since 2021, he has been a member of the National Biodiversity Future Centre. Since 2004, he has been an adjunct professor of Zoology at the Instituto de Biociencias, University of São Paulo, Brazil.

Member of numerous scientific societies (U.Z.I., S.I.B.M., International Association of Meiobenthologists, American Microscopical Society, Willy Hennig Society). Member of the Executive Committee of the International Association of Meiobenthologists for the three-year period 2002-2004, confirmed for the three-year period 2004-2007.

From 2003-present, member of the Scientific Committee and Board of Directors of the Consortium for the Interuniversity Center for Marine Biology and Applied Ecology "G. Bacci" in Livorno. From 2010 to 2012, UNIMORE representative on the Board of Directors of CONISMA.

Co-organizer of the XII International Meiofauna Conference (Ravenna, July 11-16, 2004). Member of the organizing committee of the 74th Congress of the Italian Zoological Union (Modena, September 30-October 3, 2013).

Author of 170 scientific papers on zoo-ecology regarding meiobenthic organisms (Gastrotricha, Loricifera, Harpacticoid Copepods, Priapulids, Kinorhynchs
<http://www.gastrotricha.unimore.it/bibliography.htm>).

He has served as a referee for national and international scientific journals (Italian Journal of Zoology; *Biologia Marina Mediterranea*, *Sarsia*, *New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research*, *Zoological Science*; *Archive of Fishery and Marine Research*; *Brazilian Journal of Oceanography*; *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the UK*; *Invertebrate Biology*; *Helgoland Marine Research*, *Zoologischer Anzeiger*, *Limnologica*; *Marine Biology Research*; *Molecular Ecology*; *ZooKeys*; *Zoologica Scripta*; *Zootaxa*, *Microscopy Research and Technique*, *PLoS ONE*, *Marine Biodiversity*, *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society*, *Nature Communications*).

In 2005, he was the sole guest editor for the special volume of the journal *Meiofauna Marina* dedicated to the proceedings of the XII International Meiofauna Conference. From 2006 to 2014, he was co-editor-in-chief of the international journal *Meiofauna Marina* (Munich). Since 2010, he has been subject editor for the international journal *ZooKeys*. Since 2019, he has been an associate editor for the international journal *The Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society* (UK) and a member of the editorial board of the international journal *Diversity* (CH). From 2011 to 2017, he was on the editorial board (*Zoology*) of the international journal *The World Scientific Journal* and from 2013 to 2016, on the editorial board (*Zoology*) of the *Chinese Journal of Biology*. Since 2002, he has been the creator, editor, and main contributor to the "Gastrotricha World Portal" (www.gastrotricha.unimore.it). Since 2008, he has been the editor for the phylum Gastrotricha of the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS, <http://www.marinespecies.org/>).

His research has been funded by public and private institutions, both Italian (FAR, PRIN, ICRAM, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Modena, CIBM; PNRR-Biodiversity; Emilia-Romagna Region) and foreign (COBICE, Denmark; SYNTHESESYS, Germany, National Science Foundation, USA).

In 2002, 2003, and 2008, at the invitation of the University of São Paulo (Brazil), he conducted research on the meiofauna of the coast of the state of São Paulo and gastrotrichs of inland waters. In 2005, 2006, and 2007, at the invitation of the Kuwait Environmental Public Authority, he conducted research along the coasts of the Persian Gulf. In 2007, he was invited to participate as an expert and lecturer in the workshop and graduate course on marine meiofauna of Sweden, organized by the Universities of Gothenburg and Stockholm as part of the Swedish Taxonomic Initiative. From 2011 to 2013, he conducted research in the Caribbean islands (US Virgin Island, Jamaica, Curaçao) as part of the US-NSF project "Origin and Phylogeny of the Caribbean Gastrotricha." In 2013, at the invitation of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban), he conducted research along the coast of South Africa and in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park (UNESCO World Heritage Site). In 2016, he was invited by the Smithsonian Institution (USA) to the workshop on the "Meiofauna of Pacific Panama"; in 2018 and 2019, he participated in the research expedition on the quinnorhynchus and gastrotrichus of Costa Rica in partnership with researchers from the University of Costa Rica. In 2021, he participated in the workshop on the meiofauna of the coast of the Netherlands at the invitation of the Naturalis Biodiversity Center. In 2025 (June), he will participate as an instructor at the Meiofauna Workshop at Tjärnö Marine Laboratory (Sweden).

Expertise

Integrated taxonomy, systematics, phylogeny, biodiversity, biogeography, evolutionary biology, marine biology, marine ecology, statistics, experimental design.

Research Areas

My main research interests include the fauna, systematics, phylogeny, biogeography, and ecology of low-lying metazoans and crustaceans. My studies focus on a group of animals known collectively as meiofauna. Meiofauna consist of invertebrate animals small enough (ranging in size from 0.063 mm to 1 mm) to live in the interstices of aquatic sediments, and almost all major animal phyla have interstitial representatives, with some phyla exclusively meiobenthic in size. Using advanced microscopy techniques and molecular approaches, I am committed to reconstructing evolutionary relationships within and between groups such as Gastrotrichs, Loricifera, Priapulids, Kinorhynchs, and Harpacticoid Copepods. I am also interested in investigating the biotic and abiotic factors that influence the distribution and abundance of meiobenthic organisms and assessing the impact of natural and/or anthropogenic stresses on marine meiobenthic communities.