

"The Great Icelandic Swim": How Citizen Science Became Popular

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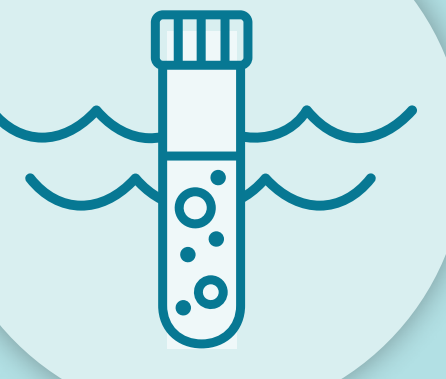
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What is eDNA?

Every living thing in the sea leaves traces behind, such as skin cells, mucus, or waste. eDNA lets scientists detect which species have been in the water simply by filtering a sample of it.

In BioProtect, this is how we build a picture of biodiversity along Iceland's coast and track how it changes.

no nets, no disturbance, just a bottle of seawater and a lab



The Great Icelandic Swim A 1,000-mile swim that carried science



>1,000 miles in ~100 days



100 samples of environmental DNA (eDNA)



International media coverage

In 2025, ultra-marathon sea swimmer Ross Edgley became the first person to swim around Iceland's entire coastline.

It could have been a story purely about endurance, but he chose to **bring science along with him, collecting eDNA** samples as he went so that researchers could learn more about the life along Iceland's shores.

BioProtect, part of the EU Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters", supported that sampling, and the swim was followed internationally through news coverage and the Channel 4 documentary "The Great Icelandic Swim".



BioProtect



Sampling in the field led by Dr Solomon Weston (HAFRO)

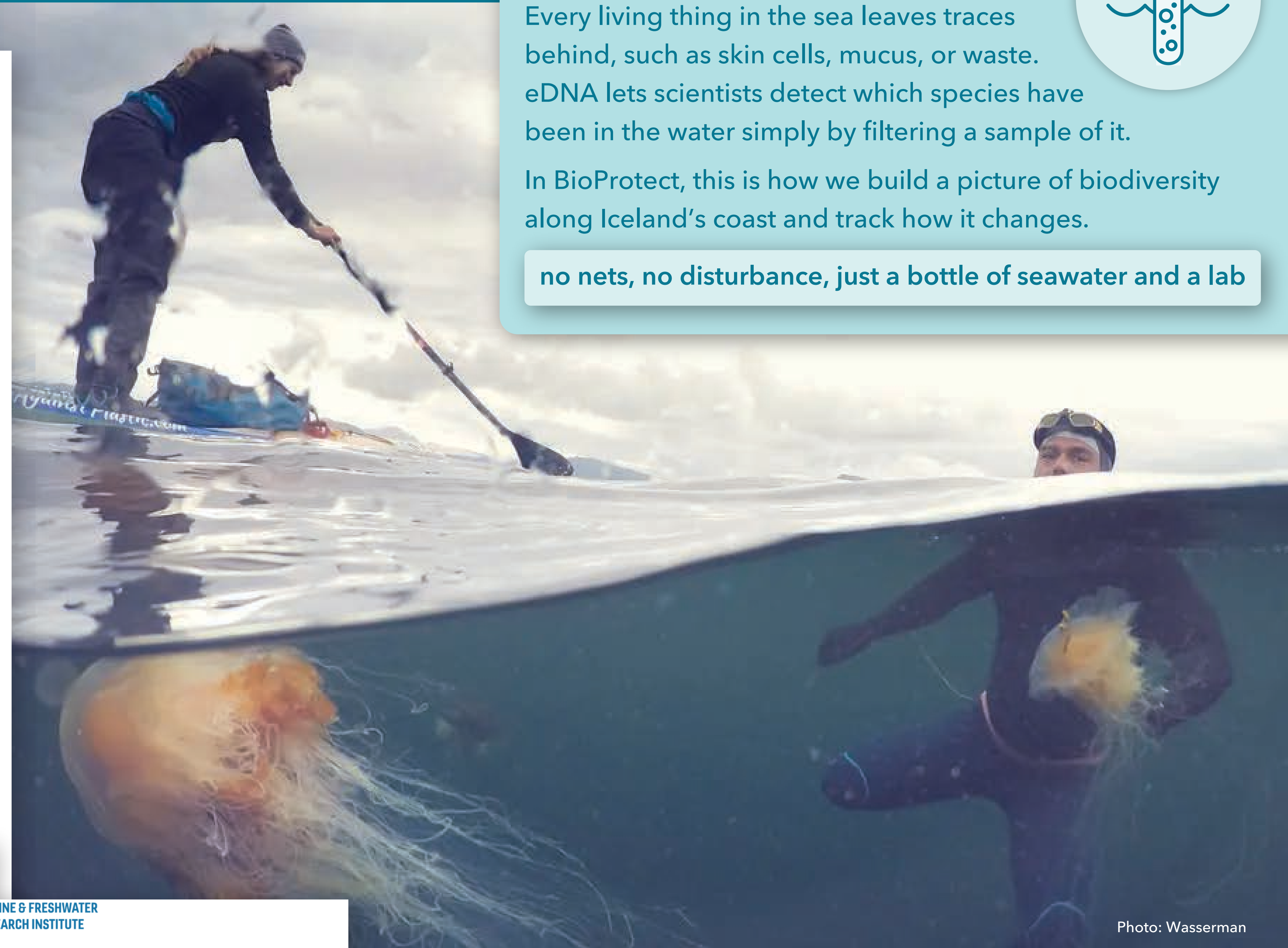


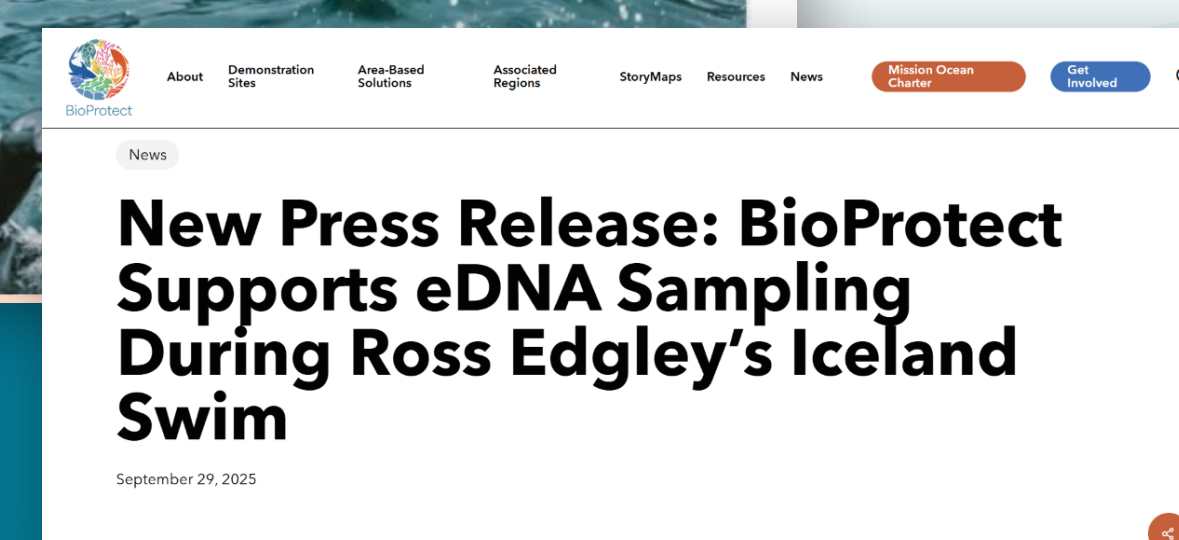
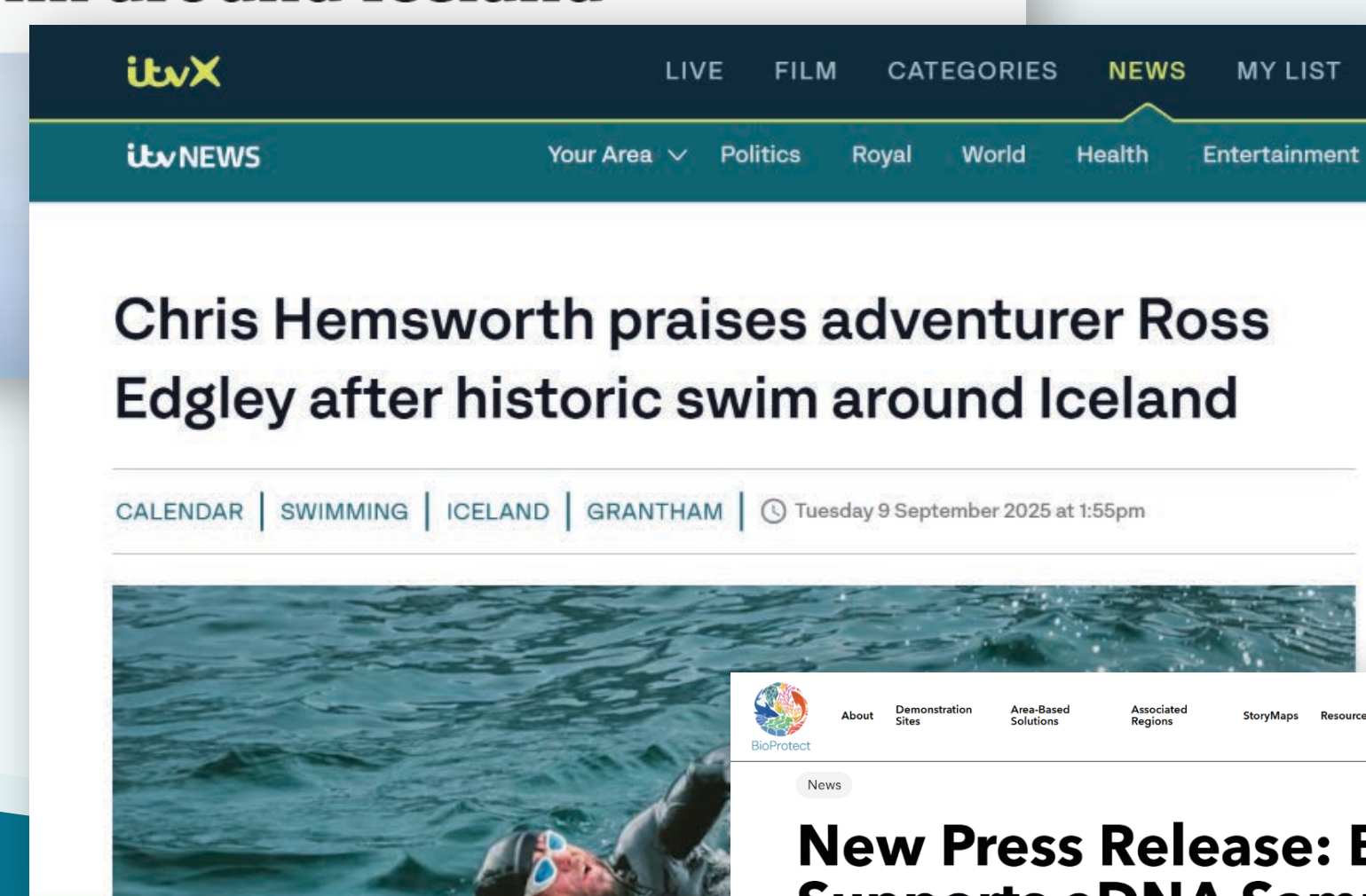
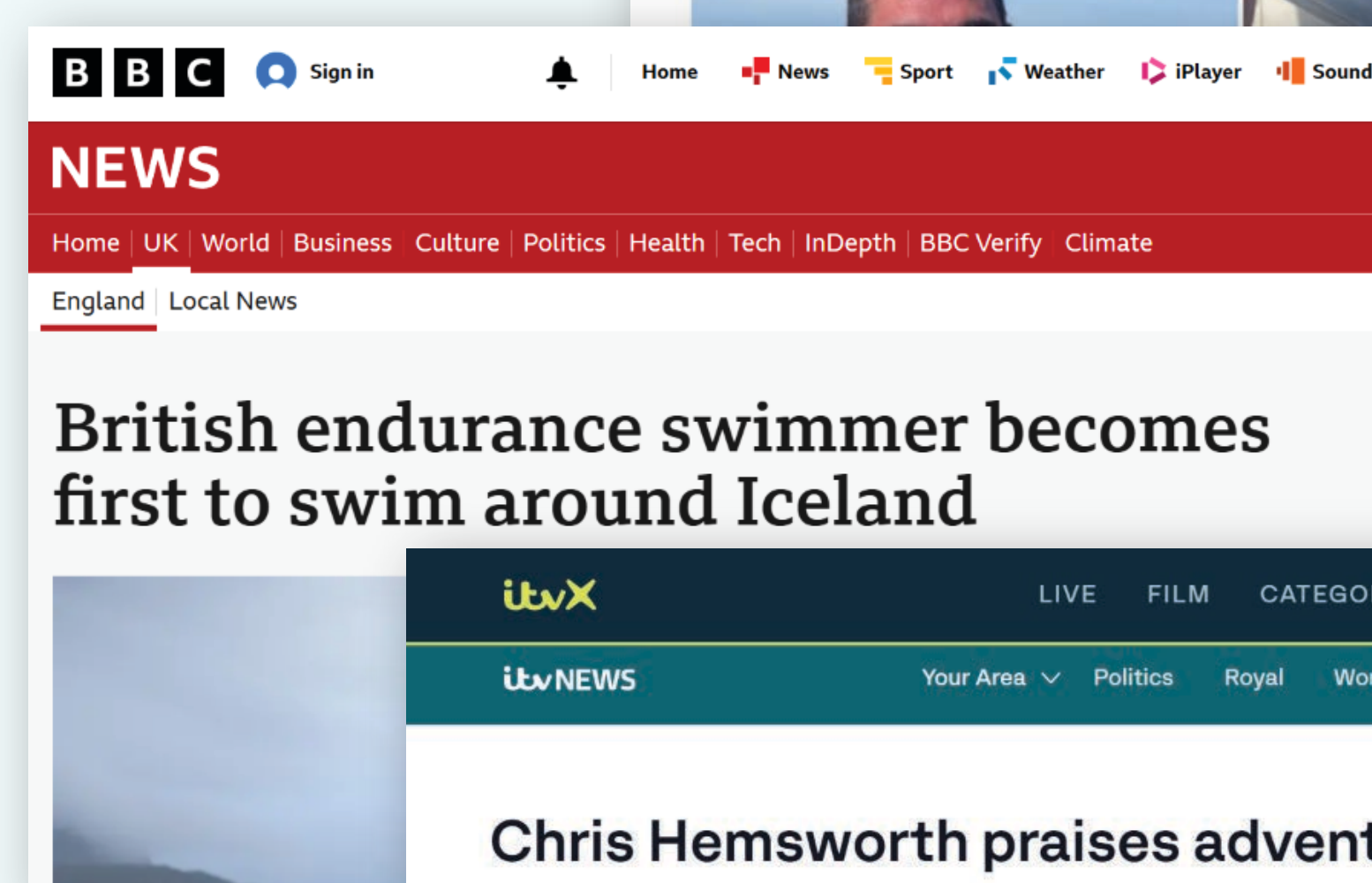
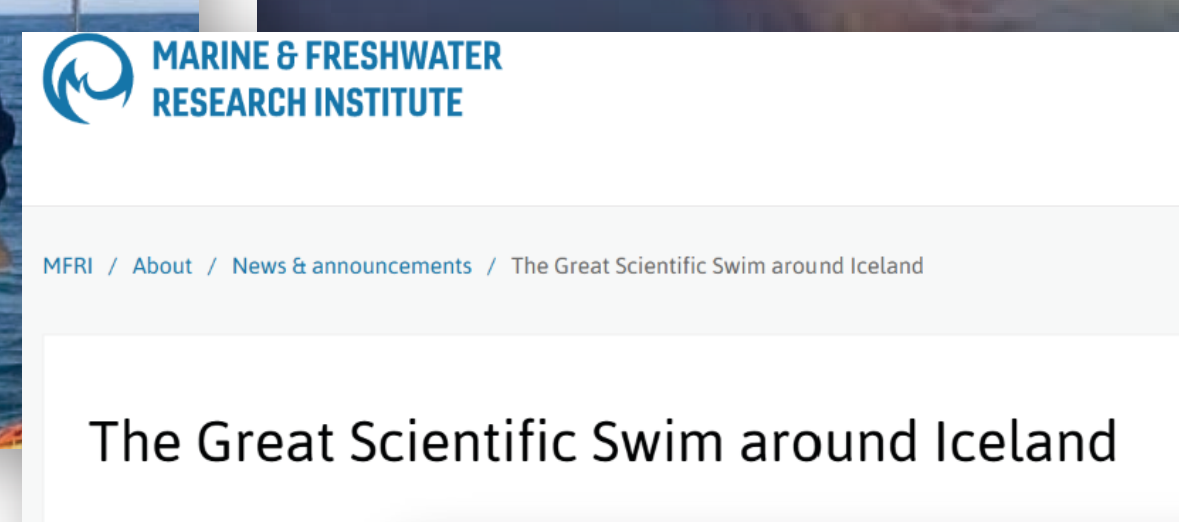
Photo: Wasserman

Visibility

The swim carried BioProtect into living rooms, news feeds and conversations that an EU project does not usually reach on its own.

People who had never heard of a Mission Ocean project – and who were not looking for marine science – came to know that someone was swimming around Iceland taking water samples, and why that was worth doing.

Every coastline has its swimmers, divers, sailors, rowers and fishers. Their local following and enthusiasm are already there. A project doesn't have to build that audience from scratch – it can share it.



What this means for ocean literacy

Three lessons from The Great Icelandic Swim that travel beyond one project:



Champions beat channels

A trusted local doer reaches audiences a project website never will. Find the swimmers, divers and sailors already loved by your coastline.



Visible participation lowers the barrier

Seeing sampling done by non-scientists makes it feel doable. Show the act, not just the invitation!



Ride existing stories

Endurance, adventure, place and personality already have audiences. Ocean science can travel with them, if we let it.



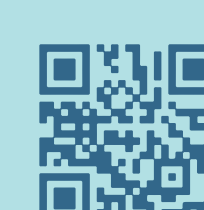
Photo: mbl.is/
Egbert Jóhannesson



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Scan for the full story, eDNA results & the documentary trailer
www.bioprotect-project.eu

Come say hi!

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