



## **ZMT Alumna and Ambassador: Dr. Maryam Weigt, Iran**

### **What was your position at ZMT?**

After earning my M.Sc. in Marine Ecology from Khoramshahr University of Marine Science & Technology in 2008, I started working with the Iranian National Institute of Oceanography (INIO) as a researcher where I worked on many ecological projects in the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea. During an international workshop on "Integrated Coastal Zone Management" at the Institute of Marine Sciences and Technology in Izmir, I had the chance to meet Dr. Tawfiq, a former ZMT Alumnus, who encouraged me to do a PhD at the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT).

After receiving a three-year scholarship from Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, I started my PhD research at ZMT (2011-2015). The title of my dissertation is "Fish Community Structure and Food web Dynamics in Low Rainfall Mangrove and Non-mangrove Ecosystems (Persian Gulf)". The results of my work have been published in privileged marine journals in the form of four journal articles. I also gave many talks at international symposia e.g. Meeting on Mangrove ecology, functioning and Management (MMM3) in Sri Lanka and 2nd International Symposium on Mangroves as Fish Habitat: Ecology and Ecological Services in Mexico as well as National Geographic news.

### **How did you benefit from your time at ZMT?**

Doing a PhD at ZMT gave me the great opportunity of working with world class scientists, establishing international professional networks in my research field. Publishing papers in cooperation with other scientists and developing a professional network during my PhD helped me to be known as one of the few scientists working on arid mangroves.

In my home country Iran, marine biology research is under-represented and there are a lot of opportunities to do research in this area. Therefore, ZMT - a leading ecological research institute for tropical regions - is a perfect place for young scientists coming from countries like Iran. Strengthening the cooperation between ZMT, Iranian scientists and students is consequently one of my objectives I am currently working on.