

**Ana Bielen, PhD**, is an associate professor at the University of Zagreb Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology, where she leads a research group focusing on host–pathogen interactions in freshwater ecosystems. In her research, she applies molecular microbiology to study pathogenic oomycetes, in particular *Aphanomyces astaci*, the causative agent of crayfish plague. She aims to understand how changes in abiotic and biotic environmental factors — particularly temperature and host-associated microbial communities — influence disease dynamics, pathogen virulence and host susceptibility. The overall aim of her work is to support the development of sustainable disease control strategies for endangered aquatic species in aquaculture and in the environment.

Dr Bielen has led and participated in numerous national and international research projects in the field of aquatic pathogen ecology. She has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications and actively contributes to the scientific community as a mentor, journal reviewer, guest editor and member of scientific and organizing committees.