

The 42nd Annual Larval Fish Conference

Francis Juanes | University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. E-mail: juanes@uvic.ca

Pierre Pepin | Fisheries & Oceans Canada, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

John Dower | University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

The 42nd Annual Larval Fish Conference took place in Victoria, British Columbia from June 24–28, 2018. The meeting attracted 120 participants from 22 countries of which about one-third were students. There were 89 talks and 31 posters spread over five themed sessions and one contributed session. The Sally Richardson award for best student oral presentation went to Andrew Corso from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science for a talk entitled, “A time-series analysis of the larval fish assemblage of the Western Antarctic Peninsula.” The John H.S. Blaxter Award for best student poster went to Carolin Muller from the University of Rhode Island for the poster, “Growing up in a plastic ocean: the impact of microplastic uptake in juvenile seabream.”

The meeting began with a keynote lecture by Janet Duffy-Anderson (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Seattle) with a talk entitled, “The contribution of fish early life studies to ecosystem based fishery management.” Janet is the program manager for the Center’s Recruitment Processes Program and co-leads the Ecosystems and Fisheries Oceanography Coordinated Investigation Program. Her research elegantly links early life history ecology to fisheries

recruitment dynamics and ecosystem functioning. In her talk, she used various case studies to illustrate the development of indicators to be used in assessment, forecasting, and ecosystem-based fisheries advice for management. As such, and because of her work on egg, larval, and juvenile stages, the talk served as an excellent introduction to all the themes of the conference.

The five theme sessions included the following:

1. *There is life (and death) after metamorphosis: Recent advances in the ecology of juvenile fish.* Yes, it is called the Larval Fish Conference, but the section is the Early Life History Section, which includes juvenile stages, generally through the first year of life. Talks in this theme highlighted research on juvenile fish, particularly given the current interest in the ecology of juvenile salmonids and forage fish in British Columbia, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and elsewhere;
2. *Fisheries oceanography in a changing ocean.* This session included a range of topics including changing ocean climate and possible consequences for the ecology/physiology of larval fish, for match-mismatch and other phenological phenomena;
3. *Predator-prey interactions and consequences to growth-survival.* This session focused on research that aims to



- understand the interaction between larvae, their prey and predators, and their consequences to changes in growth, mortality, and survival;
4. *Emerging threats to early life history stages and their consequences to physiological processes.* This session included topics related to anthropogenic impacts, such as noise, ocean acidification, or micro-plastics; and
 5. *Application of ichthyoplankton data to fisheries management.* This session brought together researchers from all over the world to explore how ichthyoplankton data may contribute to the management of ecosystems and fisheries through the use of time series and the identification of recruitment bottlenecks.

There were also two pre-conference workshops. The first was a one-day larval identification workshop hosted by Alison Deary (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Alaska Fisheries Science Center), Peter Konstantinidis (Oregon State University), and Moira Galbraith (DFO, Institute of Ocean Sciences) and held at the University of Victoria. The 30 participants sorted through ichthyoplankton samples to give them hands-on experience in: (1) understanding the morphological characteristics used

to identify early stage fishes, (2) using larval fish identification keys, and (3) curation of ichthyoplankton collections. The second workshop was a session for early career scientists organized by Marta Moyano (University of Hamburg) and Alison Deary, and led by Stuart Ludsin (Ohio State University). The focus was on “demystifying proposal writing.” The 15 participants heard tips about how to prepare an effective proposal and were given advice from an expert panel with experience writing and evaluating proposals in the USA and Europe.

From the organizers’ perspective, the conference was highly successful because the quality of the posters and presentations was first rate, the discussions were dynamic, and the overall sense of community was strong. We were able to avoid having to deal with concurrent sessions, which gave a chance for everyone to gain a better perspective on a broad range of topics.

The 43rd Annual Larval Fish Conference will take place May 21–24, 2019, in Palma, Mallorca, Spain hosted by Ignacio Catalan (Spanish National Research Council), Patricia Reglero and Itziar Álvarez (both from the Spanish Institute of Oceanography). **AFS**