

# JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

## REPORT ON EXPEDITION / PROJECT / CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/**

**Conference Title:** European Society of Evolutionary Biology conference 2022

**Travel Dates:** August 12-19

**Location:** Prague, Czech Republic

**Group member(s):** Julie Grosse-Sommer

**Aims:** 1) Presentation of research aims to general public  
2) Receive feedback to improve methods and aims

**Photography consent form attached:**  Yes  
(please refer to your award letter)  No

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### OUTCOME (a minimum of 500 words):-

The European Society of Evolutionary Biology (ESEB) conference 2022 brought together around 1.600 researchers in the field of evolutionary biology from around the world (although mainly focused on Europe and the United States). Each day, talks on various topics of evolutionary biology were held, including the evolution of reproductive systems, adaptation genomics, antibiotic resistance and much more. Prestigious keynote speakers started off the days with different topics, followed by talks and presentations. Two days ended with a poster session, where scientists could present and discuss their current research.

In general, attending the conference was a novel and exciting experience. My original aim had been to receive feedback for my PhD project, which did indeed occur, but I initially underestimated the value of becoming familiar with research in the broader evolutionary biology environment. While at the conference, I was exposed to various different research areas, some unrelated to my project. It was extremely interesting and helpful to hear what other researchers were working on, gaining a broader overview of the research field beyond my own topic. Experiencing these other talks and posters gave me an idea what issues the general field of evolutionary biology is currently tackling, and gave me insight on other research areas which I may be interested in pursuing after the completion of my PhD.

An often-emphasized aspect of attending conferences is the possibility to network with other researchers working in the field. This allows for setting up (future) collaboration and productively exchanging ideas. As I will detail below, while I did receive quality feedback for my research plans in the upcoming years, which was my intended outcome of attending the conference, and I talked to scientists about their research, which was broadly related to mine, I felt I lacked the experience and opportunity to properly network and really expand my connections in the scientific community. Although I recognize that this may be due to only recently starting my PhD (and thus not knowing many researchers), I feel like if I want to pursue this aspect of networking in the future, I will aim to attend smaller, and more specialized conferences. Though I would like to emphasize that this aspect in no way reduced the information and experiences I have gained from attending ESEB, I think this is an important take-away and reflection for the future.

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For this conference, I presented a poster detailing my plans for my upcoming second and third year of my PhD. I outlined the plan behind my research and how I intend to implement methods to answer my research questions. I had multiple people coming up to my poster to discuss my plan, during which I received feedback on potential problems or reviewer comments which may appear if I publish this work. Additionally, suggestions were given how to alleviate potentially problematic issues, which was extremely helpful, as I now know what I need to improve for my research plans.

I would like to thank the James Rennie Bequest Fund for offering me this opportunity to present my research to the wider scientific community. The exchanges with fellow researchers that my attending the conference enabled have challenged my current ideas, questioned my methods and suggested solutions to existing problems. I believe this will greatly enrich the next years of my PhD, as I will take this feedback into account to work on providing high-quality research.