

# JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

## REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/  
Conference Title:** 14<sup>th</sup> International Society for Behavioural Ecology Congress

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**Travel Dates:** 12<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> August 2012

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**Location:** Lund, Sweden

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**Group member(s):** NA

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**Aims:** To give an oral presentation entitled “Parental care and inbreeding depression in the burying beetle”, to gain feedback on my results and to network with other researchers in the field of behavioural ecology.

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### OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

Having received a generous award from the James Rennie Bequest Fund I was able to attend the 14<sup>th</sup> International Society for Behavioural Ecology congress in Lund, Sweden in August 2012. It was attended by roughly 1000 delegates world wide and was my first major conference.

The conference had several sessions comprising of fifteen minute presentations on a wide range of topics in behavioural ecology, given by scientists at all stages of their careers. Particularly interesting and relevant talks that I attended was Nathan Bailey (university of St Andrews) talking about mate choice flexibility and social environments influencing sexual selection, Timo Thuenken (University of Bonn, Germany) describing kin biased grouping behaviour in cichlid fish and Veronika Laine (University of Turku) discussing heterozygosity-behaviour correlations in sticklebacks. Whilst I mainly focussed on talks mainly relevant to my own work I also had the opportunity to attend others given by prominent and inspiring scientists not necessarily in my field, such as environment-dependent effects of metabolic rates in wild salmon by Neil Metcalf (University of Glasgow), philopatry in eusocial ambrosia beetles by Michael Taborsky (University of Bern) and how social information can determine clutch sizes in birds by Jukka Forsman (University of Oulu, Finland). Until recently my PhD has concentrated on studying the effects of inbreeding, however in the upcoming months I am focussing much more on parental care and so the conference was of a particular benefit as I was able to form a basis for such research as parental care featured heavily among the talks. Plenary talks were given each day by a prominent member of the field of behavioural ecology and I particularly enjoyed Jacobus Boomsma (University of Copenhagen) discuss mate choice commitment in social breeding. The conference ended with the Hamilton lecture, this year given by John Krebs giving a retrospective on behavioural ecology in which he himself has been very much a part of and he gave first hand experience of the history of behavioural ecology.

As well as attending talks at the conference I also gave a presentation entitled “Parental care and inbreeding depression in the burying beetle” which described results I have gathered in the past year. I received very interesting questions at the end of my talk and insightful feedback and comments in to other ways and directions to interpret my work. In addition to feedback from my presentation I was introduced to Ruedi Nager (Univerity of Glasgow) who is carrying out work very relevant to my own, though due to some unfortunate timing our talks were at the same time, however we were able to later meet and discuss each others work, and this was particularly valuable.

## **JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST**

As well as the conference itself I took the opportunity to attend a day-long post conference symposium on sexual selection in which Hanna Kokko (Australian National University), Marlene Zuk (University California Riverside), Nina Weddell (University of Exeter) and Tim Clutton-Brock (University of Cambridge) all presented talks and discussed new topics of discussion in sexual selection such as the presence of sexual selection in females which I found especially interesting and novel.

This was my first major conference and I found it insightful and encouraging. I would like to thank the James Rennie Bequest Fund for the opportunity to not only attend the conference but to also to give me an opportunity to present my work. The experience has provided me with further inspiration and motivation for my final year of my PhD.