

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/

Conference Title: ESEB XVI conference

Travel Dates: 19-26th August 2017

Location: Groningen, the Netherlands

Group member(s): Jon Richardson

Aims: Give a talk to present my research, attend talks and posters during
the conference, network with other researchers.

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

The European Society for Evolutionary Biology (ESEB) congress is a large, biannual conference with delegates from around the world. This year the conference was held in Groningen, the Netherlands with more than 1,700 evolutionary biologists in attendance. The XVI conference included more than 300 talks and 800 posters arranged across 35 different symposia. The symposia covered a wide range of topics in evolutionary biology, such as experimental evolution in complex environments, fitness in the social environment and the evolutionary biology of ageing.

On the 21st of August, I gave a 20-minute talk as part of symposium 11: Evolution of communication signals, where I presented results from a project carried out during my PhD. My talk (title: Effects of inbreeding depression on parent-offspring communication in the burying beetle *Nicrophorus vespilloides*) was well received with many people providing insightful questions and comments both immediately afterwards and during the rest of the conference. My talk was shared on social media by a few researchers who attended and subsequently I have been contacted with further positive comments and questions through social media. In addition, I was interviewed by Science magazine about work being carried out by other researchers studying the same species. Throughout the rest of the conference, I had the opportunity to attend many fascinating talks and poster sessions to learn more about current work in evolutionary biology. I was also to speak to other researchers at various career levels about their work and discuss implications and future directions. This has provided me with new insights and ideas that will be useful during the course of my PhD.

This was my first time attending such a large, international conference and it provided me with the valuable opportunity to network with other evolutionary biology researchers at various stages of their careers. My experience at the conference – from giving a talk, attending talks and posters and networking with senior researchers will be helpful for the rest of my PhD and my wider academic career.

Attending the ESEB congress 2017 has been an invaluable experience, and I am very grateful to the funding received from the James Rennie Bequest, which made it possible for me to travel to Groningen, the Netherlands to attend this meeting.