

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION / PROJECT / CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/
Conference Title:** International Society for Behavioural Ecology (ISBE) Congress 2022

Travel Dates: 28 July – 2 August

Location: Stockholm, Sweden

Group member(s): Casey Patmore

Aims:

1. Present a poster on my ongoing PhD research
2. Network and engage with other members of the behavioural ecology community
3. Update my knowledge on the most recent developments in the field of behavioural ecology

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

OUTCOME (a minimum of 500 words):-

The International Society for Behavioural Ecology (ISBE) Congress is one of the biggest conferences of its kind – this year gathering over 700 in-person attendees studying behavioural ecology from across the globe. The ISBE Congress is usually hosted bi-annually, though in 2020 it was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022 the ISBE Congress was able to return (hooray!), and was held at the Stockholm Waterfront Congress Centre, Sweden, from 28th July – 2nd August. I was fortunate enough to attend this year, thanks to support from the James Rennie Bequest, to present a poster on my ongoing PhD research titled: “Interspecific competition promotes biparental cooperation in the burying beetle *Nicrophorus vespilloides*”

Each day the conference was opened by plenary speakers who would share their research, personal experience in academia, and thoughts on the future of behavioural ecology – they were: Redouan Bshary (University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland), Jenny Tung (Duke University, USA), Yossi Yovel (Tel Aviv University, Israel), Mariella Herberstein (Macquarie University, Australia), and Toshitaka Suzuki (Kyoto University, Japan). In addition Hanna Kokko (University of Zurich, Switzerland) delivered the Hamilton Lecture on the final day to mark the end of the conference.

During the conference many talks (over were scheduled according to corresponding themes of interest (eg. parental care, cooperation, etc...), along with two poster sessions (one on the 30th July and another on the 1st August). Throughout these I was able to discuss and learn more about ongoing research relevant to my own PhD work (eg. parental care, cooperation), as well as develop a broader understanding on behavioural ecology work that falls outside of my own particular area of interest (eg. brood parasitism, animal personality). During the coffee and lunch breaks that followed it was possible to speak with people more directly, and in more detail, about their research, methods, and potential future plans.

While presenting my own poster I had the opportunity to meet and discuss my research with both early-career and senior academics, all of whom were able to offer valuable feedback and advice on my research aims, interests, and progress to date. I was able to address and

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elaborate on questions about my projects methodology and analysis, which was incredibly useful to me as I intend to write this project up for publication in the near future. Being able to talk through my findings with people who were previously unfamiliar with my work gave me a new perspective on how best to communicate my findings (both in academic and non-academic circles).

Having started my PhD in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (September 2020) has been a real struggle, and to date it has been difficult to properly network and engage with other researchers in my field. Being able to finally attend a large international conference, like the ISBE Congress, has been an incredibly important experience to develop my research profile and create meaningful connections with the behavioural ecology community. I'm very grateful to have attended this conference, and I am looking forward to attending and presenting more of my research in future ISBE meetings, including the ISBE Congress 2024 – which has been confirmed for Melbourne, Australia!