



13TH EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY MEETING

CONFERENCE REPORT

Scientists of various disciplines interested in evolutionary biology met at the 13th Evolutionary Biology Meeting in Marseilles on 22–27 September 2009. This is an annual congress (<http://sites.univ-provence.fr/evol-cgr/>) held since 1997, headed by Dr. PIERRE PONTAROTTI (Evolution Biologique et Modélisation, Université de Provence, Marseilles France). The aim of those meetings is to provide an opportunity for sharing results, thoughts and ideas and promote collaboration in evolutionary biology re-

search. The 2009 themes were: Comparative Genomic and Postgenomic, Concept and Modeling, Evolution of Complex Trait, Biodiversity and Systematics, and Environment and Biological Evolution. There were 58 oral presentations, 20 posters with fast presentation, and 22 posters. Four presentations focused on molluscs: Analysis of the Molecular Phylogeny and Venom Apparatus Occurrence in the Terebridae (MANDÈ HOLFORD et al., USA), Comparative Genomics and Transcriptomics Analysis for the Evol-



Fig. 1. Evolutionary biologists at the Calanques. Dr. PIERRE PONTAROTTI, first from the left (with a dog). Photo M. OZGO



Fig. 2. *Pomatias sulcatus* (Draparnaud, 1801), a unique inhabitant of the Calanques. Photo M. OŻGO

ution and Diversification of Molluscan Eye (ATSUSHI OGURA, Japan), Rapid Adaptation in Subdivided Populations of the Polymorphic Land Snail *Cepaea nemoralis* (MAŁGORZATA OŻGO, Poland), and Comparative Mitochondrial Genomics of Freshwater Mussels (Bivalvia: Unionoida): Are Unassigned Regions Responsible for Developmental Control of the Doubly Uniparental Inheritance of Mitochondrial DNA? (DONALD T. STEWART et al., Canada). Other study systems included mammals (14 papers, including 4 on humans), plants (13 papers), fish (9 papers), insects (8 papers, including 4 on *Drosophila*), fungi (7 papers, including 4 on yeast), bacteria and cyanobacteria (7 papers), and birds (3 papers). Viruses, unicellular eukaryotes, acoels, flatworms, nematodes, pogonophores, and crustaceans were represented by one paper each. There were 9 papers devoted to gene and genome evolution, 9 to the evolution of proteins, 5 to mathematical modeling and computer simulations, and 4 to tumor research.

Most presentations were very interesting and attending the sessions was well worth it. However, the vicinity of the National Park of Camargue turned out to be irresistible to some participants who decided to

skip a few presentations and have a look at the amazing landscapes and wildlife there, including land snail fauna, doubtlessly products of biological evolution.

At the conference, there were participants from 28 countries, which made the meeting truly international. It was not however one of those big congresses; the list of participants included just 107 persons, so very quickly we knew each other's faces, and as the conference progressed, also each other's areas of interest, achievements and research projects. The organizers realized that the time outside the sessions is most conducive to the integration of scientific community, and that best way to integrate is to meet at a table or on a trip. The conference itinerary included lunches and a cocktail party at the meeting center, two dinners at lovely typically South French restaurants, a day devoted to visiting the old town of Marseilles, and a day of visiting Calanques, picturesque canyon-like river valleys created by the erosion of the limestone. On this trip, there was an opportunity to take a swim in the Mediterranean, and some evolutionary biologists brought their snorkeling gear to make the most of this opportunity. It makes you wonder how the organizers managed to include all those fantastic events in a reasonable conference fee. Anyway, it worked. The atmosphere was very friendly and relaxed, which greatly facilitated the exchange of thoughts and ideas. The charming personality of Dr. PIERRE PONTAROTTI doubtlessly had a lot to do with it.

The 13th Evolutionary Biology Meeting was a really good, useful and nice scientific meeting. What is best, such meetings are held every year. If you asked me for advice, I'd say yes: if your work relates to evolutionary biology do consider discussing your results in the unforgettable atmosphere of Southern France.

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