

First Overseas Conference Travel Fund Report

César A. Cárdenas
(Victoria University of Wellington)

9th World Sponge Conference, November 3rd-8th 2013 Fremantle, Western Australia

Attending to the 9th World Sponge Conference in WA last year was a great experience. The World Sponge Conference is held every 3-4 years, this time it congregated more than 200 international scientists studying different aspects of sponge research. The conference focused on new frontiers in sponge science and we heard about interesting new developments in themes of ecology, symbiosis, evolution, taxonomy and biotechnology.

As a PhD student nearing the completion of my thesis, this conference was an excellent opportunity to show my research, which examines the interactions between sponges and macroalgae on shallow water rocky reefs of New Zealand. The attendance to this conference provided an invaluable opportunity to show results of my PhD research to an international audience of scientists working on sponges. My talk was entitled “Positive effects of canopy forming kelp on sponge assemblages through habitat modification” and also I presented a poster entitled “Influence of environmental variation on symbiotic microbial communities of two temperate sponges”.

I received very good feedback about my work from other colleagues. All the feedback received during the conference helped me to improve the final version of the final thesis document. The organizing committee also gave me the opportunity to chair one of the Ecology Sessions, which was also a great experience.

I greatly thank the NZMSS for funding my travel to Australia and so giving me this excellent opportunity to participate in this important international conference.

César A. Cárdenas
PhD Candidate in Marine Biology
Victoria University of Wellington