

Hua Zha (University of Auckland)

18th International Conference on Diseases of Fish and Shellfish

Belfast, United Kingdom 4-7 September 2017

I was very fortunate to be awarded the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society First Overseas Conference Travel Award in 2017. The funding allowed me to present an oral presentation “Damage to disaster: Cause and effect of tail fan necrosis in lobsters” at the 18th International Conference on Diseases of Fish and Shellfish in Belfast, United Kingdom.

This international conference happens every other year and is at forefront of diseases of fish and shellfish, which makes it so worthwhile for me to have attended as a young researcher. The conference brought together over 300 scientists, policy makers and industry professionals to discuss different diseases on shellfish and fish. During the week, there were around 200 oral presentations on 24 topics and over 200 posters. I relished the opportunity to attend most of the presented topics as well as to interact with other researchers during the poster sessions. I particularly enjoyed the oral presentation by Dr Edmund Peeler “Reporting and management of emerging aquatic animal diseases - a review”, as well as Dr Pantelis Katharios’s oral presentation “Epitheliocystis disease in Greece is caused by a wide variety of unrelated bacteria”.

I acquired a great amount of knowledge from the oral and poster presentation. Furthermore, as I enter the later stage of my PhD at the University of Auckland it was very helpful to present a talk on part of my research which is still in progress and receive positive comments and feedback. Importantly, attendance at this conference also provided invaluable networking with many excellent scientists and gave me the opportunity to discuss possible postdoctoral opportunities and future collaborations. I left the conference enthusiastic and inspired.

I would like to thank the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society once again for giving me such a good opportunity to attend and present at my first overseas conference. Without their generous support, this unforgettable experience would not have been possible.