

## **First Overseas Conference Travel Fund report**

European Marine Biology Symposium (EMBS45) | Dublin, Ireland | 25-29 August 2019

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I would like to sincerely thank the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society for awarding me the First Overseas Conference Travel Fund. This award has given me the opportunity to present my PhD research at an international conference, an invaluable experience at this stage of my PhD. I attended the 54th European Marine Biology Symposium (EMBS) in Dublin, followed by a research visit to the Tvärminne zoological station (University of Helsinki) in Finland.

The EMBS conference provided a great opportunity to communicate our research in New Zealand to a wider audience in Europe (and beyond) and for me to learn more about the work that is conducted there. I was pleased to be given the opportunity to present my research in an oral presentation as part of the 'Blue growth' session of the conference. This session was focussed on the potential for marine organisms to underpin economic and societal benefits and the sustainable growth of aquaculture, tourism, biotechnology and ocean energy sectors. My work on the ecological mechanisms that underpin ecosystem service bundles provided by shellfish fitted well within this session, linking the ecology to the services that are supplied by shellfish in coastal and estuarine systems. The presentation was well received and resulted in some engaging conversations about the topic afterwards.

The conference was very well organised and as they prioritised to not have any parallel sessions, I was able to attend all presentations during the conference. The sessions of the conference were highly relevant to my work and to the work we do in New Zealand. The other sessions focused on 'Rapid change', 'Movement and redistribution of species', and 'Fundamental biological traits', covering a range of topics focussed on fish distribution, invasive species, functional traits, and environmental stressors including climate change, ocean acidification, etc. in a variety of places in the world, from polar regions to the Mediterranean. Prior to each session, plenary presentations were held by experts on each of the topics, which were incredibly insightful and provided a nice introduction for the session to come. The conference organisers also arranged a number of social events capturing the Irish culture. These included the annual 'yellow submarine' contest, where our New Zealand team came second place, a conference dinner at the Trinity college dining hall, followed by a traditional Irish dance class, and finally a kayaking tour in Dublin bay. Overall, the conference was a great experience!

After the EMBS conference, I went to the Tvärminne zoological station in Finland, for a 5 day research visit hosted by Alf and Joanna Norkko. Their research group has collaborated a number of times with our groups in New Zealand, as they work on nutrient cycling and soft sediment processes in the Baltic sea. It was great to connect with them and their work group and seeing some of the work they do in the Baltic. They hosted a seminar series for us to present our work, which was an excellent chance to share with them some of our work, which was received with great interest.

I would like to thank the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society once more, as this conference and research visit would not have been possible without their support. This was an invaluable opportunity furthering my scientific career and making connections that will be of great benefit for possible future collaborations.