

First Overseas Conference Travel Fund Report

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Stefan Spreitzenbarth, PhD candidate, Marine Science, University of Auckland

The New Zealand Marine Sciences Society First Overseas Conference Travel Fund enabled me to present the results of two experiments from my PhD research at Aquaculture Europe (AE), the biggest aquaculture conference in Europe. Aside from presenting my research, it provided me with the opportunity to get direct feedback from other researchers in my area of research and build valuable connections for potential research collaborations in the near future.

The AE19 conference had 56 sessions representing a multitude of different research areas with up to 10 sessions being run parallel. Participants came from a variety of sectors, including science and industry. For me this was fantastic exposure to a wider range of current research activity that is beyond the specific area of my PhD research. This was extremely valuable in terms of providing a clear sense of the specific areas of research that are currently drawing attention and funding, and in turn where post-doctoral opportunities may lie for me to work towards.

I was given the chance to do an oral presentation on my PhD research with the title “Artificial world – new insights on octopus egg rearing and larval feeding behaviour” within the “Hatchery Technologies and Practices” session. The feedback and comments that I received after my presentation were constructive and positive which gave me new insights and provided some novel ideas for directing my research going forward. Other sessions that I enjoyed in particular were “Aquaponics & IMTA” and “Shrimp” sessions due to my previous work in these areas.

After the conference, I went to Porto, Portugal for a five days for a research visit with Dr Manuel Nande who is working at the Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research of the University of Porto (CIIMAR). Following this, I went to Barcelona, Spain for another three days to visit Prof Roger Villanueva at the Institut de Ciències del Mar (CSIC). Both are working with octopus paralarvae, some of the small group of researchers like myself working in this area. It was great to meet both of them and exchange ideas, views and talk about current and past problems around octopus aquaculture. They have both offered to collaborate on further research, which I am currently following up on.

I would like to thank the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society for giving me the opportunity to present my work in Berlin which also allowed me to connect with researchers within and outside my research area. Overall, I feel like the trip was enormously valuable for my professional development as an early career scientist, with a desire to develop a strong international network of research collaborations.