

Symposium on the Intra-specific Diversity of Animals, France 25 - 27 June 2010  
The Fitfish Workshop on the Swimming physiology of fish, Spain July 2-3 2010  
The International Conference on the Biology of Fish (ICBF) Spain. June-July 2010.  
Denham Cook (University of Auckland)

With thanks to the NZMSS First overseas conference travel award I was able to attend three conferences throughout Europe over the period June-July 2010. Firstly, the Society of Experimental Biology's symposium on the Intra-specific Diversity of Animals was attended in Sete, France. The meeting progressed from presentations on the Genetic basis of variation to work on the physiology and the behaviour of the whole animal. The small scale of the symposia combined with the presenters involved made the event one to remember with Sete providing a fantastic setting for the meeting. Over the duration of my stay in France, the success of Frances football team in the World Cup was not worthy of mention. However, it was time to head off to Spain (World Cup favourites!) for two further meetings.

In Spain, I attended the Fitfish Workshop on the Swimming physiology of fish. The content and calibre of invited speakers at the workshop was high class with subject material ranging from the migrations of eels and salmonids in the wild, to robustness and 'fitness' characteristics of fish. The presentation of a technical/methods poster at the workshop arose surprising levels of interest and provided the basis for some very good discussions and shared expertise. The closing of the workshop discussed (i) how incorporating a capacity for swimming in a fish aquaculture setting may/or may not benefit the industry, and (ii) how such a capacity could be introduced. Most interestingly, knowledge gaps in the area of fish swimming and its relevance to aquaculture were discussed and directions of future research identified. By this stage of the conference trail, Spain was doing very well in the World Cup having just won their quarter final match against Paraguay, leading an interesting final week of my conference stay.

The International Conference on the Biology of Fish (ICBF) held by the Physiology section of the American Fisheries Society was the final conference attended, again in Barcelona. This conference was by far the largest attended and presented a fantastic array of physiological research. Plenary presentations provided a fantastic overview of some very interesting, and fast moving areas of research, while conference sessions provided a thorough overview of wide ranging and topical research areas. An oral presentation within the 'Climate change – bad news for fish' went well with insightful questions, remarks and latter discussions. During the conference, Spain won their semi-final game against Germany, disappointing fellow German attendees but making for a lively atmosphere and some fantastic street parties for the rest of the week leading to the big final.

Collectively, with relevance to my own interests and research, these conferences provide a fantastic insight into how physiological characteristics within (and between) species will influence the response of fish to expected climate shifts. This is hoped to be applied within the

marine, and New Zealand context. However, with much disappointment (perhaps as a result of poor planning?!), I was flying back to New Zealand when Spain was facing off against the Netherlands in the World Cup final. So, unfortunately I cannot report on the jubilation of Barcelona as Spain won. However, with much gratitude I thank the NZMSS as well as other funding bodies for enabling me attend these conferences, which without their support, my attendance would not have been possible.