

SICB Newsletter



Volume Spring 2006

Division of Animal Behavior (DAB): 2006 Spring Newsletter

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Message from the Chair

Scott MacDougall–Shackleton

I hope everyone had a great time in Orlando. It is great to see the Society thriving with so many excellent symposia and presentations in a range of disciplines including Animal Behavior.

This will be my last year as chair and I have enjoyed working with the other DAB executive members and becoming more involved in the Society. I plan to continue being active in the division in whatever capacity I can.

I encourage members to think ahead about planning symposia. The deadline will be in late summer and we want your ideas! Organizing a symposium is a great way to meet others in your field, develop ideas and highlight recent progress – and there is the opportunity for publication in Integrative and Comparative Biology, now published through Oxford University Press.

We need to elect a new chair and secretary this year and have a great slate of nominees. Thanks to all for running. Don't forget to vote!

Scott

Message from the Program Officer

Sarah Humfeld

As your newest program officer, I was very pleased to meet many of you in Orlando and hear your comments about the meeting. I received generally positive feedback about the schedule and the session arrangement. However, in the coming weeks and months, please feel free to contact me with your suggestions and comments for how we can improve future meetings. I welcome your feedback!

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all of you to submit ideas for future symposia. We will be co-sponsoring a symposium at the 2007 meeting in Phoenix entitled "Ecological dimorphisms in vertebrates: proximate and ultimate causes." Please email your ideas to me regarding new and emerging areas of animal behavior that should be addressed in a symposium format. Your suggestion will not be automatically treated as an offer to organize a symposium, but I would like to get our collective creative juices flowing. I would like to challenge the members of DAB to propose at least two symposium topics for the 2008 meeting in San Antonio, TX! Now is a good time to start brainstorming; the proposal due date is later this summer. Sarah

Message from the Secretary

Tom Hahn

I've been on sabbatical this autumn and winter, doing field work in Wyoming and Oregon, so I missed the Orlando meeting. I heard it was terrific, as usual, however.

I know you've heard a lot about symposia from Scott and Sarah already, but I would like to emphasize that the types of symposia that SICB sponsors are really unique among societies in the extent to which they bridge disciplines. Interdisciplinary research is, after all, a key element of integrative biology. Animal Behavior lies at the interfaces between many of the divisions represented in our society, so the DAB has a pivotal role to play in this important process of planning and sponsoring symposia. Organizing symposia is a great way for you to contribute to the society, to further research in areas that are important to you, and to establish contacts with a network of scientists who share your interests. Take a look at the website calling for symposia for the 2008 meeting in San Antonio: <http://www.sicb.org/meetings/2008/index.php3>. The deadline for the San Antonio meeting symposium proposals is 19 August 2006. Contact any of us if you want more information.

As noted by Scott, we are having elections for both Chair and Secretary this year. The bios / information blurbs for the two candidates for each of these positions appear below. Please take a look at them and vote via the SICB website. And while we're on the subject of divisional officers...if you haven't thought about it before, consider running for one of the officer positions in the future. The health of the division depends on active involvement of the membership, and serving as a divisional officer is a great way to serve both the division and the society. You also can help the division in less demanding ways, like by volunteering to help judge student posters and talks at the meetings (postdocs as well as faculty are encouraged to help with that...contact Sarah before the next meeting if you're interested), and by simply attending the division business meeting / social at the annual SICB meeting.

Just a couple of other things: First, it's important to keep your personal information up to date on the SICB website, so if you haven't checked your personal information for accuracy lately, I encourage you to do that. Second, if you have any good photographs of study organisms that you think would look good on the DAB website, please email digital versions of them to me along

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with identity (in case we don't know what it is) and a brief (a couple of sentences) description of what is interesting about its behavior.

I'm looking forward to the 2007 meeting in Phoenix. January in the Sonoran desert is delightful, so I hope to see you all there.

Tom

DAB Election Candidates

Candidates for Secretary

Scott A. MacDougall–Shackleton

Current Position: Associate Professor, Departments of Psychology and Biology, University of Western Ontario

Education: B.Sc. (Biology), Queen's University, 1990; M.Sc. (Biology), Queen's University, 1991; M.A. (Psychology), Johns Hopkins University, 1994; Ph.D. (Psychology), Johns Hopkins University, 1997.

Professional Experience: 1991–92, Research Technician, Department of Biology, Queen's University; 1997–99, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Princeton University; 1999–2001, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Toronto; 2002–2005, Assistant Professor, University of Western Ontario, 2005–current, Associate Professor, University of Western Ontario

SICB Activities: Chair of DAB, 2004–2007

Other Memberships: Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology, Animal Behavior Society

Research Interests: Physiology and behavior; evolution of perceptual, neural and endocrine mechanisms of behaviour; neural and endocrine integration of environmental information; sex differences in brain and behavior; seasonal changes in brain and behavior. My research addresses the interaction between neural, endocrine, and perceptual mechanisms and the evolution of animal behavior. Specifically I am interested in how songbirds integrate environmental information –such as seasonal changes in photoperiod or the courtship song of a mate– and use this information to organize their behaviour in an adaptive way. Thus, I am interested in topics such as i) how birds learn and perceive environmental cues (e.g. birdsong), ii) how these cues are processed by the brain, and how the brain then mediates changes in behavior and/or reproductive physiology, and iii) how these neural and endocrine mechanisms have been shaped by natural and sexual selection to result in adaptive behaviour.

Goals Statement: Over the last 17 years I have participated in a variety of societies and conferences dealing with animal behavior, ranging from behavioral ecology to neuroscience and psychological societies. One of the greatest strengths of animal behavior research is that it touches on all areas of the life sciences. Because behavior is best studied from an integrative perspective, I believe the best home for animal behavior researchers is in the SICB. I have enjoyed serving as chair of DAB and will work to ensure a smooth transition for the upcoming chair–elect. I plan to continue participating in the Division and would be pleased to do so as Secretary.

Website for additional information: <http://publish.uwo.ca/~smacdou2>

Allison M. Welch

Current Position: Research Associate and Adjunct Faculty, College of Charleston, SC

Education: B.S., Biology, Truman State University, 1993; Ph.D., Biological Sciences, University of Missouri–Columbia, 2000.

Professional Experience: 1994–2000, Ph.D. student, University of Missouri–Columbia; 2000–2005, Postdoctoral Fellow, Seeding Postdoctoral Innovators in Research and Education, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill; 2005–current, Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Missouri–Columbia; 2005–current, Research Associate and Adjunct Faculty, College of Charleston.

SICB Activities: Meeting Participant, Division of Animal Behavior and Division of Ecology and Evolution

Other Memberships: Animal Behavior Society, Society for the Study of Evolution, American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists

Research Interests: Behavioral ecology and evolutionary biology: evolution of mating preferences and sexual displays, genetic benefits of mate choice and context–dependent sexual selection, quantitative and ecological genetics of amphibians

Goals Statement: If elected secretary of DAB, my goals will include strengthening communication and ties with other SICB divisions and with other animal behavior societies. I will work to support integrative animal behavior as a focal area within our society by promoting the participation of members of other divisions in DAB scientific and social activities and by encouraging a wide range of SICB members to consider organizing DAB–sponsored or –cosponsored symposia. I would also like to work with other societies to raise awareness among their membership of the opportunities for animal behavior researchers within SICB, including student opportunities, symposia, and an excellent venue for integrative animal behavior.

Website for additional information: <http://www.cofc.edu/~welcha/>

Candidates for Chair

Thomas P. Hahn

Current Position: Associate Professor, Section of Neurobiology, Physiology and Behavior, University of California Davis.

Education: BS (1984) Biological Sciences, Stanford University; MS (1985) Biological Sciences, Stanford University; PhD (1993) Zoology, University of Washington.

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Professional Experience: 1993–94: Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Psychology, Johns Hopkins University; 1996–2000: Assistant Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Princeton University; 2000–2001: Assistant Professor, Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska, Fairbanks; 2001–present: Assistant and Associate Professor, Section of Neurobiology, Physiology and Behavior, University of California Davis.

SICB Activities: Secretary, Division of Animal Behavior, 2003–2006; regular meeting attendee and presenter since 1987; student paper judge in divisions of Animal Behavior and Comparative Endocrinology.

Other memberships: Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology, Society for Neuroscience, Animal Behavior Society.

Research Interests: Effects of the environment on animal behavior and physiology. Focus on regulation of avian reproductive behavior and physiology by environmental factors such as day length, food, and social factors, and on behavioral and physiological responses to unpredictable environmental events.

Goals Statement: SICB is the one society I know of that really focuses on what most interests me in biology. The emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches to complex problems, the broad representation of research on different taxonomic groups, the high value placed on student participation, and the interest in broader education of the general public in scientific matters all mesh well with my own priorities. Animal Behavior has fundamental ties to all of the other divisions in the society. If elected chair I would work to maintain the current momentum of increased member involvement in the DAB, redouble our efforts to increase involvement in the division especially by encouraging members of other societies such as ABS to consider attending SICB if they don't regularly do so already, to boost the division's involvement in sponsoring multidisciplinary symposia at the society meetings, and to build our communication to the general public through a non-scientist-friendly website.

Website for further information: <http://www.npb.ucdavis.edu/npbdirectory/hahn.html>

Keith W. Sockman

Current Position: Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

Education: B.A. (Biology), Occidental College, Los Angeles, 1990; M.A. (Biology), San Diego State University, 1996; Ph.D. (Zoology), Washington State University, Pullman, 2000

Professional Experience: 1993–1996, Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Biology, San Diego State University; 1997–2000, Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Zoology, Washington State University; 2001–2004, NIH Individual–NRSA Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, Johns Hopkins University

SICB Activities: Divisions of Animal Behavior and Comparative Endocrinology; Meeting Participant and Presenter, 9 of past 10 years; Student Presentation Judge

Research Interests: Ecological Neuroethology. I study the ultimate and proximate factors governing flexibility in reproductive decisions, using free-living and laboratory-housed birds. Recently, I have been applying neurohistochemical techniques to investigate how environmental and social experience affect such reproductive decisions as mate choice and the seasonal timing of breeding. I address findings in terms of their functional and adaptive significance. In this way, I integrate mechanistic with adaptive explanations to investigate trade-offs in reproductive decisions.

Goals Statement: I attended and presented at my first SICB meeting in 1996 as a graduate student and have continued attending and presenting at SICB meetings nearly every year since. Initially, I was drawn to the meeting by the strong student support and the many investigators taking comparative and integrative approaches. To me, one of the best ways to study animal behavior is in an integrative context, where the organism's evolutionary history, its natural environment, and its underlying physiological mechanisms are all considered simultaneously. For example, one of the most exciting areas of research in Animal Behavior is in the neurobiological regulation of natural, ecologically relevant behaviors. SICB's multi-division organization offers a good opportunity for interactions with members who are also highly integrative in their research but who focus on other aspects of organismal biology. As chair, I would try to strengthen those interactions and the role the Division of Animal Behavior plays in the Society by working toward greater membership and prominence of annual symposia.

Website for additional information: <http://www.bio.unc.edu/faculty/sockman/>