

Division of Vertebrate Morphology

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DVM Officers & Representatives

Callum Ross
Chair 2015-2017

John Hutchinson
Chair-Elect 2015-2017

Alice Gibb
Past-Chair 2015-2017

Casey Holliday
Secretary 2014-2016

Andrew Clark
Secretary-Elect 2015-2016

Manny Azizi
Program Officer 2014-2015

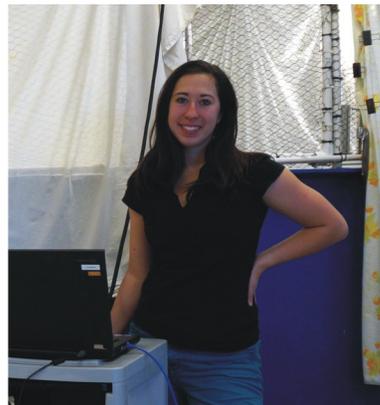
Morgan Burnette
Student/Postdoc Affairs 2014-2017

Message from the Chair

Callum Ross, Chair.DVM@sicb.org

Greetings from Chicago, DVMers! I presume (and hope) it is warmer where you are. The West Palm Beach meeting was a great success. With more than 400 abstracts by DVM members we definitely had a strong presence. Let's keep the momentum going in Portland!

The DVM podium presentations and posters were of very high quality. I was especially impressed with the student submissions for the Liem and Davis awards, which were excellent. Please join me in congratulating the two winners. Glenna Clifton received the Karel F. Liem Poster Presentation award for her poster entitled "Hindlimb muscle anatomy of foot-propelled swimming birds." Sarah Longo won the Dwight D. Davis Oral Presentation award for her podium presentation entitled "Novel suction feeding kinematics results in an unusual form of prey capture in syngnathiform fishes." Congratulations!



Top: Liem presentation winner Glenna Clifton. Bottom: Davis Presentation winner Sarah Longo.

The program committee worked hard on the Program and thanks are due to Rita Mehta for serving as our Program Officer for the last two years. It's a tough job that she did with good humor. We welcome Manny Azizi to that role and look forward to his work on the Program Committee.



As your new Chair, I want to thank Alice Gibb for serving as Chair for the last two years. Under her leadership, DVM continued to grow in size and in presence at SICB. Special thanks are due to Alice for creating the Division of Vertebrate Morphology Group on Facebook. If you have not yet joined the Group, please do so! Members regularly post links to conferences, including Regional DVM meetings,

postdoctoral positions (4 posted in February), software tools, books, and images. This is a great way for us to keep our DVM network connected. "Like it" on your own home pages and link to it from your lab websites!

Also, please take a few minutes to update your profile on the SICB home page. As the public face of SICB, it is important that the information there is up to date and accurate.



Looking to the future, the DVM Executive Committee, including past, present and future Chairs, believes it is important that DVM builds its financial resources so that we can do more. With that in mind, at the Annual Meeting of the Division in West Palm Beach we voted to reinstate our annual fee for DVM membership. Our first target is to build up the value of the Davis Fund. It is currently valued at \$15K. SICB requested that all Divisions build their Funds to a self-supporting \$25K, which would then yield approximately \$1,000 per year in perpetuity. However, we can reach that target more quickly if all DVM members donate at least \$10 to the Davis Award Fund. Please take some time to make a donation on the SICB website. Most of us donate when we submit our SICB dues, and I encourage you to keep doing that. However, if we all contribute one more time during the year, we can build up our funds more quickly. Once this fund reaches the \$25K point, any additional money becomes available for supporting DVM activities. We can decide as a Division how that money would be spent, but the low hanging fruit is funding of Regional DVM Meetings. These are great venues for local networking and for students (and faculty) to practice presentation skills and get feedback in a small setting. I believe that these are important and would like to see our support for these grow.

Donate to the Davis Fund at: <https://ssl4.west-server.net/birenheide/sicbcart/donations.php>

Portland is gearing up to be a great meeting. We are planning to hold the DVM/DCB Social in Portland off site. We can get more bang for our buck outside of the hotel venue, enabling us to convert the dessert social into a buffet meal and dance party. Melina Hale, Chair of the Division of Comparative Biomechanics, and I are looking for volunteers to work on the organization of this social. We need someone to scout out venues in Portland, look at possible food options, and arrange music. Please contact me or Melina to volunteer.

Ok, enough from me. Feel free to email me with ideas and suggestions. The Executive Committee welcomes feedback and ideas for the DVM of the future. Start thinking about Symposium Proposals for 2017 and your presentations for Portland in 2016! See you on Facebook.

Message from the Program Officer

Manny Azizi, DPO.DVM@sicb.org

Thank you to everyone who worked to make the meeting in West Palm Beach a success. Specifically, I want to acknowledge the efforts of my predecessor Rita Mehta who served three years as DVM program officer. Rita was asked to serve an extra year in order to stagger the new incoming program officers from DVM and DCB. So the next time you run into Rita please thank her for her service and dedication to our division.

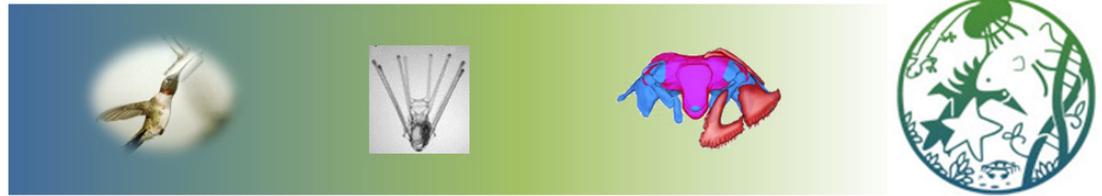
DVM participation was fantastic at the meeting, sponsoring (or co-sponsoring) 33 sessions based on more than 400 submitted abstracts. In addition, DVM sponsored (or co-sponsored) four successful and well-attended symposia. Most importantly the joint social with DVM, DPCB and DCB was a huge hit. Thanks all for showing up and partaking in wonderful desserts!

One concerning issue was the drop in the number of students participating in the Dwight D. Davis best student oral presentation competition. Many students did not comply with the new requirement of a two-page extended abstract. We hope that this upcoming year a larger proportion of our students (and their mentors) are familiar with the new requirements and participation will come back up. Our goal will be to place all of the participants in a dedicated session to showcase the amazing work of our graduate students.

We also had a fairly steep decline in the number of participants choosing the 5-minute lightning talk format. We would like to continue providing this option to those interested in presenting preliminary data or new ideas. If interest in lightning talks continues to wane, we may want to consider eliminating the option.

As spring approaches it is time to start thinking about next year's meeting in Portland, Oregon (January 3-7, 2016). I've already heard some rave reviews about the venue so I encourage everyone to participate in what is sure to be a fun meeting. DVM will be sponsoring (or co-sponsoring) three exciting symposia:

- 1. Building an Extravagant Toolbox: The Morphological Diversity of Intromittent Organs** Organizers: Branden Moore and Diane Kelly
- 2. A bigger picture: Organismal function at the nexus of development, ecology, and evolution** Organizers: Sharlene E. Santana and Paul Gignac



3. Life on the edge: the biology of organisms inhabiting extreme environments Organizers: Annie Lindgren

Please keep in mind that symposium proposals for the New Orleans (2017) meeting are due August 24, 2015. I encourage you to think broadly about your topics as no less than two and often more than three divisions supported each successful symposium proposal in the last three meetings.

Message from the Secretary

Casey M. Holliday, Secretary.DVM@sicb.org

Thanks to everyone for such a great turnout at the DVM Business Meeting in West Palm Beach. We have such an enthusiastic bunch. The West Palm Beach meeting was gorgeous: critter cams, linkage models, fish tacos, wildlife, you name it. As usual, DVM talks were integral to making the meeting a success. All of you looking to support DVM's mission and outreach, please be sure send me information and photos to upload to the DVM Researcher's Database.

This spring election, there will be two revisions to the bylaws to vote upon included along with the election ballot later this Spring. These changes will include 1) Modifications to our annual DVM dues language releasing the executive committee to implement dues collections and 2) Striking specific language for the application and review of best student prizes. We found that specific bylaws language hampered the rapidly evolving nature of how we evaluate nominees for the Liem and Davis awards. Instead, specific guidelines will be found in the SICB Awards pages where small changes will not require bylaw changes.

In addition, we need to elect a Program Officer-Elect this spring to work with and ultimately replace Manny Azizi. Thanks to those who participated as the nominating committee! We have three outstanding candidates for each position. Their candidate profiles follow the bylaw changes. Please vote in the upcoming election!

[Minutes of the 2015 DVM Business Meeting](#)

Amendments to by-laws

The following are proposed amendments to the DVM Bylaws.

DVM Bylaws (Old language is ~~strikethrough~~, new language is **Bold Underline**)

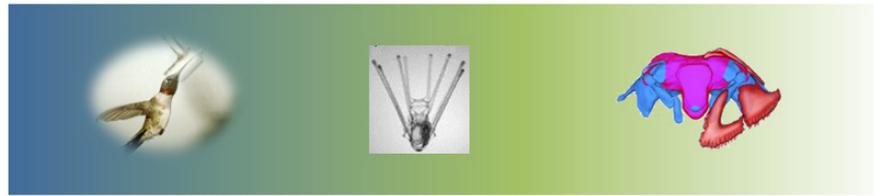
Article XV. Finances

The expenses of the Division shall be paid from the treasury of the Society and in any year may not exceed the sum allotted to the Division. The Chair shall authorize all disbursements and coordinate financial procedures with the SICB Business Manager. All members of the Division of Vertebrate Morphology will be assessed an annual fee in addition to SICB dues to be used to pay divisional expenses above and beyond those covered by the SICB budget allotment, including support for regional meetings, divisional functions at the SICB annual meeting, and other activities, as determined by the Chair in consultation with the Divisional Executive Committee. The amount of the assessment will be determined by the DVM Executive Committee, ~~and shall range from 0\$ to \$5 per member per year.~~ Assessment funds will accrue across years, be managed through the management company, and disbursed with the authorization of the Chair, in consultation with the Divisional Executive Committee. The Chair shall coordinate disbursements and financial procedures with the Executive Director of the Society.

Article XVII. Best Student Presentation Awards
1. The rules governing participating in the D. Dwight Davis and Karel F. Liem Best Student Paper Award Competitions shall be determined by the Division Executive Committee. Specific regulations and application details will be maintain on the SICB Award Information Page.

~~±~~**2.** D. Dwight Davis Award for Best Student Paper Presentation: An award may be given for an outstanding paper presented by a student (or by a new Ph.D. who received the degree no more than 12 months before the meeting at which the paper is presented). The award is made only on the unanimous decision of a committee of at least three members, appointed before the meeting by the Chair of the Division. The **General** guidelines for the award are as follows:

a. Each student shall be allowed to compete for the D. Dwight Davis Award an unlimited number of times however a student may only win the award once.



b. The work must be original, must have been carried out by the competing student, and the student must be the first author. Co-authored papers may be entered into the competition, but the student must describe explicitly the contributions of all of the co-authors as part of the presentation. Failure to make the contributions of all listed co-authors clear may be grounds for disqualification.

c. Each student will submit a two page extended abstract to be reviewed by the DVM program officer and appointed reviewers. These extended abstracts will be an opportunity for the students to share more aspects of their research and will not be published. Students with the top selected extended abstracts will then present their work in a platform session devoted to Davis Award participants. We will ask for a short form version of these abstracts to be included in the final program.

d. The intention of the award is to recognize significant conceptual, observational, and experimental contributions to the field of vertebrate morphology. These shall be the major criteria for selection. Only outstanding work is to be recognized.

e. Acceptable standards of visual aids and oral presentation shall be required for consideration. Spectacular presentation techniques shall not by themselves qualify a paper.

32. Karel F. Liem Award for Best Student Poster Presentation. An award may be given for an outstanding poster presentation given by a student (or a new Ph.D. who received the degree no more than 12 months before the meeting at which the paper is presented). In addition, a certificate will be given as well as an appropriate gift to reflect Vertebrate Morphology. The work must be original, and must have been carried out by the student or students. The award is made only on the unanimous decision of a committee of three appointed before the meeting by the Chair of the Division. The guidelines for the award are as follows:

a. The intention of the award is to recognize significant conceptual, observational, and experimental contributions to the field of vertebrate morphology. These shall be the major criteria for selection. Only outstanding work is to be recognized.

b. Acceptable standards of visual presentation techniques shall not by themselves qualify a poster.

Candidate Profiles

Program Officer-Elect

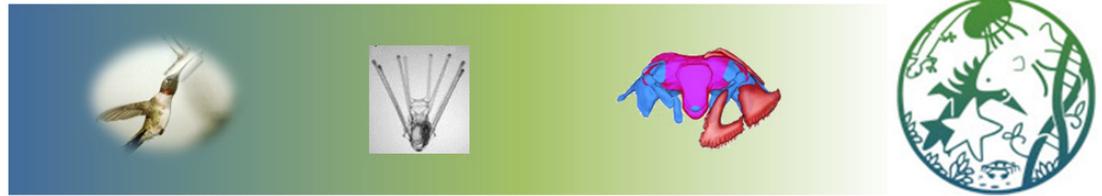
Dave Ellerby



Current Positions: Associate Professor of Biology, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA; Visiting Associate Professor of Engineering, Brown University, Providence, RI.

Education/Training: B.Sc. Biology, University of Manchester (1997); Ph.D. Biomechanics, University of Leeds (2001); Postdocs, Northeastern University (2001-2003), University of Leeds (2003-2005).

Research Interests: Childhood dissections of road kill on the kitchen table revealed an early interest in anatomy, or psychopathy, although these things may not be mutually exclusive. My research is focused on the mechanical function of muscles during locomotion and the energetic costs of muscle activity. This has included work on muscle and cardiovascular function in swimming fish, avian running mechanics and energetics, and avian flight muscle performance. Current work in the lab is focused on variation in phenotype and locomotor performance within fish populations, and



quantification of swimming performance in the field. Although these may be bad things to admit in a DVM election statement, I also have interests in explosive dehiscence and ballistic seed dispersal in plants and the mechanical properties of invertebrate obliquely striated muscle.

SICB Activities: I've been a SICB/DVM member since 2000, and a regular contributor at the annual conference and regional DVM meetings. This is long enough to have lived through the four ages of SICB membership: nervous graduate student, grad student frantically networking to find a postdoc position, postdoc frantically networking to find another postdoc position, and faculty member hoping their students make it to the end of the meeting relatively unscathed. Apart from sporadic talk/poster judging and session chairing I've largely been a shirker of responsibility, until now.

Other Memberships/Activities: Society for Experimental Biology; International Society of Vertebrate Morphology; American Physiological Society; symposium organizer for ICVM and SEB meetings.

Goals: Grumbling about scheduling is a venerable SICB tradition. The number and quality of the presentations by DVM members, and the inevitable scheduling conflicts this creates, is however a clear indicator of the strength of our field. This strength stems from the continuing integration of classical morphological techniques with advances in imaging, modelling and molecular biology. As program officer my primary goal will be to organize sessions and promote symposia that reflect this integration, foster collaborations across disciplines, and are forward looking rather than retrospective. In doing so, I will work closely with program officers from other divisions. SICB has also seen innovation and experimentation in presentation formats and scheduling in recent years (lightning talks, student award sessions etc.). As program officer I will ensure that this openness to change is retained and guided by feedback from the membership.



Brooke Flammang



Current Position: Assistant Professor, Federated Department of Biological Sciences, New Jersey Institute of Technology/Rutgers University-Newark, Newark, NJ.

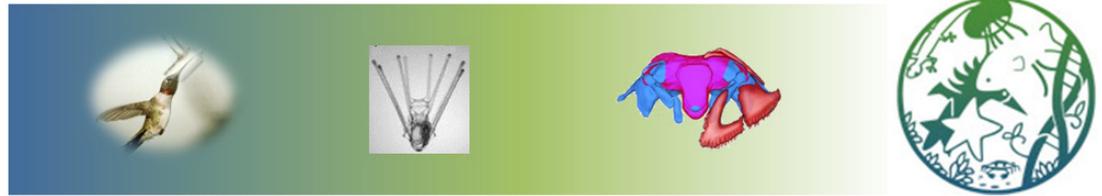
Education: B.S. Fairleigh Dickinson University (1998); M.S. Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, California State University – Monterey Bay (2005); Ph.D. Harvard University (2010); Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, Harvard University (2010-2014).

Professional Experience: Assistant Professor, NJIT (2014-), Research Associate, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University (2014-), Graduate Faculty, University of Rhode Island (2014-), Seminar Associate, Columbia University (2014-), Nationally Registered Paramedic (1999-2005).

SICB Activities: Member of SICB and the Division of Vertebrate Morphology since 2005. Member of Division of Comparative Biomechanics since its inception (2007). Judge of student poster competition at three meetings, student talks at one meeting. Organized symposium for 2011 meeting. Organizing first mid-Atlantic Regional DVM meeting for Fall 2015.

Other Memberships: International Society for Vertebrate Morphology; American Physiological Society; American Association of Anatomists; American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists; American Elasmobranch Society.

Research Interests: Functional morphology, comparative biomechanics, locomotion, and fluid dynamics of fishes.



Goals Statement: When I attended my first SICB meeting in 2005, I was inspired by the magnitude of sensational talks. Since that meeting, the program has yet to disappoint, with a wealth of incredible presentations from which to choose. As DVM Program Officer, I will encourage and recruit exciting, integrative, and cutting-edge symposia that highlight the great science this division has to offer. I look forward to organizing the contributions of our division members into sessions that will fill the meeting with many extraordinary talks and posters. I would be honored to serve as DVM PO and to help continue to make future SICB meetings an intellectually invigorating experience and strong international conference.

Natalia Taft



Current Position: Assistant Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Parkside

Education: 2009: PhD in Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, University of Massachusetts Amherst; 2002: BA, Barnard College, Columbia University

Professional Experience: Post-doctoral Research

Associate, University of Chicago 2009-2011; Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology, DePaul University Chicago 2011-2012.

Awards and Honors: D. Dwight Davis Award, 2009

SICB Activities: Session Chair, multiple years; Judge of Best Student Presentations in DVM: 2014, 2015.

Other Memberships: SICB is all I need

Research Interests: Evolution and functional morphology of fish fins with a focus on the material properties of fin rays in ray-finned fishes, and the fin-to-limb transition.

Goals: In my opinion, there has never been a better time to be a vertebrate morphologist. We are discovering new things every day with trusted techniques, even as advances in technology, imaging and better understanding of the evolution of our organisms rapidly expands our horizons. The Division of Vertebrate Morphology at SICB has always felt like home to me, and I am committed to making others feel as welcome and encouraged as I have throughout my career. I always come back from SICB full of new ideas and exciting collaboration opportunities from our amazing DVM sessions and symposia. We have had some truly fantastic groups of talks and symposia in recent years, and as Program Officer I would welcome the opportunity to help facilitate that growth. In this position, I would work hard with other Program Officers in DCB, DCPB, DNB and DEDB to design sessions with minimum conflict and maximum opportunities for exploration and collaboration on these exciting new frontiers. It would be an honor to be able to give a little back to the Division and Society that has given me so much.



From the Researchers Database: Research on Inuit dogs in Greenland (photo: Nadine Gerth), Matthias Starck