The Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology

SICB Newsletter

Spring 2010 Issue

Division of Animal Behavior

In this newsletter

DAB Officers & Representatives

Thomas Hahn
Chair 2007-2010

Jordanna D. Sprayberry
Secretary 2009-2012

Sarah Humfeld
Program Officer 2008-2011

Zachary R. Stahlschmidt
Student/Postdoc Representative 2008-2011

Diana K. Hews
ICB Editorial Board Representative 2008-2013

Message from the Officers

Best Student Presentations in Seattle 2010

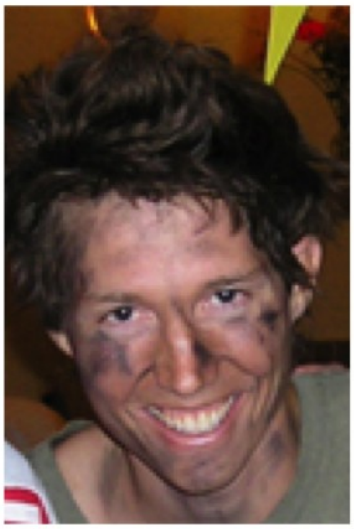
Once again we had an excellent meeting with a strong showing from DAB, with student research figuring prominently in our presentations. The best student presentation competition was a close call, with many excellent contributions.

Best Oral Presentation: Justin Henningsen, *Performance prevails over signal size during staged dominance encounters between male green anole lizards"*

Justin Henningsen

Justin received his B.S at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, AZ in 2006. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in Organismic and Evolutionary Biology at University of Massachusetts, Amherst with Dr. Duncan Irschick. Justin's research focuses on how behavior and performance interact to influence an animal's survival and reproductive success and how proximate mechanisms regulate these traits. His dissertation pursues how signals and performance affect fitness in green anole lizards.

Best Poster: Bret Pasch, *Androgens activate advertisement songs of Neotropical singing mice (Scotinomys)*



Bret Pasch

Bret received his B.S. with honors in Biology at Ursinus College, PA in 2001. He then moved to the University of Arizona to work with Dr. John Koprowski on the behavioral ecology of sky island tree squirrels and received his M.S. (Wildlife Science) in 2004. Bret has been a Ph.D. student in Dr. Steven Phelps' lab in the Department of Biology at the University of Florida since 2006. He is broadly interested in how ecology and geography shape social behavior and its mechanisms.

The Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology

SICB Newsletter

Spring 2010 Issue

Minutes of the Business Meeting

Jordanna Sprayberry opened this year's business meetings with some long-distance remarks from Tom Hahn, our chair-in-absentia. Richard Zimmer from NSF then spoke to the division about funding opportunities in NSF that are potentially relevant to DAB members. After Rich's informative session, we announced which symposia will be receiving support from DAB for the Salt-Lake City meeting in 2011 (see "Upcoming Meetings" below). We gently prodded our members about the importance of putting together symposia proposals, and provided an overview of how to complete that process.

The business meeting finished with thanking Tom Hahn for his years of dedicated service as chair of DAB, and welcoming our new chair, Marilyn Ramenofsky. Marilyn spoke with us about the society-wide Grand Challenges initiative.

Upcoming Meetings

The DAB has committed to support the following symposia for the 2011 meeting:

- I've Got Rhythm: Neuronal Mechanisms of Central Pattern Generators
- Neuroecology: Neural Determinants of Ecological Processes from Individuals to Ecosystems
- Environmentally-Cued Hatching Across Taxa: Embryos Choose A Birthday
- The Biomechanics and Behavior of Gliding Flight
- *Late Breaking*: Global Climate Change and Thermal Regulation

Symposia are a vital component of SICB meetings. DAB has hosted many excellent symposia and would like to continue this tradition. Now is the time to start thinking of proposals for the 2012 meeting in Charleston. The deadline for symposia proposals to the society is August 2010. If you have questions about how to put together a proposal, please contact Marilyn, Jordanna or Sarah. We look forward to hearing from you.

Division Business

Election season is upon us! This year we will be holding elections in the spring cycle. Sarah Humfeld will be finishing her stellar service as our program officer at the end of the Salt Lake City Meeting. Three new candidates have stepped forward: Nicole Perfito, Keith Sockman, and Allison Welch. Please read their bios below and be sure to vote!

Zach Stahlschmidt's tenure as our representative to the Student/ Post Doctoral Affairs Committee is coming to an end. As such we will be suggesting a new representative this fall for appointment to the Student/Postdoctoral Affairs Committee. Two members have submitted their name for consideration. If you would like to be considered for this position, please contact Marilyn or Jordanna.

Elections
Candidates for Program Officer

Nicole Perfito

Current Position: Postdoctoral Fellow, Max-Planck Institute for Ornithology, Radolfzell, Germany and Integrative Biology Dept., UC Berkeley, Berkeley, California

Education: B.S. Zoology/ B.A. Psychology, Univ. of Washington (1994), M.Sc. Psychology/Animal Behavior, Univ. of Washington

1998, Ph.D. Zoology, Univ. of Washington (2002)

Professional Experience: 1998-2002, Research Assistant, Zoology Dept., Univ. of Washington; 2003-2005 Post-Doctoral Associate, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology Dept., Princeton Univ., 2005-2008 Associate Research Specialist, Integrative Biology Depart., UC Berkeley, 2008-present Postdoctoral Associate, Max-Planck Institute for Ornithology and Visiting Scholar UC Berkeley

SICB Activities: Meeting Participant and Student Presentation Judge, Divisions of Animal Behavior and Comparative Endocrinology, Aubrey Gorbman Award for best student presentation 2002

Other Memberships: Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology

Research Interests: How do individuals perceive and integrate the multitude of signals in their environment to appropriately time reproduction? How does the perception of particularly relevant environmental information reverberate throughout the organism as physiological signals and behavior? My main research interest is to understand how organisms interpret information in their environment, and how this environmental information is integrated and translated by the brain into hormonal signals regulating reproductive behavior and the timing of reproduction. For any environmental signal to influence the reproductive axis, it must interact with the gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) system. This system acts, by way of gonadotropins, to activate the reproductive organs, sex steroid hormones and ultimately behavior. My research attempts to understand how this system is stimulated or inhibited by relevant environmental cues.

Goals Statement: My attendance at SICB meetings began early on in graduate school, and I have always appreciated the integrative nature of the society. Participants in the Animal Behavior Division in particular span diverse fields such as neurobiology, endocrinology, physiology and behavior. As division program officer I would foster this diversity in preparing annual meeting sessions to cover this wide breadth of scientific interests. I would also advocate for symposia taking a comparative approach to the study of behavior.

Keith W. Sockman

Current Position: Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, Curriculum in Neurobiology, 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; 2004-Current, Assistant Professor, Department of Biology (since 2004), Curriculum in Neurobiology (since 2008), University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

SICB Activities: Divisions of Animal Behavior and Comparative Endocrinology; Meeting Participant and Presenter, 12 of past 13 years; Student Presentation Judge several times

Research Interests: Reproductive Ecology, Behavior, and Neurobiology. I am a reproductive biologist and study the ultimate and proximate factors controlling flexibility in re-

productive decisions. Of particular interest is the study of courtship effort and mate-choice and how the songbird brain integrates the ecological and social information that adaptively guides these decisions. I am also interested in the ultimate and proximate control of the timing of reproduction, reproductive effort, and life-history trade-offs.

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 program officer, 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. I am also interested in strengthening the representation of neuroethological research in the Division of Animal Behavior.

Allison M. Welch

Current Position: Assistant Professor, Biology, College of Charleston

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

Professional Experience: Postdoctoral Fellow, Biology, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill (2000-2005); Postdoctoral Fellow, Biological Sciences, University of Missouri–Columbia (2005-2007); Research Associate/ Adjunct Faculty, Biology, College of Charleston (2005-2007); Visiting Assistant Professor, Biology, College of Charleston (2008).

SICB Activities: Student Support Committee, 2007-2009; Nominating Committee, 2009; Meeting Participant and Presenter (9 of the past 10 years); Member of Division of Animal Behavior and Division of Ecology and Evolution; DAB Student Presentation Judge several times

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

Research Interests: Behavioral ecology and evolutionary ecology of amphibians: evolution of mating preferences and sexual displays, genetic benefits of mate choice and context-dependent sexual selection, genetic variation in tolerance to environmental stressors.

Goals Statement: As Program Officer of DAB, I would work to promote integrative animal behavior as a focal area within our society. If elected, my goals will include facilitating excellent symposia and supporting strong links with other Divisions, as well as planning efficient, well-organized sessions. I will encourage symposia with a strong animal behavior focus, for example by working with young researchers to develop their symposium ideas and by working with other divisions to co-sponsor symposia that highlight the integrative nature of animal behavior research.