

Lecture 4.3 – Poster Presentations

Learning Objectives:

3.7 – Learn the most effective strategies for written and oral presentation of scientific ideas.

3.7.3 – Practice watching and understanding poster presentations.

What are Posters?

- Poster presentations are a common form of presentations at scientific conferences where there is not enough time for everyone to give a talk.
 - Researchers will prepare a poster that communicates their basic findings and pin it up in an exhibition hall the day before their session. This gives other attendees a chance to read their poster before the session.
 - There is then a session where researchers stand by their posters to give short presentations and answer questions people might have.
 - Many people (including me!) prefer to give poster presentations because of the conversations they invoke and the one-on-one nature of the interaction.

Poster Presentations: Components

- Poster presentations have two components: a poster (written) and a presentation (oral).
 - The poster itself consists of sections that are very similar to the scientific paper: usually a title and authors section, intro/background, materials & methods, results, conclusions, acknowledgements, and references.
 - It's typical to locate the results and conclusions centrally to draw the viewer in and materials and methods, acknowledgements, and references towards the periphery.
 - The oral part of the presentation is usually fairly simple: they walk their viewers through the poster, pointing out important pieces of background, hypotheses, results, and conclusions. Poster presenters often have a “short” version of their presentation for someone who only has two or three minutes before moving on, and then a “long” version that is about five minutes.

Poster Presentations: Construction Models

- What's the theory behind constructing posters? There are two “theories” behind constructing posters.
 - **Classic or “Old” model:** Posters should have everything on them that someone would need to know if you weren't there.

Pros:

- Understandable if you are not there
- Information rich

Cons:

- Very busy, too much going on
- Results and conclusions swamped out with other stuff
- Does not draw anyone in!

“Old” Model

Establishment of a research colony of Marmorkrebs, a parthenogenetic crayfish species

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Abstract

Marmorkrebs, or marbled crayfish, are recently discovered parthenogenetic crayfish. Its origins are unknown, but it has been introduced into natural ecosystems and could become a highly invasive pest species. Marmorkrebs have potential as a model organism for research in many biological fields because they are genetically uniform. A key element of most successful model organisms is maintaining self-sustaining breeding colonies. We report on our efforts to find the best conditions for establishing and maintaining a Marmorkrebs breeding colony for research. The colony was founded by four adults of unknown age (P generation). These founders were housed communally in standard aquaria and mainly fed vegetables (mostly peas), which were readily eaten. All adults generated multiple large batches of embryos, although three adults died over the course of a year. One daughter of the original adults (F₁ generation) had her own offspring (F₂ generation). The colony contained 14 descendants of the original adults after one year. The colony was later supplemented with additional 72 juveniles, which experienced 7% mortality in the first month in the colony. High juvenile mortality poses the most significant obstacle to establishing a research colony of Marmorkrebs, although relatively few adults would be needed to supply many viable embryos for developmental research.

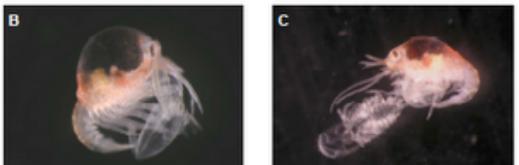


Figure 1. A. Adult Marmorkrebs in berry. Photo by Fabrice-Vipoux & Harzsch. B. C. Juvenile Marmorkrebs.

Introduction

Marmorkrebs are parthenogenetic crayfish (Scholtz et al. 2003) that appear to belong to the genus *Procambarus* (Vogt, 2008). All individuals are genetically identical females that reproduce without the need of males. Their origin is unknown, but they first came to attention in the mid 1990's by German hobbyists who kept crayfish as pets. Marmorkrebs are interesting because:

- They are genetically identical. This makes them highly desirable as lab animals to control for individual genetic variation.
- They have the potential to be invasive pests. They have been introduced in Madagascar and could pose a threat to endemic crayfish there (Jones et al., in press).
- Their origin is unknown. This poses an interesting evolutionary puzzle as to how this asexually reproducing species evolved.

The aim of this study was to determine optimum food and housing conditions to rear Marmorkrebs to reproductive age and establish a stable breeding colony.

Methods

Animals

Four adult Marmorkrebs were provided from the lab of Steffen Harzsch in September 2007. An additional 70 juveniles and two adults were purchased from a Canadian hobbyist in August 2008.

Housing

All animals used in experiments were housed in an AHAB 5-shelf medium stand-alone aquarium system (60" wide x 14" deep x 84" tall) (Aquatic Habitats) with recirculating aged tap water. This system included mechanical filtration (filter pads and filter cartridge), biological filtration (siphon and kaldness), and ultraviolet light disinfection. All experimental animals were kept in 3 litre tanks with lids and a baffle with a 750 µm screen protecting the outflow. Water flowing out of each tank was treated by passing through a coarse filter pad, followed by 50 µm filter, carbon filter, and passed by ultraviolet lamp. Water flow rate averaged 18 L/hr. Some animals, not used in experiments, were kept in 10 litre tanks in the same system.

Water quality was recorded at least once a week using either 5 in 1 Aquarium Strips (API brand) or Quick Dip Aquarium Multi-Test Kit (Jungle brand). Water quality remained stable through the experiments and within a range considered normal for healthy freshwater aquaria systems (Table 1).



Figure 2. Aquaria system used to house animals. Photo by Kevin Faulkes.

Table 1. Average Water Quality of Housing

General hardness (ppm)	Carbonate hardness (ppm)	pH	Temp. (°C)	Nitrite (ppm)	Nitrate (ppm)
180	180	7.5	21	0.5	0.20

Methods (continued)

Experiment 1: Does live food affect growth?

Live food often enhances survival and growth in crayfish, but may be time-consuming to provide to all animals. González and colleagues (2008) found that commercially available prepared food could substitute for live *Artemia* nauplii and not affect growth of juvenile signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*). We tested whether this would also be true for Marmorkrebs.

The general diet of the animals consisted of feedings on all days of the week except Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday. The general diet included either 5-8 thawed Hikari Bloodworms Bio-Encapsulated with Multi-Vitamins, half of a thawed pea, or Proton #2 (an *Artemia* replacement; Inve Aquaculture). Proton was given in a mixture of 1.5 g Proton / 200 ml filtered water. Each animal received 1.5 ml, and the mixture was stirred vigorously between each feeding. Animals were fed one crushed freshwater snail, *Planorbis corneus*, during the test. Snail feeding was ceased due to concern about possible trematode infection.

Testing included Row A and Row B. Row A initially housed a total of 18 animals. Four aquaria housed two animals each and one aquarium housing three animals; all other aquaria housed only one animal. Row B began testing with a total of 18 animals. Four aquaria housed two animals each and all others had one animal each. Each aquarium contained only gravel; no shelter was given to either of the rows.

Rows A and B were fed the same general diet, except one day a week when Row A was fed live *Artemia* nauplii while Row B was fed Proton #2. Row A received between 100-200 nauplii per crayfish during these feedings. Artemia were raised in salt water (~30 ppt) using a hatchery system in the lab. Nauplii were collected through a synthetic fabric mesh system, immediately rinsed with tap water, and fed to the crayfish. The same amount of food was given throughout the experiment.

Test 2: Does the access to shelter affect growth?

Habitat complexity could affect animal welfare. Crayfish frequently prefer having shelters, particularly when ovigerous. We tested whether the presence of shelters had any impact on growth.

Both Row C and Row D housed 12 animals each, one animal per aquarium. Both rows were fed the same general diet as stated previously. Row C aquaria were provided with gravel and a shelter 1" diameter PVC pipe about 4" in length, one pipe per aquarium. Row D was not provided with a shelter and each aquarium contained only gravel.

Experiment 2: Shelter

There was no noticeable effect of providing a shelter on growth. Two individuals without shelter became ovigerous, compared to three individuals with shelter.

Results

General observations

All adults generated multiple large batches of embryos, although three adults died over the course of a year. One daughter of the original adults (F₁ generation) had her own offspring (F₂ generation). To date, this one F₁ female has had two batches of eggs. The colony contained 14 descendants of the original adults after one year. In August 2008, the colony was supplemented with additional 72 individuals, which experienced 7% mortality in the first month in the colony. Nine of these individuals generated eggs in late December. Marmorkrebs ate a variety of foods, but they appear to prefer food in the following rank:

1. Proton #2
2. Thawed bloodworms
3. Peas
4. Artemia nauplii
5. Carrots



Figure 3. Marmorkrebs in shelter eating a thawed bloodworm. Photo by Karen Faulkes.

It appeared that behaviour differed with food type. Proton #2 generated the strongest reaction, which included rapid movement towards the feeding hole and begging behaviour.

Experiment 1: Live food

There was no noticeable difference between Marmorkrebs fed live food versus those that did not receive live food. In both conditions, two animals became ovigerous.

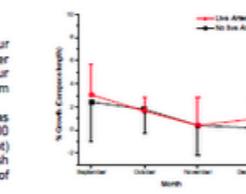


Figure 4. Effect of live food on growth.

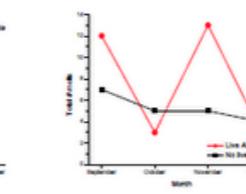


Figure 5. Effect of live food on molting.

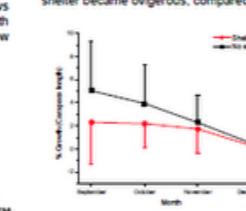


Figure 6. Effect of shelter on growth.

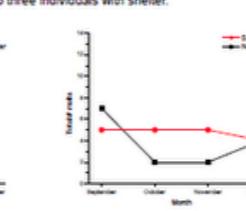


Figure 7. Effect of shelter on molting.

Discussion

After 15 months, we are near to establishing a viable research colony. We estimate a lab could have a self-sustaining working research colony in about 2 years. High juvenile mortality poses the most significant obstacle to establishing a research colony of Marmorkrebs, although relatively few adults would be needed to supply many viable embryos for developmental research.

The future

Future experiments include:

- Characterization of neural anatomy.
- Preliminary research on genetics and molecular biology of Marmorkrebs.
- Behavioural experiments on social interactions, such as aggression, within and between species.

Marmorkrebs.org

Resources

Marmorkrebs.org (also known as MarbledCrayfish.org) is a website devoted to advancing research on Marmorkrebs. It provides a complete list of publications on Marmorkrebs, a blog that is regularly updated (usually every Tuesday), and will provide more information and resources to the research community as they become available. If you are interested in working with Marmorkrebs in your lab, please feel free to contact us to request animals or ask questions.

Acknowledgements

We thank Steffen Harzsch and Silvia Sintoni for providing the original Marmorkrebs used in this study. This research is supported by a National Science Foundation small grant for exploratory research (award 0813561). Stephanie Jimenez is supported by a Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) grant (award 0849271). We also thank the Chancery Mangum Student Support Program and SICB for providing and coordinating Stephanie's housing scholarship for the conference.

References

- González A, Celada JD, González R, García V, Corral JM & Sáez-Royuela M. 2008. Artemia nauplii and two commercial replacements as dietary supplement for juvenile signal crayfish, *Pacifastacus leniusculus* (Astacidae), from the onset of exogenous feeding under controlled conditions. *Aquaculture* 281: 53-60.
Jones JG, Rasamy JR, Harvey A, Toon A, Oldmann B, Randrianarison MH, Raminoza N & Ravoahangimalala OR. The perfect invader: a parthenogenetic crayfish poses a new threat to Madagascar's freshwater biodiversity. *Biological Invasions*: in press.
Scholtz G, Braband A, Tolley L, Reimann A, Mittmann B, Lukhaup C, Steuerwald F & Vogt G. 2003. Parthenogenesis in an outsider crayfish. *Nature* 421: 806.
Vogt G. 2008. The marbled crayfish: a new model organism for research on development, epigenetics and evolutionary biology. *Journal of Zoology* 276: 1-13.

Poster Presentations: Construction Models

- What's the theory behind constructing posters? There are two “theories” behind constructing posters.
 - **“New” model:** Posters should be designed to draw viewers in. Basically it becomes an advertisement for your study.

Pros:

- Visually pleasing
- Focused on Results and Conclusions

Cons:

- Leaves out a lot of detail and context
- Sometimes not easy to understand the study without your oral explanation

“New” Model

Does the orchid mantis deceive pollinators?



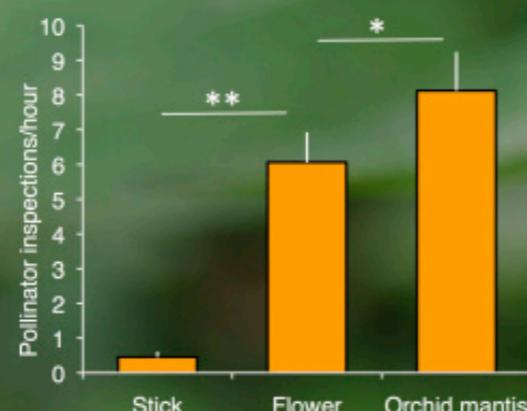
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“Less is more”

The behaviour of naturally occurring pollinators towards orchid mantises, *Asystasia* flowers and a control stimulus was recorded at the Ulu Gombak forest reserve in Peninsular Malaysia.



Average + SE pollinator inspections per hour
*p<0.05, **p<0.001 (Log-normal poisson model).

Mantises
attract
even more
pollinators
than flowers!

Poster Presentations: Construction Models

- In reality, most posters are somewhere in the middle or a “hybrid”.
 - **“Hybrid” model:** somewhere in between old model and new model.

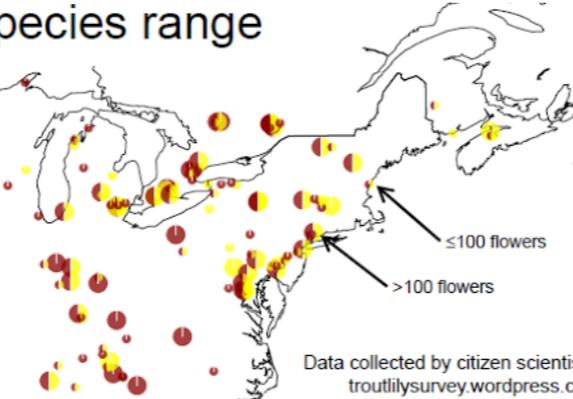
“Hybrid” Model



Why does anther colour vary in trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*)?

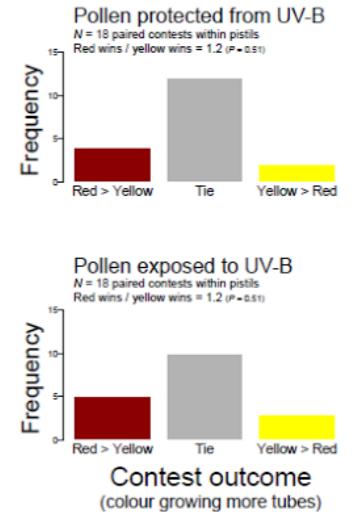
Emily Austen^{1,2} & Jessica Forrest¹
¹University of Ottawa, Canada; ²austen.emily@gmail.com; emilyjausten.wordpress.com

Red & yellow anthers occur throughout species range



Data collected by citizen scientists: troutlilsurvey.wordpress.com

Colour does not affect pollen tube growth
and neither colour is damaged by UV-B



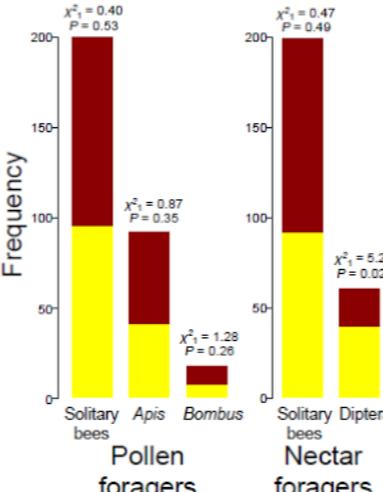
Pollen protected from UV-B
N = 18 paired contests within pistils
Red wins / yellow wins = 1.2 (P = 0.51)

Pollen exposed to UV-B
N = 18 paired contests within pistils
Red wins / yellow wins = 1.2 (P = 0.51)

Contest outcome (colour growing more tubes)

When encountering a mixed array
Pollinators exhibit no preference

N = 575 flower patches visited, by 378 visitors, during 25 hours observation, at 6 sites



$\chi^2_1 = 0.40, P = 0.53$

$\chi^2_1 = 0.87, P = 0.35$

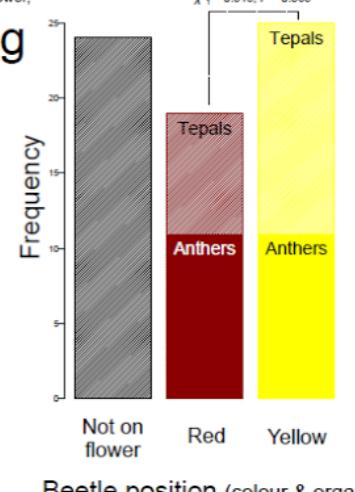
$\chi^2_1 = 1.28, P = 0.26$

$\chi^2_1 = 0.47, P = 0.49$

$\chi^2_1 = 5.23, P = 0.02^*$

Given a choice between a red or yellow flower,
Pollen-feeding beetles are indifferent

N = 68 *Asclera ruficollis* beetles; 44 made a flower choice



$\chi^2_1 = 0.818, P = 0.365$

Not on flower

Red

Yellow

Tepals

Anthers

Tepals

Anthers

Beetle position (colour & organ)

Acknowledgements:
• Nearly 100 citizen scientists contributed data to occurrence map
• Stephan Schneider provided pizza & friendship during pollen tube study
• Peter Lin contributed a day of pollinator observations
• Doug Campbell, Tammy Sage & Spencer Barrett lent equipment
• James Thomson, Alison Parker & Stuart Campbell gave helpful advice

Research permissions granted by:
• University of Toronto's Koffler Scientific Reserve
• Lancaster County Conservancy PA
• Cornell Lab of Ornithology
• Huyck Preserve & Biological Research Station
• National Capital Commission (Ottawa-Gatineau)

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• Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council (Canada)
• Ottawa Field Naturalist's Club

Anther colour is seemingly (and surprisingly) ecologically neutral.

What Makes a Good Poster?

- Think of our lecture on information transfer: tell a story!
 - **Good posters ask a clear question.**
 - **Good posters answer that question with data and clear visualizations!**
 - **Good posters are accessible to a wide audience.**

Better Posters Blog is a great resource!

<http://betterposters.blogspot.com/>

Some great articles:

<http://betterposters.blogspot.com/2013/08/detective-stories-whodunnit-versus-hows.html>

<http://betterposters.blogspot.com/2010/06/learning-from-cosmo.html>

<http://betterposters.blogspot.com/2009/08/entry-points.html>

<http://betterposters.blogspot.com/2010/01/is-it-big-enough.html>

How Do You Start a Poster?

- Use a slideshow program or Adobe Illustrator (if you know how to use it).
 - **Keynote (Macs) -**
 - Open a new slideshow in basic white background.
 - On the upper right, click “Document” and then “Slide Size” click the dropdown menu and select “Custom Slide Size”
 - Fill in the pts/pixel size for the height at width. Posters should have a resolution of 72 pixels per inch. So for a 30” by 40” poster the pixel size would be 2160 pts by 2880 pts.
 - Design your poster how you would like it set up.
 - Export the final poster as a PDF!

How Do You Start a Poster?

- Use a slideshow program or Adobe Illustrator (if you know how to use it).
 - **Powerpoint (Windows/Macs) -**
 - Open a new blank presentation in basic white background.
 - Click “File...” then “Page Setup...”
 - Click dropdown menu for “Slide sized for:” and select “Custom”
 - Fill in the height and width of your poster in inches
 - Design the poster how you would like it set up
 - Export the poster as a PDF!

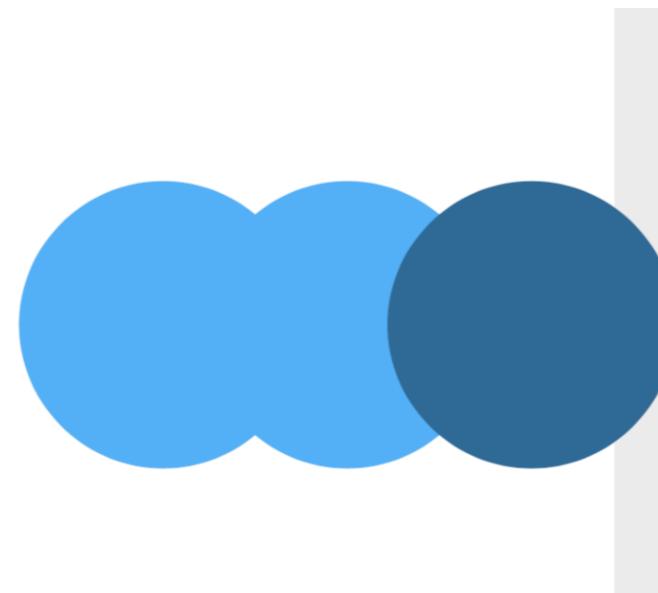
Adding Your Visualizations

Saving Options in R:

- `ggsave()` has many device options

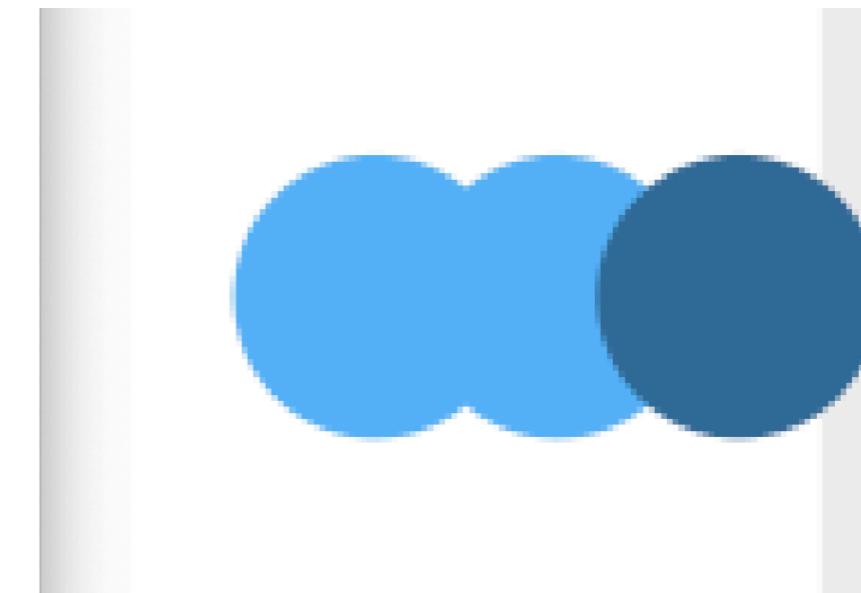
- **Vector graphics:** PDF, EPS, SVG, AI

- `pdf()`
- `setEPS()` and `postscript()`
- **Don't worry about resolution!**
- **Worry about color maps!**



- **Raster graphics:** JPEG, PNG, GIF, TIFF, BMP

- `png` package: `png()`, `bmp()`, `jpeg()`, `tiff()`
- `jpeg` package: `readJPEG()`, `writeJPEG()`
- **Worry about resolution!**
- **Don't worry about color maps!**



Use Vector graphics options to save for your poster!

Some Important Points in Design

Be Sure to Align things

- gaps should be same size
- Be consistent with capitalization
- bullet points should be aligned
- be consistent with margins of text
- use large text that can be viewed at arm's length
- avoid hard-to-read fonts
- be mindful of visual hierarchies
- use empty space mindfully
- use appropriate visualizations

Some Important Points in Design



Wendy Nather
@wendynather

▼

What UI wizardry is this??

And you will read this last

You will read
this first

And then you will read this

Then this one

In-class Exercises

- 1. Work with a partner to read a critique post on Better Posters and summarize the changes for the class between the two versions.**

- 2. Find another partner and exchange your visualizations for Project 3. Spend 2 minutes looking at the graph without explanation. Then, have your partner explain what the graph was suppose to describe. Critique the work and give suggestions for improving based on what your partner wanted to communicate.**

Action Items

- 1. Complete past assignments.**
- 2. Work on SK4.1**
- 3. Work on Project 3.**