To: American Society of Naturalists

Attn: Michael Bertram, Jeff Connor, Santiago Ramirez

May 21, 2024

The Ontario Ecology, Ethology, and Evolution Colloquium (OE3C) was held May 2-4, 2024 at the University of Waterloo. The OE3C is a provincial conference organized by (graduate) students for students that is hosted at a different university each year (founded in 1974). The primary aim is to provide young researchers with a platform to refine their communication skills, receive valuable feedback on their work, and network with local experts and peers.

A total of 139 participants (43 undergrad, 39 MSc, 34 PhD, 4 postdoc, 13 faculty, 4 industry, 2 unknown) from 14 universities and one private company attended OE3C 2024 and gave 106 presentations (37 undergrad, 31 MSc, 32 PhD, 4 postdoc, 2 faculty). A total of 11 undergraduate students and 23 graduate students attended for free thanks to your support. We were also able to decrease registration fees for students by 24.4% compared to last year ($170 this year vs. $225 in 2023) thanks to the support of our sponsors. Sponsors logos are displayed on our website, in the conference program, and shown on powerpoint slides during the conference.

We held a panel with Patricia Huynh, Sustainability project manager, University of Waterloo; Jean-Marc Daigle, landscape architect; and Brendon Samuels, PhD candidate Western University to discuss sustainability and biophobia. Keynote talks comprised Jessica Forrest, University of Ottawa; Hannah Ter Hofstede, University of Windsor; and Rebecca Doyle, McMaster University. The first day of OE3C consisted of excursions and one keynote talk. There was one off-campus excursion; a guided tour of [RARE charitable research reserve](https://raresites.org/) where participants learned about bumblebee radio telemetry, sustainable farming, and other research projects. Excursions on-campus comprised tree planting, bird banding, [WATER facility tours](https://uwaterloo.ca/biology/resources-and-services/water-facility), tours of the zoological collections, and the [earth science museum](https://uwaterloo.ca/earth-sciences-museum/).

We distributed an electronic survey to participants after the conference to solicit feedback and 18 responded. The conference was regarded as a fantastic experience for most respondents, with the welcoming atmosphere and organization of the conference being the most appreciated aspects. Most respondents left with a positive perception of the University of Waterloo and the Department of Biology, with many being inspired to consider new directions of research and appreciative of the opportunity to chat with people from different fields of study. Some suggested areas of improvement were better accommodation and food options, which will be taken into consideration for next year’s OE3C hosted at Carleton University.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your generous sponsorship, which significantly enhanced the accessibility of the conference for students. Your support played a pivotal role in making this event financially feasible for our student attendees. We deeply appreciate your commitment to empowering the next generation of scholars and ensuring their meaningful participation in our community. Thank you for making a difference.

On behalf of OE3C 2024 organizing committee,

Karen Vanderwolf

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