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**16<sup>th</sup> congress of the International Society for Behavioral Ecology, Exeter, UK**

I am very grateful to the *Royal Society of Biology* for giving me the chance to attend the 16<sup>th</sup> congress of the *International Society for Behavioral Ecology*, thanks to an Early Career (MRSB) Travel Grant.

It had been 10 years that I hoped to be a part of this major international congress in animal behaviour, but I had never managed to attend it, either for schedule or funding constraints. I was thus delighted to finally be able to make it happen this year, mostly thanks to the generosity of the Royal Society of Biology.

Indeed, presenting at this conference was a great opportunity for enhancing my scientific profile and my research, as I am a PhD student in behavioural ecology, at the Université du Québec à Montréal, in Canada. I am interested in linking personality and vocal communication in eastern chipmunks, and I more particularly presented some of my work that investigates individual differences in aggressiveness, based on the observation of natural agonistic interactions in chipmunks.

I gave a talk showing that chipmunks bigger or closer to their territory tend to win more, as classically predicted by contest theory, but that individuals also consistently differ in their tendency to overthrow their adversaries, suggesting that chipmunks' aggressiveness also represents an aspect of their personality. I was glad to get good feedback from different researchers, and although I presented on the last day I was lucky enough to get more time for thrilling discussions after my talk as the subsequent one was cancelled.

The conference was organised by the University of Exeter in UK, from 28<sup>th</sup> July to 3<sup>rd</sup> August, which is the perfect place to host such an event as it is a worldwide leader that gathers a great number of behavioral ecologists. This international congress attracted more than a thousand attendees, who presented more than 500 talks and 300 posters.

The 6 day conference was really exciting, covering an extensive range of research in behavioral ecology, with many sessions that highly interested me, especially those on signalling, vocal communication, foraging, anti-predator strategies, fighting, and personality variation. As 10 sessions were run in parallel it was sometimes very hard to choose which talk to attend, and even more when you get tempted to discover research completely unrelated to your own project, but the practical choice usually tend to bring you back to subjects you are familiar with. The last day was dedicated to 10 very interesting post-conference symposiums and I was looking forward to attend the one organized especially by my supervisor, Denis Réale, on "Statistical quantification of individual differences", as this is an important topic for my research project.

Beyond enjoying an international outreach to show my scientific findings and to get access to the discoveries of other researchers, attending this type of conference was also a great way to maintain and widen my relational network. This congress was the perfect opportunity to catch up with some friends who did a postdoc at our lab a few years ago, to see again students and researchers that I had the chance to meet at previous conferences, and also to finally meet some of the "big names". This social aspect is also quite important for developing connections and to initiate collaborations, in the aim of a future postdoctoral position.

Attending this overseas conference was a very rewarding experience, so I thank the Royal Society of Biology, as well as the QCBS and the ISBE, for their funding support, and I would of course encourage other members to apply for travel grants from the Royal Society of Biology.