

The 8th International Conference on Marine Bioinvasions

by Thomas Therriault and Lisa Drake

From August 20–22, 2013, the 8th International Conference on Marine Bioinvasions—the first held in Canada—was convened in Vancouver, British Columbia. Approximately 125 researchers, policy makers, and managers from 13 countries in North America, South America, Europe, Australia/New Zealand, and Asia arrived in Vancouver to exchange ideas and discuss the latest findings and progress in the global effort to understand and reduce the delivery, establishment, and spread of marine invasive species. This conference’s theme, “*Biological Invasions in Changing Waters: Envelopes, Estuaries, and Evolution*”, solicited papers on a variety of topics, including the role of some invasive species as ecosystem engineers, the intersection between invasive species and climate change, and the increasing use of molecular tools in invasive species studies. In addition, a poster session was held on the first evening that allowed presenters and attendees to mingle and learn about the latest findings in a relaxed atmosphere that included pizza and drinks (always helpful for breaking the ice!). A social gathering on the second night allowed continued discussion over snacks and drinks at the beautiful University of British Columbia gardens. An important part of this conference is the opportunity to informally discuss presentations, meet new colleagues, and forge new contacts.

To this end, coffee breaks and meals hosted on site allowed these happy interactions to take place in a relaxed and inviting setting. On the last day conference delegates were free to explore the famed Beaty Biodiversity Museum on campus and each evening participants were able to sightsee or tour around Vancouver.

The conference co-chairs (and co-authors of this article), Thomas Therriault (Fisheries and Oceans Canada) and Lisa Drake (Naval Research Laboratory, USA), were supported by a diverse, international Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) and an extremely productive Local Organizing Committee (LOC) headed by Cathryn Clarke Murray (World Wildlife Fund/University of British Columbia). In addition to the efforts by the SSC and its advisors, the LOC, and three student interns, the conference received generous financial support from the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), the Second Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species Network (CAISN II), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the University of British Columbia (UBC). The conference was held at the main campus of UBC in Vancouver which allowed easy access to the botanical gardens and the Beaty Biodiversity Museum.



Dr. Thomas Therriault with the PICES-supported early career scientists at the 8th International Conference on Marine Bioinvasion.

The three invited plenary speakers began each day with timely and novel approaches to issues of invasive species research. Emma Johnston (University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia) opened the conference by discussing how marine ecosystems are under pressure from a wide variety of stressors, including invasive species, and that research needs to consider how invasive species interact with these other stressors, particularly the cumulative effects which are much less predictable. James Carlton (Williams College – Mystic Seaport, USA) provided a moving and thought-provoking plenary about the potential introduction of invasive species associated with Japanese tsunami debris from the catastrophic magnitude 9.0 earthquake that hit off the coast of Japan in March 2011. Lastly, Thomas Therriault (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Nanaimo) provided an overview of CAISN II and highlighted advancements on better understanding European green crab invasion dynamics in British Columbia. All presentations were well received and provided a starting point for continued discussion during coffee breaks, meals and especially over drinks. Plenary talks were followed by two concurrent sessions on each day and included topic sessions on: management of invaders, factors affecting invasion success, invasion vectors, invasion niche, invasion impacts, applying molecular tools, fish invasions, tunicate invasions, and crab invasions.

The input and participation of early career scientists historically has been an important aspect of the Marine Bioinvasions Conferences, both due to the contributions of early career scientists and the benefits to their professional development by participating in such events. Indeed, this conference was no different. Thanks to funding from PICES, it was possible to provide travel support to 14 of the 34 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows who applied. PICES offered travel support to two undergraduate students (Stephanie Hall and Katherine Rolheiser), eight graduate students (Johanna Bradie, Farra Chan, Elizabeth Sheets, Darragh Clancy, Brian Turner, Max Castorani, Carolyn Tepolt, and Brian Cheng), and four postdoctoral fellows (Emily Brown, Amy Fowler, Christine McLaughlin, and Amanda Kelley). Many of these award recipients were captured in a group photo.

In summary, the plenary talks, along with all of the presentations—approximately 110 papers and posters—engendered lively discussions during the sessions, the breaks, and the social events. The topics of the presentations were impressive: new ideas and approaches to invasion biology, clever field studies to address emerging hypotheses, and research results used to inform national and international policy. This clearly illustrates how the field of invasion biology has advanced since the first conference in 1999, owing largely to the researchers and policy makers who attend these conferences!

Planning has begun for the 9th International Marine Bioinvasions Conference tentatively scheduled for January 2016 in Sydney, Australia, and the 10th International Marine Bioinvasions Conference tentatively scheduled for 2018 in Argentina, so keep an eye out for further details in future issues of PICES Press.



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Dr. Lisa Drake is a Physical Scientist at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory in Key West, Florida. She is a biological oceanographer and leads a team of biological and physical scientists, engineers, and a statistician who develop procedures and methods used in testing ballast water management systems. Specifically, the biology group is developing robust, automated analyses to determine protist and zooplankton viability.