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Conferences attended in Beijing, China:

3rd International Symposium of Integrative Zoology (ISIZ). 8-10 July 2009.

23rd Annual Meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB). 11-16 July 2009.

Participating to the International Symposium of Integrative Zoology and to the Society for Conservation Biology meeting has been extremely helpful for my research and my future career. My PhD research is on the ecology of tropical fish and their effects on food webs dynamics in impacted and pristine streams in Trinidad (West Indies). Both conferences encompass major topics related to my dissertation: proximate and ultimate aspects of animal life and conservation of species and ecosystems.

During the first conference (ISIZ) I had the chance to meet many international researchers with broad interest in the field of zoology, spanning from ecology, paleontology, behavior, etc. The big majority of them were from China, as it was the society organizing the Symposium. I had the chance to learn which are the major lines of research in the Chinese Academy of Sciences and get to know Chinese scientists working in my field. I received a lot of good feedback on my talk and learn the importance of considering the biological consequences of climate change as part of my study. The Chinese hospitality during the meeting was outstanding and we even had the chance to assist to a Chinese Opera performance – including traditional instruments, changing faces, puppets, dances, and acrobatic shows - during the conference main banquet. I enjoyed the meeting a lot and I was very happy to have the chance to increase my scientific and cultural knowledge of Chinese customs.

In the Society of Conservation Biology I could assist to many talks focused on both science and policy. Even if I am mainly an ecologist, it is very important to

integrate knowledge of laws and policy to scientific information. Indeed, conservation biologists and ecologists need to provide policy advice to governments on how to sustainably manage all natural ecosystems.

While at the meeting, I joined the 'Austral and Neotropical America Section', which unites the conservation efforts in Central, South America, and the Caribbean – the region where I conduct my research. Being part of this Section will enhance my opportunities to network with colleagues involved in biological conservation in the Neotropics, which will be especially useful in the near future when I will start a job hunt for post-doc position in this field.

Also, at the SCB meeting, I considered my poster presentation successful, as I could introduce the audience to a new technique (stable isotope analysis), which has not been contemplated in conservation biology study but that proved to be very useful in many ecological research.

At last, the Drexel delegation and I had the opportunity to visit the Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding Center, with which Drexel had started collaborating since 2007. We met the center staff and had the chance to learn all the progresses made with the very compelling task of breeding in captivity such an endangered species. We also offered our diverse knowledge to assist in the realization of a new Giant Panda Center that will start a reintroduction program. A Chinese delegation from the Center visited Drexel last year and will likely soon come back to continue this successful collaboration.



Changing faces and puppet show at the Chinese Opera



Workshop at the Chegdu Panda Center



Two young Pandas born in the Chengdu Center



The forbidden City (Beijing)