

In March 2018, 30 PhD students and post-doctoral fellows converged from around Europe and Canada at the Oulanka Research Station in Kuusamo, Finland for a workshop focused on salmonid research. This small workshop, also known as NoWPaS, is organized by early career scientists as a setting for PhD students and post-doctoral researchers to come together and present their work, as well as interact with established senior scientists invited as keynote speakers. NoWPaS has been a great success each year since its inception in 2005, and has taken place in countries like Norway, Canada, and the UK.

NoWPaS acts as a fantastic environment for career networking and the development of collaborations between research groups, as well as an opportunity for our young scientists to take a small break from the stresses that often accompany a PhD! This year's NoWPaS had the highest attendance record ever and our delegates came from a total of 10 different countries.

In addition to facilitating exchanges of information between young scientists, NoWPaS provides participants the opportunity to travel and learn more about salmonid research occurring in different countries, and this year was no exception. On the way to Kuusamo, our group was treated to a tour at the Kainuu Fisheries Research Station (i.e., Natural Resources Institute Finland, Luke Kainuu) where several of this year's NoWPaS delegates have carried out much of their field work. Their extensive facilities provide ample opportunity for a wide variety of different behavioural and evolutionary experiments to be carried out using local fish species such as pike-perch, land-locked salmon, burbot, and brown trout.

After a fantastic insight into some of the work being carried out by our Finnish hosts, the delegates arrived at the Oulanka Field Station and settled in for three days of research presentations and traditional Finnish activities, including sauna, ice-fishing, skiing, and, of course, ice-swimming -which was among the most popular activities of the entire workshop! The beginning of the meeting was crowned by a spectacular evening of Northern lights.

Presentations on salmonids were divided into three broad categories; "Salmomics" & Physiology, Management & Conservation, and Ecology & Ecosystems. We were honoured to be joined by four keynote senior researchers within these themes. The keynote presentation by Prof. Craig Primmer (University of Helsinki), and other talks from his research group members, provided insight into understanding the genetic basis of age-at-maturity in Atlantic salmon. The second keynote Dr. Katja Anttila (University of Turku), described how heart rate can be used as an ecologically relevant tool for understanding the effects of global warming on fishes. Dr. Pauliina Louhi (Parks and Wildlife Finland, Metsähallitus) provided an outside-of-academia perspective in her talk, introducing an impressively wide project called Freshabit that is focused on freshwater habitat restoration across Finland. The final keynote presentation was given by Prof. Andrew Hendry (McGill University), who gave extensive perspective into rapid evolution and local adaptation in North American salmonids.

Presentations by participants further covered all of the themes of the workshop and more, with exciting new field equipment advancements, such as acoustic telemetry tracking and imaging sonar methods. The favourite demonstration of field equipment in a talk was provided by Aurora Hatanpää, who shared video footage of a helicopter depositing redd gravels into an artificially developed spawning site to be used by land-locked salmon in Finland! Many topics in brown trout and Atlantic salmon research were presented, spanning from genetics of migration to fishing induced selection, and disease tolerance in brown trout, and from differences in microbiomes from different genetic backgrounds to temperature tolerance of Atlantic salmon, and the poor success of stocked salmon in Scotland, among other interesting talks.

After a terrific week of science and leisure, delegates agreed that this year's NoWPaS had been an overwhelming success and that next year's workshop had a lot to live up to. Luckily, the 2019 planning committee is already hard at work developing next year's programme and is excited to announce that our next NoWPaS workshop will be held at the Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment in Scotland from March 4th to 9th!

If you are a PhD student or an early career post-doc and are interested in attending NoWPaS 2019, please follow us on Twitter (@NoWPaS), Instagram (@nowpas), or request to join our Facebook group (NoWPaS-Salmonid Network). We will be posting updates about how to register later in the year. The gripping enthusiasm for keeping the NoWPaS momentum going at the end of the meeting guarantees that this workshop continues to be a favorite among salmonid biologists! And of course, this workshop wouldn't be possible without the generous donations of our sponsors

