

World Oyster Society Early Stage Investigator Award

Third Prize Winner

Mr. David L.J. Vendrami, University of Bielefeld and Marie Curie Initial Training Network fellow, Germany

I am very new in the world of oysters, as I've never had the opportunity to study these bivalves before starting my PhD two and a half years ago. Attending the 7th International Oyster Symposium has therefore been a really great opportunity for me to deepen my knowledge about this very fascinating species, as I could speak with the true experts of the field. On the other hand, I attended the symposium also to give my contribution, specifically presenting the results of my study on the genetic structure of the populations of *Crassostrea gigas* present in Europe. Analyzing a genetic dataset with unprecedented resolution power, I could confirm the genetic structure of European populations of pacific oysters already identified by former studies and their relationship with the two source populations from Japan and British Columbia (Canada), as well as show the presence of previously undetected groups: one located in the south-west of the Iberian Peninsula, where *C. gigas* is known to hybridize with the Portuguese oyster *C. angulata*, and one found in the Adriatic Sea. Finally, I could also provide evidence for the fact that, even if human mediated translocation is the main factor shaping the genetic structure of *C. gigas* populations in Europe, also local adaptation may play an important role. Taken together, these results provide new meaningful insights into the adaptive genetic structure of the keystone invader *C. gigas* in Europe. I am very happy to have had the opportunity to present my work at the symposium and the feedback I received were all very useful and will be taken into account in my future work on the genetics of oysters. Last but not least, receiving the "World Oyster Society Early Stage Investigator Award" has been a huge satisfaction: as I said I am quite new in the study of oysters and receiving this prize means a lot to me. I feel my contribution, and as a consequence the effort I put on this project, has been recognized and this fills me up with motivation to keep on studying this beautiful mollusk species and continue my research project.

