

Hi ELHS members,

If you are planning to attend the 41<sup>st</sup> annual Larval Fish Conference, or if you need a little more encouragement before you decide to attend, here is an update. The first part of the update is specific to the Larval Fish Conference. Following that is a lot of information about the overall meeting, which comes from the Joint Meeting of Ichthyology and Herpetology (JMIH) Meeting Management and Planning Committee (MMPC) after their visit to the meeting venue in Austin earlier this month. MMPC members: Marty Crump (Program Officer), Chip Cotton, Marlis Douglas, David Green, Henry Mushinsky (Chair), Kyle Piller, and Dustin Siegel. Brandi Nelson and Cara Richardson (Kansas State University) arranged the meeting. Below that is information specific to the Larval Fish Conference.

Cheers,

Lee Fuiman & Chris Chambers

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#### 41<sup>st</sup> annual Larval Fish Conference particulars

This year's Larval Fish Conference contains 3.5 days of talks with no overlapping sessions (if you don't count the concurrent presentations by the other societies meeting with us). The LFC will have four theme sessions plus two sessions of contributed papers, a poster session, and an early career workshop (in two sessions). All of that is organized between 1:30 pm Thursday (July 13) and 3 pm Sunday (July 16). Of course, you likely will want to participate other JMIH events, including in a social on Wednesday evening, a reception on Thursday evening, and the plenary sessions on Thursday morning.

In lieu of a Larval Fish Conference banquet, the University of Texas Marine Science Institute will host an LFC social on Friday evening at a downtown location (Cedar Door). Winners of student awards will be announced at the LFC social, so please be sure to attend. Food and drink will be provided. When you register for the conference, be sure to sign up for the special bus that will take you to the LFC social and back to the Renaissance Hotel. (This is different from the bus provided by JMIH). The Cedar Door is conveniently located if you wish to explore downtown Austin's restaurants and music clubs, walk around the lake, and observe the nightly egress of Mexican free-tail bats (population estimated to be 1.5 million) at Congress Avenue bridge.

Don't forget to bring items for the traditional Sally L. Richardson auction. Proceeds from the auction support our Sally L. Richardson Award for the best student oral presentation at the Larval Fish Conferences.

What weather should you expect? Let's just say that you won't need a jacket or sweater, at least not outdoors. In July, the mean daily high/low temperature is 96/74 F (36/23 C). The probability of rainfall is low; July averages 1.9 inches (4.8 cm) of rain. Indoor temperatures provided by Texas-sized air conditioning units can feel chilly to some people.

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JMIH Austin Texas 12 -16 July 2017

**Getting to the hotel**-The Renaissance Hotel Austin is located north of Austin and the airport is on the south side, so if at all possible arrive at the airport during mid-morning to mid-day. The roads going through the city get very congested at rush hour. A taxi costs about \$35-55 depending on traffic, sharing a ride is a good idea. A shuttle is available as well. Uber and Lyft are not functioning just now, but “Fast,” “Fasten,” and “GetMe” are in service. You can download their Apps off the Austin Airport website. We met an organizer of a co-op taxi service called ATX CO-OP Taxi that we recommend using if one needs a cab. [512-669-2559](tel:512-669-2559). The cabs are bright lime green, hard to miss.

**Getting started** - 12 July 2017, Time TBA. No Host Social at the Glass Oaks Ballroom (on site). Much like last year in New Orleans (at the House of Blues) JMIH musicians will be able to provide some entertainment for their friends and colleagues. The Glass Oaks Ballroom will be equipped with bars and provides a wonderful setting to get reacquainted with colleagues and friends on the evening before the conference begins. We made a strong case for good quality beers and plenty of it.

**The Opening Session** - will feature the Carl Gans Plenary Lecture by Michael Ryan, Clark Hubbs Regents Professor, Department of Integrative Biology, University of Texas, entitled “Beauty and Brains: Insights from Frogs and Fishes.” Guest speakers from some of the sponsoring societies will also make presentations, and societies will recognize individual award winners.

**JMIH Opening Reception** - 13 July 2017, 6:00pm – 9:00pm Oasis Restaurant. PLEASE check out their Website: <http://oasis-austin.com>. The Oasis is a beautiful reception site overlooking Lake Travis. Although it will be hot, there are ample indoor and outdoor spaces to congregate, eat, and drink. The Austin Lounge Lizards (<http://www.austintloungeizards.com>) will be playing on the main stage at the Oasis. The stage is indoors with a newly installed HVAC system, so everyone should be able to dance and enjoy themselves without being covered in sweat. For guests that do not like live music or prefer deep conversations, there are multiple other temperature controlled indoor areas reserved for our group.

**Hotel rooms** - Our rooms at the Renaissance Austin Hotel were very nice and included a small refrigerator and a safe. Everyone on the MMPC was impressed by the quality of the hotel and conference center, we anticipate most attendees will agree. Self-parking is \$10.00 per day.

**Conference center** - We toured every room that will be used at JMIH for conference events; e.g., oral presentations, poster presentations, plenary sessions, presentation preparation, and workshops. They all appeared adequate for our needs. The exhibitor area and poster viewing area (Rio Grande Exhibit Hall) is a converted parking garage so we will have plenty of space between posters.

**The Guidebook** - As a green initiative, the MMPC agreed to spend \$3500 on Guidebook for JMIH 2017. Guidebook is a smart device “App” that replaces paper program books (<https://guidebook.com/event-apps/>). JMIH spends \$3000+ a year on paper printing. Guidebook eliminates this expense and also makes the conference greener. An email will be sent to registrants explaining how Guidebook will replace their paper programs before they arrive at JMIH 2017. When participants check in, a paper program will not be included in their conference

bag. Volunteers will then ask if the participants would like a paper copy of the program; thus, for JMIH 2017, paper copies will still be available. For future meetings, if a participant requires a hardcopy of the program book, a pdf of the program book will be available to download and meeting goers will be advised to print a hardcopy of the program before arrival at JMIH.

**Digital posters** - Some JMIH participants have inquired about the potential to switch to digital posters. The MMPC found this cost prohibitive. To run the poster sessions similar to how they are currently operated would cost \$32K+. To make digital posters possible in the short-term, the way the poster sessions are operated would have to change dramatically (e.g., 45 min per presenter with screen changing to another presenter afterward) or the poster presenters would have to pay an increased registration fee. The MMPC did not believe that the majority of JMIH participants would be interested in those two changes.

**JMIH Survey** - The MMPC is providing a survey at JMIH 2017 to get a better idea of what meeting attendees' want, what they are willing to spend, where they want to meet and when they want to meet. The data will be tallied and used to plan future meetings.

#### **Miscellaneous –**

- For participants that want to test their abilities on 1980s/-90s Jaleco video games, there is a retro-gaming center in the lobby of the hotel.
- The grounds around the hotel offer plenty of space for exercise, networking, breaks, a short hiking trail , a duck pond, stone cows, and lots of places to sit outdoors.
- East 6th street in downtown Austin is a 20-30 minute car ride from the hotel. This area calls itself “the music capital of the world” and is loaded with great pubs to provide great music. Also on the same street but further away from downtown is an area that has a bevy of food trucks and microbreweries. Most of the microbreweries are fairly small and depend on outdoor overflow seating.
- Much nearer to the hotel is the Domain Shopping Center (<http://www.simon.com/mall/the-domain>).
- The Domain is 2 miles from the Renaissance Austin Hotel, which means it is within the 5-mile radius of the free hotel shuttle. Users of the shuttle should keep in mind that the shuttle will take you places, but it will not bring you back! There are lots of higher-end shopping opportunities at the Domain with mid- to high-scale dining. You will not want to walk back to the hotel from the Domain, so plan on some form of transportation. Two interstate highways separate the Domain from the Hotel.
- Beer in the Renaissance Austin Hotel Bar is \$4 a pint during happy hour (4pm to 6pm). It is called the 4/5/6 happy hour with wine at \$5 and well drinks at \$6. The hotel bar closes at 11pm as do the other nearby bars (Iron Cactus, Dave and Buster’s, NXNW and Baretto).