



NW European IUSSI Newsletter:
February 2020

Tales from the lab: Heikki Helanterä (Uni Oulu)



Greetings from the northernmost outpost of IUSSI in Oulu, Finland - it's been an unusually mild winter here, but still this morning we had a refreshing -15C facing us!

The team studying genetics and evolution of ants in Oulu is led by two PIs, Lumi Viljakainen and Heikki Helanterä. Lumi's main focus is on evolutionary and population genomics of ants, their immune defences and viruses especially. She just signed a contract as a lecturer, and will be the Director of the Degree Program and MSc Program in Biology and also our International Master's MSc Program ECOGEN. Heikki's main interest is social evolution, genetics and behaviour of *Formica* ants and supercolonial ants in general, with many sidetracks into e.g. theoretical work, and more recently also cooperation and resource management of humans, and even genetics of fish parasites. Heikki is now in the 2nd year of his tenure track associate professorship, after moving up north from Helsinki in the autumn 2018.

To keep Lumi and Heikki busy, we have Ida Holmberg who is just starting her PhD on population genomics of Argentine ants, and our MSc students Lassi Tolonen (immune gene evolution in

Argentine ants), Mauno Konu (developing a protocol to genetically modify ants) and Johannes Oksanen (gene expression of immune genes in Argentine ants).



1 - The Oulu team from left to right: Mauno, Lassi, Heikki, Lumi, Ida.



2 - Not quite time for fieldwork yet.

EU-IUSSI 2020 website opened



The 2020 conference of the European section of the IUSSI is now open for registration. Please have a look at the following link: <https://eu-iussi2020.sciencesconf.org/>

Become a NW IUSSI member!



Having a subscription to IUSSI is a great way to support the world of social insect research. Membership is cheap (£7.50 for students, £15 for full members). One additional perk of being a member is that it provides large discounts when registering for IUSSI conferences. Registrations can be done here: <http://www.iussi.org/NWEurope/subs.htm> .

Current job opportunities



Current vacancies on the section web site: <http://www.iussi.org/NWEurope/vacancies.htm>:

Do you have Ph.D. or Postdoc positions coming up? Email nbos [at] bio.ku.dk and we will add them to the newsletter. We also run the INSECTSmil mailing list, which distributes information about job and studentship opportunities, meetings, courses, and calls for information about social insects. See more on the section website: <http://www.iussi.org/NWEurope/INSECTSmil.htm> and send any information to be included (or subscription requests) to INSECTS [at] bio.ku.dk.

Looking for pictures!



All of the pictures in this newsletter were contributed by Quentin Willot from Stellenbosch University, who kindly allowed us to choose freely from his portfolio. Have a look at his great work here: <https://www.picuki.com/profile/qwilltn>

If you have pretty pictures to share, please send a link to nbos [at] bio.ku.dk and they might just be used for the next newsletter. Credits will be given of course!

Questions? Contact Us!

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please mail to nbos [at] bio.ku.dk.