



12th International Symposium on Aquatic Oligochaeta

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This volume is the proceedings for the 12th International Symposium on Aquatic Oligochaeta (ISAO), held in Fremantle Western Australia from the 10th to the 13th of September 2012. This was the latest in a series of triennial symposia that began in May 1979 when 31 researchers met for four days in Sidney, British Columbia, Canada, hosted by Ralph Brinkhurst, then of the Institute of Ocean Sciences who has played a pivotal role in the field of oligochaete research for many decades. That first meeting set the scene for regular collegiate gatherings of oligochaetologists that have spawned many collaborations and scientific advances over the past 35 years. Continuity in the oligochaete research community is shown by the fact that four of the researchers that attended the 1979 symposium joined us in Fremantle.

The 12th ISAO symposium was the first to be convened in the Southern Hemisphere. While this resulted in a smaller than usual meeting (partly also attributable to world economic issues), it was nonetheless an engaging and invaluable gathering. The symposium was preceded by a workshop on identifying Australian aquatic oligochaetes, presented by Adrian Pinder, Mark Wetzel and Christer Erséus, providing the opportunity for local and regional aquatic ecologists as well as several symposium delegates to improve their expertise in the identification of freshwater, estuarine, and marine oligochaetes. Thirty delegates from 12 countries attended the symposium, presenting 21 oral presentations and 8 posters. In addition to the scientific sessions

convened at the Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle, there was an excursion to Rottnest Island—Wadjemup (in Noongar), just off the coast from Fremantle, and a dinner at Kings Park Botanical Gardens overlooking the city of Perth. A wide range of scientific topics were covered by presenters, including biogeography, systematics, toxicology, methodologies and ecology.

The symposium concluded with a business meeting to discuss issues affecting the aquatic oligochaete community. Discussions centred on 1) production of a symposium planning document (a draft of which assisted organisers of the Fremantle symposium), 2) the role of the General Secretary of the International Symposia on Aquatic Oligochaeta (membership directory maintenance, a mirror website for future symposia, assisting symposia hosts as required, including with proceedings volumes, and to organize and chair the symposium business meetings) and 3) An invitation from Dr Jana Schenková of Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic) to oligochaetologists past, present and future to meet in Brno in September 2015. This invitation was accepted by all delegates, and we look forward to joining our colleagues to once again discuss the wonderful world of aquatic oligochaetes. See <http://www.isao2015.cz> for more details.

About half of the presentations were written up as papers in this volume. This proceedings volume also includes a memoriam for Dr. Tamara L. Poddubnaya (1930-2011), who contributed an enormous body of work on the aquatic oligochaetes of Russia and the former Soviet republics and who will be greatly missed by her many colleagues. All papers in this volume were reviewed by two anonymous referees and revised versions were re-examined by one of the three editors.

The symposium organizing committee consisted of Adrian Pinder, David Cale, Anna Leung, Joanne O'Connor, Melita Penniford and Kirsty Quinlan. We are deeply indebted to the sponsors of the symposium that allowed costs to delegates to be greatly reduced: Phoenix Environmental Sciences, Bennelongia Environmental Consultants, Outback Ecology, Biota Environmental Sciences, Subterranean Ecology, Ecologia Environment, Australian Society for Limnology and the Western Australian Department of Parks and Wildlife (then Department of Environment and Conservation).