



## Preface: Proceedings of the XVIth International Conference on Ephemeroptera and XXth International Symposium on Plecoptera

R. EDWARD DEWALT<sup>1\*</sup> & STEVEN BURIAN<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Illinois, Illinois Natural History Survey, Champaign, IL, 61801, USA

<sup>2</sup>Northeast Ephemeroptera Laboratory, 9 Molsick Rd., Seymour, CT, USA, 06483

✉ [dewalt@illinois.edu](mailto:dewalt@illinois.edu); <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9985-9250>

✉ [burians1@southernct.edu](mailto:burians1@southernct.edu)

\*Corresponding author

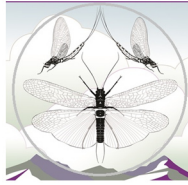
### Abstract

Because of uncertainty about hosting an international, in-person conference in mid-2021, our meeting was postponed until summer 2022. Uncertainty continued into 2022. We could not wait longer, so The Joint Meeting of the XVI International Conference on Ephemeroptera and XX International Symposium on Plecoptera was a virtual affair hosted from the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, U.S.A. The conference occurred daily, 0600–0900 hrs Chicago time, 26–29 July 2022. Despite the virtual venue, 41 oral (video) and 26 poster presentations were given by a total of 133 authors, representing 28 countries. At least 196 unique persons attended the 12 hrs of conference. It was a surprisingly successful meeting. The meeting program and links to all presentations are available from Plecoptera Species File. There were no Lifetime Achievement Awards bestowed upon our members during this meeting. A proposal for a meeting in 2024 in Turin, Italy was presented and accepted. In the weeks following the conference, we learned of the tragic death of our good friend and colleague Dr. Boris C. Kondratieff. We dedicate this volume to his memory and provide an obituary in this volume.

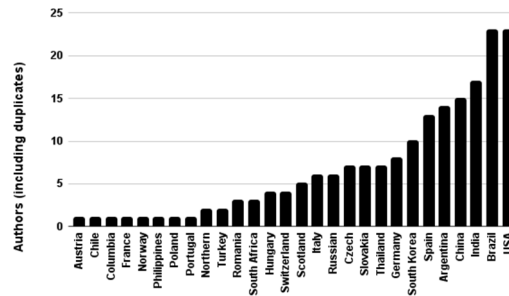
### *A brief summary of the virtual conference*

The XVIth International Conference on Ephemeroptera and XXth International Symposium on Plecoptera was proposed for 2021 by Boris Kondratieff and I during the Brazil meeting of 2018. We offered to host it in Colorado at the beautiful Mountain Campus of Colorado State University near Fort Collins, Colorado, USA during July 2021. Alas, it was not to be. The COVID 19 Pandemic that ramped up during late winter of 2020 continued well into 2022 and created great uncertainty for the prospects of holding an in-person meeting. Misfortune abounded! The Cameron Peak Fire in Colorado burned much of the forest around the Mountain Campus on 9–10 October 2020, leaving only the structures intact. During the late fall of 2021 we, in consultation with the John Brittain (Chair of the Standing Committee of the International Society of Plecopterologists) and Michel Sartori (Chair, Permanent Committee of the International Conferences on Ephemeroptera), came to the conclusion that a July 2022 in-person meeting was still not feasible. A plan was presented then for a virtual meeting during the summer 2022.

The first ever virtual conference of mayfly and stonefly researchers was hosted from the University of Illinois, U.S.A. The logo of the Joint Meeting presents adult mayflies and a stonefly over an idealized Colorado landscape (Fig. 1). The conference took place for four days, three hours each day (0600–0900 hrs, Chicago time), Tuesday July 26 through Friday July 29. The technical aspects of using Zoom were admirably managed by Phillip Hogan, PhD student in the DeWalt laboratory. Logistical challenges of a virtual conference made pre-recorded videos the best solution for oral presentations. Poster presentations were a more difficult proposition. A typical poster format is not possible, so a hybrid where three slides were discussed by the author(s) was the replacement format. This worked well when authors were present.



**FIGURE 1.** Logo of the Ephemeroptera and Plecoptera Joint Meeting. Imagos of mayflies and a stonefly set over an expansive view of idealized Colorado.



**FIGURE 2.** Distribution of authors presenting (including duplicates) in their various home countries.

The organizers invited two speakers, Eric J. South and T. Health Ogden to present on the current state of the phylogeny of Plecoptera and Ephemeroptera, respectively. Audience members checked in as they wished and viewed 41 oral and 26 poster presentations. We recorded the entire week of presentations. You may access and download the program (DeWalt & Hogan, 2022) from Plecoptera Species File (DeWalt et al. 2023). The program lists all presentation titles, authors, and abstracts with links to the re-recorded presentations and questions as seen during the conference.

A total of 133 authors appeared 187 times across all abstracts. Authors reported being from 28 countries, the U.S.A. and Brazil being the most frequent countries of origin (Fig. 2). Across all days of the conference at least 196 unique viewers were noted. The meeting, based on the number of presentations, range of topics, number of unique viewers, and geographic breadth of those attending, was more successful than we could have imagined. We suggest that in the future a hybrid approach to our Joint Meetings is necessary for inclusion members who cannot afford attending in person or have philosophical difficulties with the energy requirements of travel.

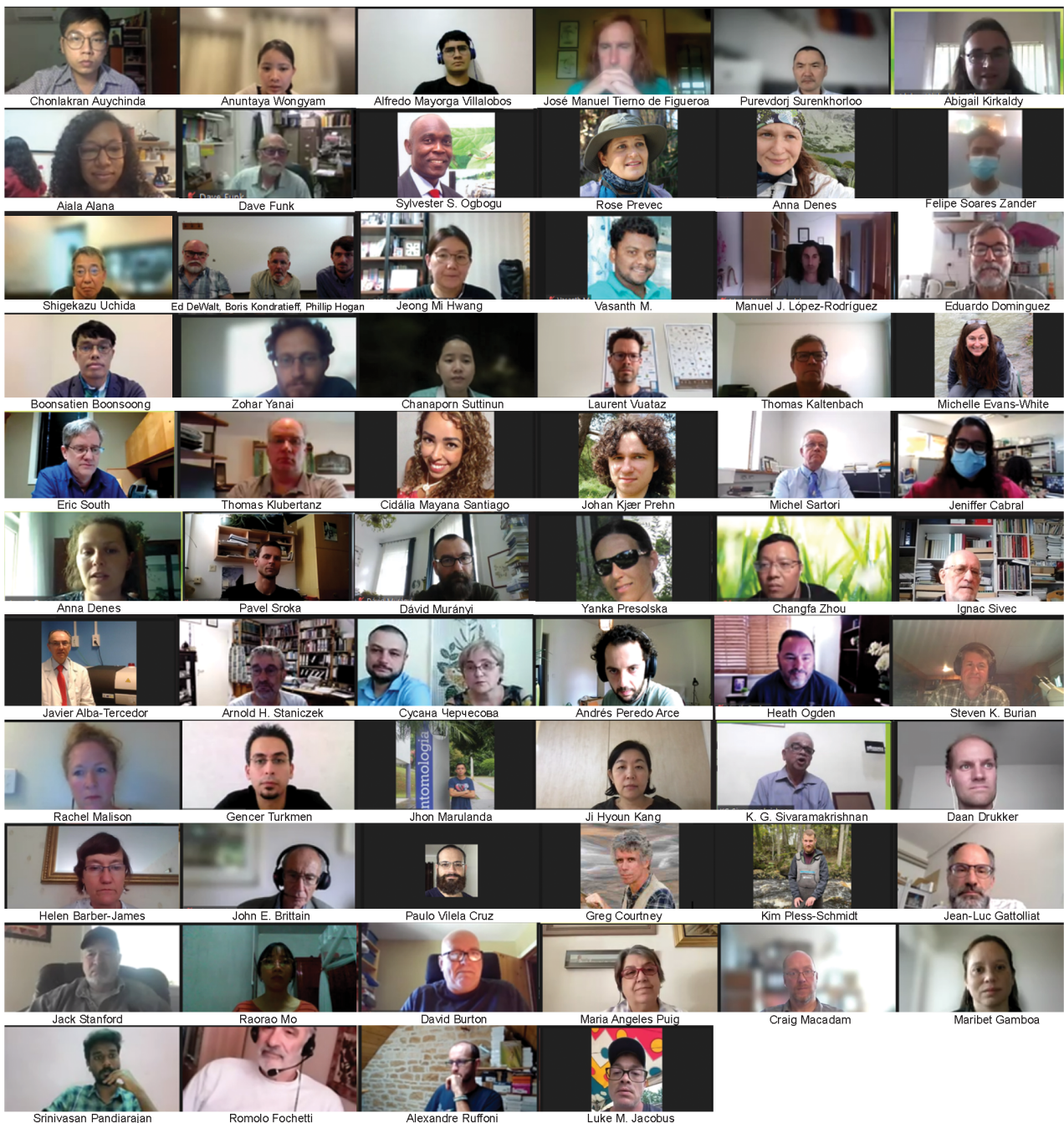
A group photograph was a difficult proposition. We captured Zoom images of attendees several times and compiled them (Fig. 3). Of course, we could not capture everyone because some attendees were absent when we captured images, did not have cameras on, or used only avatars while attending.

Several side meetings were held. Health Ogden hosted a breakout meeting to discuss how other mayfly researchers could participate in an NSF proposal to continue study of mayfly phylogeny. The standing and permanent committees held meetings to discuss important issues. Stefano Fenoglio, Romolo Fochetti, Manu Rodriguez, and Manuel Tierno de Figueroa proposed to the attending members a Joint Meeting in Turin, Italy during summer 2024. This proposal was accepted. Preliminary details of the meeting may be viewed from Plecoptera Species File (DeWalt et al. 2023). Watch *The Mayfly Newsletter* for information as well. Finally, Boris Kondratieff presented on the logistics of submission of articles for the proceedings to be published in *Zoosymposia*. We did not know that the presentation would be his last to our group. Sadly, he died just a few weeks later. Please read the obituary printed in this issue.

### *The Proceedings*

Please thank Steve Burian for stepping up to join as co-editor of this volume. We started with 17 submissions, three were withdrawn for various reasons. This volume contains Boris's obituary and 14 peer reviewed papers that are reflective of the topics covered during the Joint Meeting. Topics include behavior, systematics, biogeography,

and ecology. There are several new species described among these papers, one with a new patronym for Boris C. Kondratieff.



**FIGURE 3.** Composite image of attendees of the virtual meeting. Not all who attended are represented here due to video cameras being turned off or attendees being represented only by avatars at the time of image capture.

## References

- DeWalt, R.E. & Hogan, P.N. (2022) Program, Scheduling, and Abstracts 2022 Virtual Meeting. 2022 XVIth International Conference On Ephemeroptera and XXth International Symposium On Plecoptera. Originating from the Illinois Natural History Survey, 26-29 July, 2022. 81 pp. [[http://plecoptera.speciesfile.org/HomePage/Plecoptera/MF\\_SF%202022%20Program%20and%20Schedule.pdf](http://plecoptera.speciesfile.org/HomePage/Plecoptera/MF_SF%202022%20Program%20and%20Schedule.pdf)]
- DeWalt, R.E., Maehr, M.D., Hopkins, H., Neu-Becker, U. & Stueber, G. (2023) Plecoptera Species File Online. Version 5.0/5.0. Available from: <http://Plecoptera.SpeciesFile.org> (accessed 1 June 2023)