

Water Research Group
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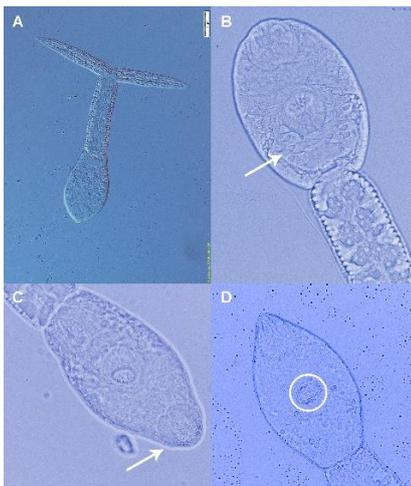
9 Questions with WRG authors

Title of the paper: Small but diverse: larval trematode communities in the small freshwater planorbids *Gyraulus albus* and *Segmentina nitida* (Gastropoda: Pulmonata) from the Ruhr River, Germany

Journal: Parasitology Research

Authors: J. Schwelm, M. Soldánová, T. Vyhliđalová, B. Sures, C. Selbach

Read the article: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00436-017-5699-0>



The parasites



The intermediate hosts

[Dr. Christian Selbach](#)



1. What previous work was integral to the new study?

We had previously assessed the trematode diversity in other, larger freshwater snails that are well-known hosts to a species-rich community of parasites. These studies have discovered a considerable number of new parasite species.



2. Why do you care about this particular subject?

I think parasites are fascinating organisms, ranging from contributing to diversity or biotic productivity to actively shaping species interactions and community structures.





3. Did any of the findings surprise you?

No, not really. Based on previous studies and samplings we did expect to find a diverse trematode fauna in this host group.



4. What are some of the limitations of this study?

We did not identify any species based on molecular markers. Applying molecular tools would give us a finer resolution, and we would surely be able to discover even more (cryptic) diversity.



5. Do you expect these findings to be controversial in your field?

Nope.



6. What are the broader implications of these findings?

There is lots of diversity and complexity in all ecosystems, we just have to look closely.



7. What do people usually get wrong about this subject?

Most people see parasites mainly as disease agents. This study highlights that they are actually integral components of ecosystems and contribute to the diversity in such systems.





8. Looking back on the study, what were some of the most memorable moments for you and your colleagues?

For this you'd probably have to ask Jessi, who is the lead author on this paper and did most of the sampling and species identification.



9. What are you working on next?

I currently work on the transmission dynamics of parasites with complex life cycles, i.e. how they get from one host to another. In particular, I want to find out how climate change and global warming will affect these processes.



Thank you for your time, Chris!