



Water Research Group
Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences
North-West University, Potchefstroom

10/Sep/2018

WRG Parasitologists attended 14th ICOPA

NWU sent eight parasitologists to South Korea to attend the 14th International Congress of Parasitology (ICOPA). The conference took place from 19th to 24th August at the EXCO Convention Center, in Daegu, and brought together over 2,000 delegates. Participants shared information in the areas of parasitology under the central theme “Parasites: harms and benefits”, including discussions on the possible scientific use of parasites. It counted on 16 plenary sessions, a symposium, oral and poster presentations, satellite meetings, and workshops.



All the scientists from NWU performed oral presentations. Kick-off was with Prof. Louis du Preez, our colleague and collaborator from the NWU African Amphibian Conservation Research Group, with a great talk on a group of flatworm parasites (monogeneans) that are found on frogs, terrapins and even on the eyes of hippos.



Prof. Louis du Preez

The Water Research Group was represented by Ph.D. student Michelle van As, Ph.D. student Marliese Truter, Dr. Rachel Welicky, Dr. Courtney Cook, Dr. Olena Kudlai, Dr. Kerry Hadfield Malherbe and Prof. Nico Smit. Michelle van As presented a talk on the blood parasites of wild and captive African leopards. Dr. Rachel Welicky not only presented a talk on fish parasitic isopods from genus *Anilocra*, but also chaired a session on "Parasites of fish and marine animals."



Michelle van As, M.Sc.



Dr. Rachel Welicky

LATEST NEWS

The final day of ICOPA 2018 included the Ichthyoparasitology (parasites in fish) Session where the WRG had a strong presence with five presentations:

- Ph.D. student Marliese Truter presented her research on the co-introduced gill parasites (monogeneans) of the Large Mouth Bass, an alien fish in South Africa.
- Dr. Courtney Cook presented her work on blood parasites of marine fishes from across the world with a molecular approach.
- Dr. Olena Kudlai talked about the trematodes (flatworms) great diversity of African freshwater fishes in Africa, work developed during her post-doctoral period at NWU.
- Dr. Kerry Hadfield Malherbe addressed the vital role that crustacean fish parasites play as vectors of different important fish pathogens, including caused by viruses.
- Prof. Nico Smit showed a review of the current status of our knowledge on fish parasitic crustaceans from Africa. His presentation clearly showed that there is still a lot of new species to be discovered in the continent.



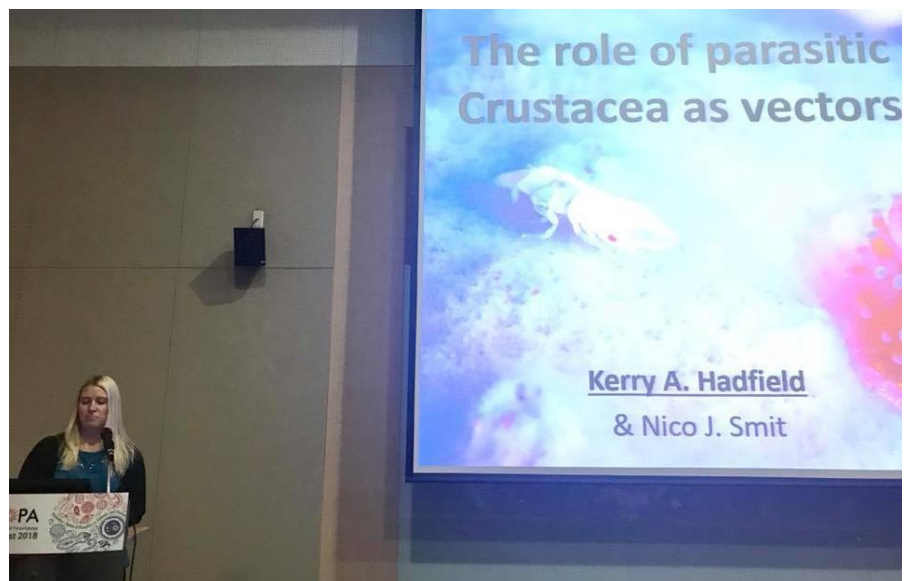
Marliese Truter, M.Sc.



Dr. Courtney Cook



Dr. Olena Kudlai



Dr. Kerry Hadfield Malherbe



Prof. Nico Smit

As for social programs, the group was invited to attend Copenhagen's bid to host ICOPA 2022, a lovely evening with wine, and Marliese Truter was on the stage as one of the pub quiz winners. They also took a break in another evening and had a food experience at the local Seomun night market.



After this great week, WRG scientists had to travel “only” 31 hours back to South Africa, and definitely with a heavier luggage of experiences and knowledge!