

11 October 2018 (e-letter online) [typo-corrected version 25 October 2018]

## Marine Bioinvasion Research From Over 40 Countries Debated in Patagonia

**Alejandro Bortolus**, Investigador Independiente, Grupo de Ecología en Ambientes Costeros (GEAC), IPEEC-CONICET, Argentina.

Other Contributors:

**Evangelina Schwindt**, Investigadora Independiente, Grupo de Ecología en Ambientes Costeros (GEAC), IBIOMAR-CONICET, Argentina

The International Conference on Marine Bioinvasions (ICMB) is a major non-profit forum for expert scientists and policymakers to push forward the discipline. The Xth edition is celebrated (October 16-18, 2018) for the first time in a Latin American country (Puerto Madryn, Chubut, Patagonia, Argentina), a region suffocated by a scientific crisis caused by a lack of budget and political support that have led, for instance, to the collapse of the Argentina Ministry of Science and threatens with first brain-drain in decades (1). Nevertheless, far from decaying, this Patagonia edition displays a formidable, geographic- and gender-balanced team of keynote speakers from five continents, the collaboration of researchers from over 40 countries and the support of editors and founding editors from prestigious journals like *Biological Invasions*, *Aquatic Invasions*, *Management of Biological Invasions*, and *PeerJ*. The speakers will lead the debates by horizon-scanning carefully selected hot-topics like marine world legislation, biosecurity and risk assessment, society and aquaculture, global warming effect on polar seas, vectors and ballast water. In addition to lowering the registration fee, the Organizing Committees found Sponsors willing to support travel awards for Early Career Scientists from 6 countries worldwide but mostly South American. A great effort was made specifically to favor young scientists devoted to marine bioinvasion biology and ecology in the region. However, above all the academic goals we can meet, the major challenge for this Patagonia edition is to increase the visibility of Marine Biological Invasions across this vast region where the lack of research (2, 3, 4), keeps favoring the making of wrong environmental decisions and commercial activities that not only involve the deliberate introduction of exotic invasive species -like salmons, oysters, castors, and algae- but also tend to increase social turmoil regionwide in time of crisis (4, 5, 6). Politicians, decision makers, and the society of the different nations involved, should understand that supporting bioinvasion scientists and stopping them from leaving the region, is a solid long-term way out of this multinational problem of dramatic global consequences.

### References

1. V. Román. Argentina's economic crisis could trigger scientific 'collapse,' researchers warn. *Science* doi:10.1126/science.aav5602 (2018)
2. E. Schwindt, A. Bortolus. Aquatic invasion biology research in South America: Geographic patterns, advances and Perspectives. *Aquat. Ecosyst. Health Manag.*, 20, 322–333 (2017)
3. A. Bortolus, E. Schwindt. What would have Darwin written now? *Biod. Cons.* 16, 337–345 (2007)
4. D. Gomez-Uchida, M. Sepúlveda, B. Ernst, T.A. Contador, S. Neira, C. Harrod. Chile's salmon escape demands action. *Science* 361, 857-858 (2018)
5. Clarin. <https://www.clarin.com/sociedad/cientificos-argentinos-cuestionan-instal...>
6. En Argentina cuestionan la posible instalación de centros salmoneros en el Canal Beagle. <http://www.mundoacuicola.cl/new/2018/10/09/en-argentina-cuestionan-la-po...>