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World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology

WAAVP

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Cover picture courtesy of Prof. Andrei Mihalca

The President´s Message

November, 2025

Dear *Colleagues and Friends*,

It is a great honour and personal joy to write to you for the first time as President of the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology (WAAVP). I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Executive Committee for their confidence in me, and to all of you for your ongoing dedication to our community. I am humbled to follow in the footsteps of the many inspiring leaders who have guided our Association since its founding, and I look forward to building on their legacy. Special thanks to our Past President, my dear friend Professor Domenico Otranto, for his outstanding leadership over the past six years.

In 1985, Brazil hosted the WAAVP in Rio de Janeiro. Forty years later, the WAAVP conference returned to Brazil, this time in Curitiba! Professor Marcelo Molento (Chair of the Local Organizing Committee), Professor Livio Costa Junior (Chair of the Scientific Committee), and the entire organizing committee made every effort to ensure the conference was memorable!

> *"...a professional milestone and a personal highlight"*

This conference was, for me, both a professional milestone and a personal highlight. The energy in every session, the thoughtful discussions, and the enthusiasm of so many young scientists reminded me of why I first became involved with WAAVP years ago: I found a community that shared my curiosity and commitment to improving animal and human health. Seeing that same spark in the eyes of students and early-career colleagues in Curitiba was profoundly moving. It reassured me that the spirit of WAAVP is alive and thriving.

As I begin this term, I am convinced that WAAVP stands at a critical crossroads. Veterinary parasitology faces both remarkable opportunities and formidable challenges. Advances in molecular biology, genomics, epidemiological modelling, data science, and artificial intelligence are reshaping our understanding of parasites and their interactions with hosts and environments. Yet at the same time, the global context is changing rapidly — with climate variability, land-use transformation, and increased animal movement influencing the dynamics of parasitic infections in ways we are only beginning to grasp.

In this landscape, WAAVP plays a vital role. Our Association brings together veterinarians, scientists, educators, students, clinicians, and industry professionals from every region of the world. This diversity of expertise and perspective is our greatest strength. It enables us not only to generate new knowledge but to translate it into action, to inform policies, improve animal welfare, and contribute to sustainable food systems and One Health.

The future of veterinary parasitology depends on our ability to engage, mentor, and empower young scientists. During my presidency, one of my key priorities will be to expand opportunities for mentorship, training, and networking for our younger members. I envision WAAVP offering more year-round initiatives—such as online seminars, thematic working groups, and exchange programs—that allow early-career scientists to learn from established experts and to collaborate across borders. These efforts are not merely investments in individual careers; they are investments in the very future of our discipline. The Executive Committee and our Subcommittees are already developing an action plan to strengthen existing programs and to launch new initiatives that reflect this commitment.

WAAVP has always been more than a professional society. It is a community bound by shared curiosity, respect, and purpose. Our strength lies in maintaining

Our strength lies in maintaining this sense of belonging, even as we grow and evolve

this sense of belonging, even as we grow and evolve. I encourage all members to stay engaged throughout the year by sharing updates, proposing initiatives, and contributing ideas for how WAAVP can continue to serve its members and the broader scientific community. Communication will remain a central pillar of our strategy. By strengthening our visibility through our newsletters, social media, and partnerships with other organizations, we can enhance the impact of our science and amplify the voice of parasitology in global health conversations.

Finally, I would like to extend a warm invitation to those who are not yet members of WAAVP. Whether you are beginning your first research project or are an established professional, WAAVP offers a unique and welcoming platform to share your work, exchange ideas, and contribute to a global effort to advance veterinary parasitology. Our strength grows with each new member who brings fresh ideas, diverse experiences, and a commitment to collaboration.

As I look to the years ahead, I feel a deep sense of optimism. We are part of a discipline that not only deepens our understanding of life's complexity but also delivers tangible benefits to society. I am confident that, together, we can continue to ensure that WAAVP remains a source of scientific excellence, professional growth, and friendship for generations to come.

I look forward to working with all of you to shape the next chapter in WAAVP's remarkable story.

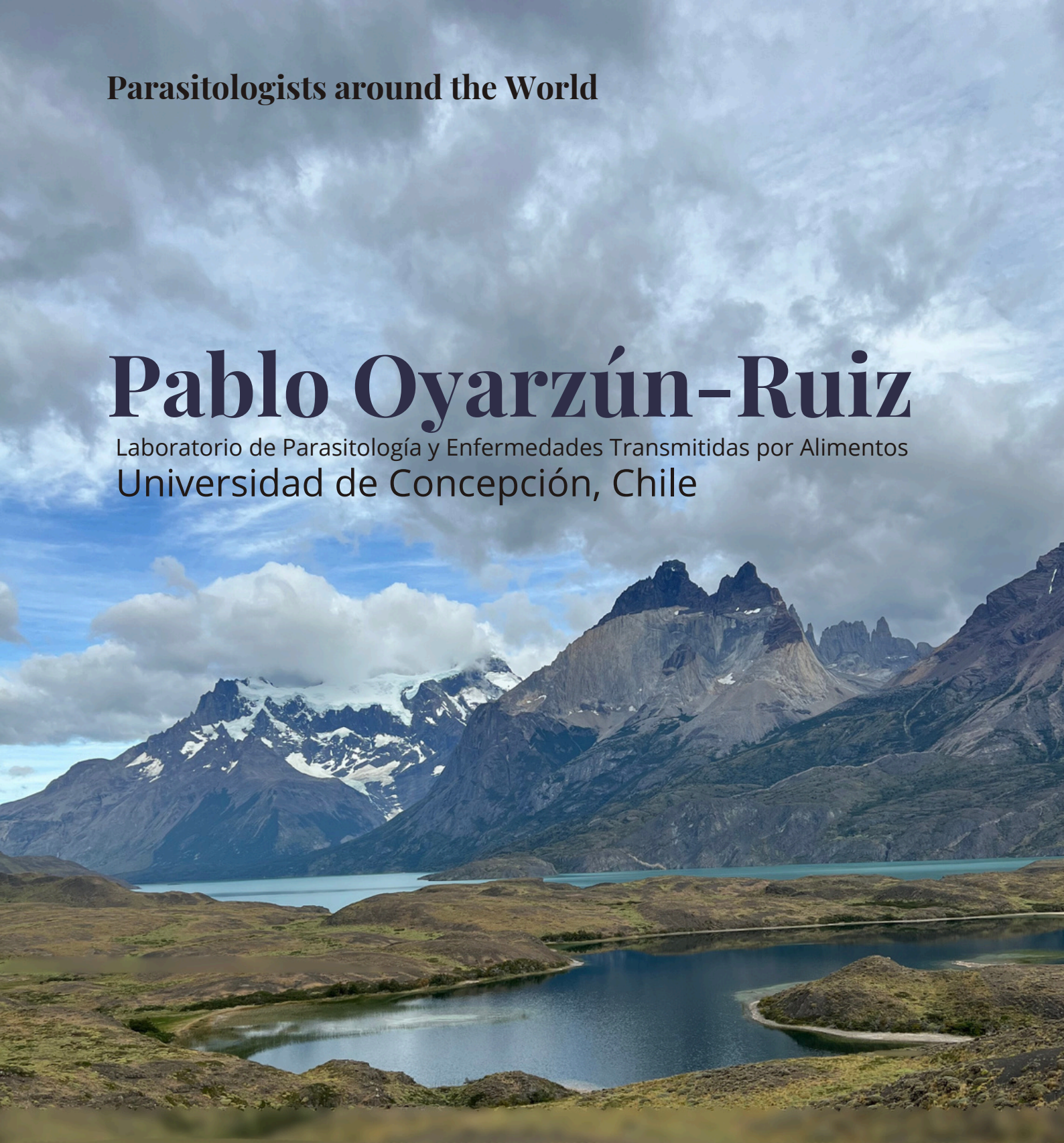
With warm regards and renewed enthusiasm,

Filipe

Filipe Dantas-Torres
President, World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology

Pablo Oyarzún-Ruiz

Laboratorio de Parasitología y Enfermedades Transmitidas por Alimentos
Universidad de Concepción, Chile



Our laboratory is based in Concepción, Biobío region, Southern Chile, at the University of Concepción (UdeC), surrounded by natural areas such as coast, wetlands and native forests, which are particularly important for the study of native and exotic parasites and their impact on animal and human health.

We offer lectures to a wide array of undergrad and graduated students from diverse areas related to human and animal health, including theses guidance. Also, we are committed to engaging with community through talks and laboratory visits to schools and museums.

Our laboratory has a long history that began decades ago, dedicated initially to diagnosing human parasites and bacteria. Over the years, our focus has expanded to include animal parasites as well—reflecting the growing recognition that human, animal, and environmental health are deeply interconnected. Today, our work embraces the One Health perspective, exploring how these relationships shape the health of both people and animals in a changing world.

Our main research interests center on zoonotic parasites, including both micro- and macroparasites. We also study parasites from wildlife, whether native or invasive, to better understand their ecology, evolution, and potential health impacts.

Our key research lines include:

1. Water-borne protozoans (e.g., *Blastocystis* spp., *Cryptosporidium* spp., and *Giardia duodenalis*): detecting them in natural and wastewater sources, using both microscopic and molecular methods.
2. Avian schistosomatids: investigating their life cycles and zoonotic potential through an integrative approach combining morphological techniques (staining, SEM) and molecular characterization.
3. Wildlife parasite biodiversity: documenting the diversity of parasites in native and exotic hosts to understand their ecological roles and emerging risks.

We actively collaborate with scientists across the country and internationally, including partners in the United States, Argentina, and Spain. By expanding this global network, we aim to deepen our understanding of parasite systematics, population dynamics, and zoonotic risks—ultimately contributing to healthier ecosystems and communities.

Today, our work embraces the One Health perspective, exploring how these relationships shape the health of both people and animals in a changing world.

Strengths: highlights and speciality of the Lab

Our laboratory conducts research at the interface of parasitology, microbiology, and public health, with emphasis on zoonotic and environmental pathogens affecting humans and animals within a One Health framework.

Microparasites and Microbiology

One main research line focuses on microparasites and microbiology, particularly the detection and characterization of zoonotic and environmental pathogens transmitted through water and food. We study protozoa such as *Cryptosporidium* sp., *Giardia duodenalis*, and *Blastocystis* sp., alongside bacterial pathogens including *Salmonella* spp., *Escherichia coli*, and *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Our laboratory applies a combination of classical and advanced methods—microscopy, bacterial culture, biochemical profiling, PCR, and immunofluorescence—for pathogen detection and molecular characterization. This work contributes to evaluating sewage treatment technologies, developing rapid diagnostic tools for foodborne pathogens, and informing strategies to prevent water- and foodborne diseases.

Wildlife Helminths and Avian Schistosomatids

Another major research line examines helminths from wildlife, focusing on avian schistosomatids (Digenea: Schistosomatidae), trematodes with life cycles involving aquatic birds and mollusks. These parasites cause Human Cercarial Dermatitis (HCD) in recreational waterbodies worldwide.

Our group—the only team in Chile dedicated to this research—uses an integrative morphological and molecular approach to study these species in freshwater and marine ecosystems. To date, we have reported over a dozen taxa, some linked to local HCD cases.

By filling critical knowledge gaps on their phylogeny and zoonotic potential, this work enhances understanding of digenean evolution and highlights the importance of wildlife parasites under climate change. The laboratory currently leads a nationally funded project on these neglected parasites, in collaboration with national and international partners.

Best Three papers

Suarez, P., Fernandez, I., Alonso, J. L., & Vidal, G. (2025). Evidence of Waterborne Parasites in Mussels for Human Consumption Harvested from a Recreational and Highly Productive Bay. Microorganisms, 13(9), 1971. https://doi.org/10.3390/MICROORGANISMS13091971

Oyarzún-Ruiz, P., Thomas, R., Santodomingo, A., Zamorano-Uribe, M., Moroni, M., Moreno, L., Muñoz-Leal, S., Flores, V., & Brant, S. (2024). Systematics and life cycles of four avian schistosomatids from Southern Cone of South America. Journal of Helminthology, 98, e47. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022149X24000035X

Fernández, I., de Los Ríos-Escalante, P., Valenzuela, A., Aguayo, P., Smith, C. T., García-Cancino, A., Sánchez-Alonso, K., Oyarzún, C., & Campos, V. L. (2021). Gastrointestinal Microbiota and Parasite-Fauna of Wild Dissostichus eleginoides Smitt, 1898 Captured at the South-Central Coast of Chile. Microorganisms, 9(12), 2522. https://doi.org/10.3390/MICROORGANISMS9122522

Introducing the team

Pablo Oyarzún-Ruiz, DVM, PhD

Is a Veterinarian with MSc and PhD degrees. He does research on parasitic fauna from wildlife, considering an integrative approach, i.e. morphological and molecular characterization. Currently, he is working on the lifecycles and systematics of avian schistosomatids, a neglected group of zoonotic helminths from aquatic ecosystems.

Pilar Suárez, PhD

Is a Biochemist with an M.Sc. in Microbiology and PhD(c) in Environmental Sciences. She researches protozoan such as *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, and *Blastocystis* in aquatic systems, and foodborne bacteria (*Salmonella*, *E. coli*, *S. aureus*), identifying pathogens in water and food using microbiological and molecular tools to support public health.

Ítalo Fernández, DVM, PhD

Ítalo is a Veterinarian and PhD. He has dedicated his career to the study of parasites transmitted by fishes and other marine animals, mostly on anisakid worms. He is interested in understanding how climate change will modify the host-parasite interactions in the marine ecosystems.

Our journey to the world's
parasitology laboratories continues:

What about yours?

Scan the QR code and fill in the form:

PHD

Divakaran Pandian, Ph.D.

Department of Veterinary Sciences, FAPPZ
Czech University of Life Sciences

I'm Divakaran Pandian. I left Pondicherry, India, with an M.Sc. in Molecular Biology and one question that wouldn't let go: *how do tiny parasites reshape ecosystems that put humans and animals' lives at risk?*

That question carried me to Prague, Czech Republic, where I recently completed my Ph.D. at the Czech University of Life Sciences under the supervision of Prof. David Modrý. My work sits at the intersection of **field epidemiology and infection biology.** I spend nights in the field recording habitats, hosts, and mornings in the lab turning those notes into data. I mainly focused on rodent-and snail-borne zoonoses, using the rat lungworm, *Angiostrongylus cantonensis*, as my model. It cycles between rats and snails, but sometimes detours into humans, causing eosinophilic meningitis (neuroangiostrongyliasis) and, rarely, eye disease and sometimes both.

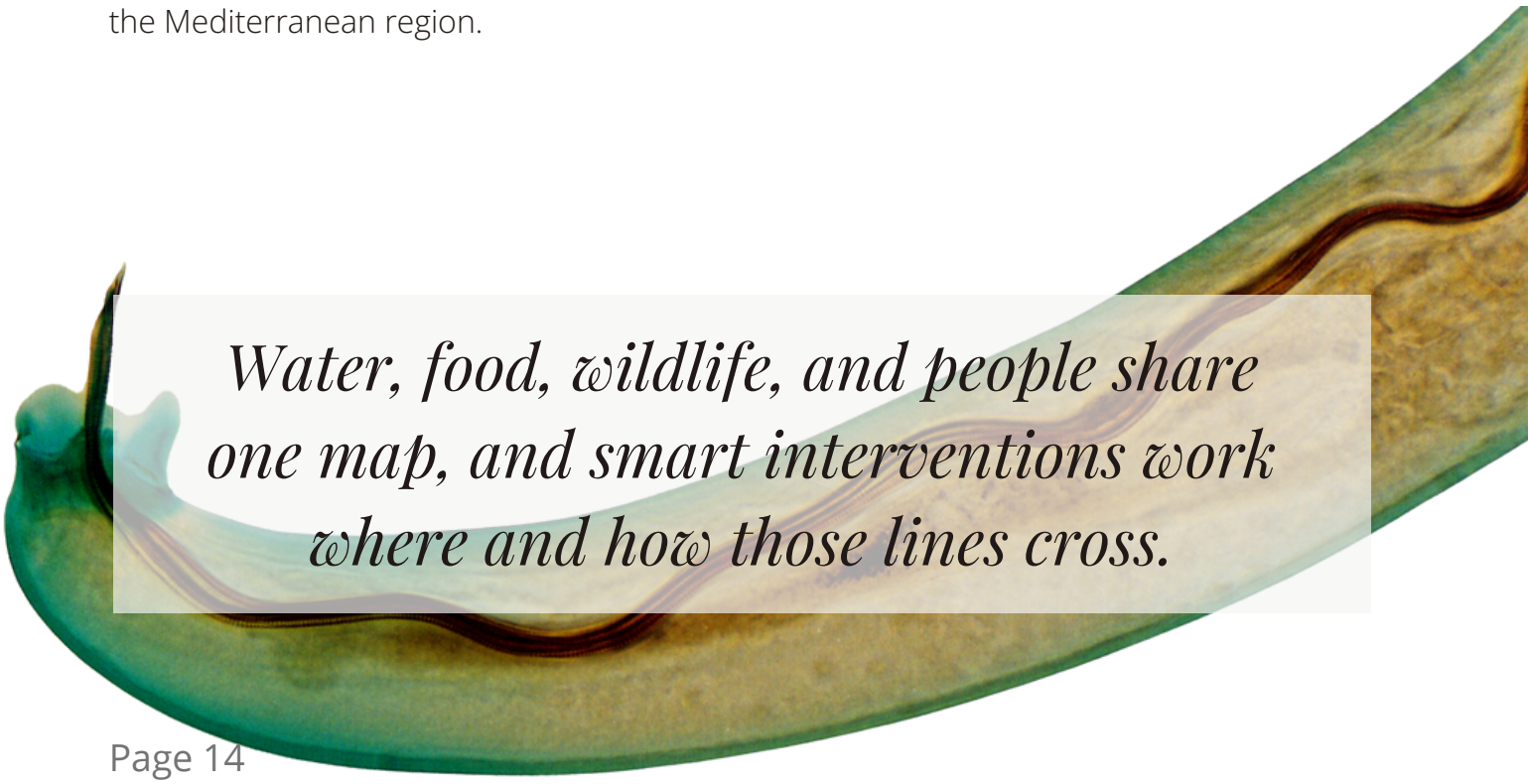
Why this worm?

Because tracking where it moves across continents, spectrum of hosts, watersheds, and food webs lets me connect terrestrial and aquatic systems and translate risk into zoonoses. It's One Health in practice: careful fieldwork, molecular diagnostics, with my Ph.D. finished, I'm pushing further into these hidden transmission pathways, so the parasite keeps fewer secrets, and public health stays a step ahead. As a young researcher and a rat man, my work has been built around rats and the snails that share their habitats in a practical search for A. cantonensis.

The parasite and its disease are well documented across Asian countries, the Americas, and parts of the Pacific. By contrast, India has been under-studied; my PhD addressed this gap by providing first molecular detection and a clearer picture of the *A. cantonensis* situation in southern part of India and, in parallel, in the Mediterranean region.

With recent animal infection cases and detections around the Mediterranean in recent times, I focused part of my work on Italy (Naples/Campania) to anchor regional risk. I coordinated urban and peri-urban trapping in Naples/Campania and documented A. cantonensis in local rodent populations with molecular support. This was the first local detection backed by sequence data for the area and helped anchor Italy's risk picture in evidence rather than speculation. The study linked detections to real urban settings, markets, drains, green corridors where human exposure pathways are plausible.

Fieldwork in southern India taught me that "rats are everywhere" is not a dataset. Prevalence is patchy, seasonal, and shaped by human behavior. In Naples/Campania, during an Erasmus exchange at the University of Naples, the urban gradient sharpened that lesson



Water, food, wildlife, and people share one map, and smart interventions work where and how those lines cross.

markets, drains, and green corridors create repeatable hotspots where rodents, snails, and people intersect. Those trips were demanding and deeply instructive, not because catching rats is "fun," but because the discipline of careful trapping, standardized necropsy, and clean molecular reads turns speculation into maps that public-health teams can use. That is the craft I enjoy: methodical, transparent, and anchored to real places

My experimental work on bivalves and zooplankton examined whether freshwater organisms act solely as filters or as transient hosts in aquatic pathways. I found that bivalves can temporarily retain larvae, posing food-borne risks, while zooplankton showed modest but consistent behavioral and physiological responses influencing larval movement in food webs.

Why this work matters, surveillance often stops at "rats and snails," yet exposure flows through water use, informal markets, raw meat consumption and food habits. Going forward, my postdoctoral plan is straightforward: (i) extend *A. cantonensis* mapping into under-studied countries; (ii) run systematic prevalence surveys in rodents and intermediate hosts (adding eDNA where useful); and (iii) build awareness modules that municipalities and health workers can deploy quickly as One health approach. The aim is measurable One Health impact: clearer transmission points, and fewer infections because interventions land where they matter.

If I were a parasite, definitively, I'd pick the rat-lungworm's infective stage L3: small, mobile, and opportunistic. Rides from snails to rats, sometimes via lizards, crustaceans, or amphibians and occasionally, us. Following its trail teaches a simple lesson: water, food, wildlife, and people share one map, and smart interventions work where and how those lines cross.

"இது எனது உயர் வரைவிலக்கணத்தில் ஒட்டுண்ணிகள் கதை"

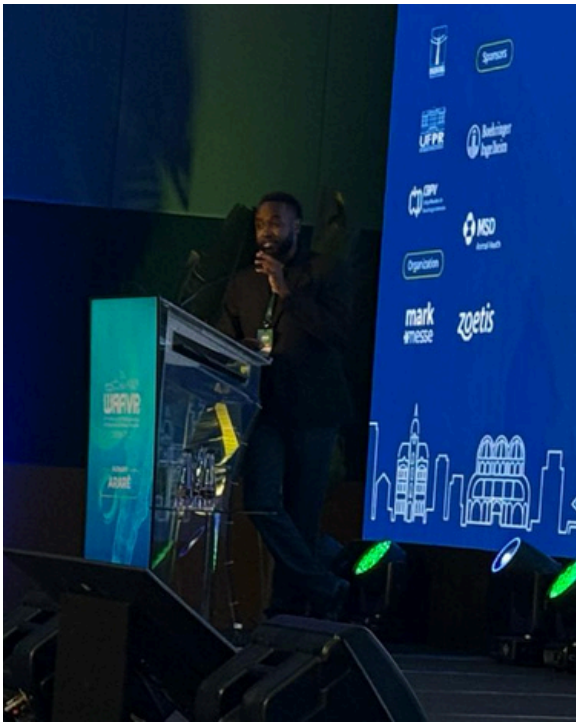
(This is my Parasite in High-Definition story for you)

Editors of PHD section:
Jairo Mendoza-Roldán and Marcos Antonio Bezerra-Santos

30th WAAVP Conference
African Foundation Travel Award Bursaries

Ian Daniel

PhD Candidate, Texas A&M University



Thanks to a travel scholarship from the WAAVP African Foundation, I attended the 30th Conference of the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology (WAAVP) in Curitiba, Brazil. This global gathering brought together researchers, practitioners, and students to share cutting-edge advances in veterinary parasitology. I am grateful for this opportunity and acknowledge the incredible role that the WAAVP African Foundation is playing in supporting students from low- and middle-income countries. By recognizing the unique challenges faced by African scholars and creating opportunities for inclusion, the foundation empowers African scientists to share their valuable research with the global veterinary parasitology community.

I presented my research on using advanced mass spectrometry technology to identify ticks in North America. The presentation, titled "Matrix-Assisted Laser Desorption/Ionization Time-of-Flight Mass Spectrometry (MALDI-TOF MS) as an emerging tool for high-throughput identification of major vectors," sparked valuable discussions with experts who provided insights that will guide my future work. The conference featured an exceptional number of presentations on ticks and tick-borne diseases—more than I've seen at any single event.

"A global gathering advancing veterinary parasitology and fostering African-led research"

valuable discussions with experts who provided insights that will guide my future work. The conference featured an exceptional number of presentations on ticks and tick-borne diseases—more than I've seen at any single event. I had the opportunity to meet renowned scientists whose published work I had studied, transforming names on research papers into real collaborative relationships. A standout feature was the WAAVP African Network booth, which connected researchers from across the continent. This initiative promotes African-led research and reinforced my commitment to advancing parasitology throughout Africa.

Beyond the scientific program, exploring Curitiba with new colleagues was memorable. We visited the Capybara Park, botanical gardens, and enjoyed evening activities along the main street, strengthening the professional bonds formed during conference sessions. Finally, I would like to appreciate the following individuals who played a major role in making my research and conference attendance successful: Professor Rosina Krecek, Dr. Guilherme Verocai (Director of the Parasitology Diagnostic Lab at Texas A&M University), Dr. Maureen Laroche (University of Texas Medical Branch), and everyone else who supported me and provided feedback on my work.

30th WAAVP Conference
African Foundation Travel Award Bursaries

Ines Hammami

BSc, MSc, PhD Tunisia

I am honored and grateful to have been awarded the travel grant from the WAAVP African Foundation, which provided me with a valuable opportunity to attend the 30th Conference of the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology (WAAVP).

This prestigious event took place in the beautiful city of Curitiba, Brazil, from August 17 to August 21, 2025. Participating in this conference has been an exceptional experience, allowing me to engage with leading researchers and professionals in the field of veterinary parasitology.

The conference provided a platform for the exchange of cutting-edge knowledge, innovative research, and best practices, which I believe will significantly contribute to my ongoing and future work. Most importantly, the networking opportunities at this congress were invaluable. Connecting with fellow researchers from across Africa and around the world has opened new avenues for collaboration and knowledge sharing. These interactions are essential for fostering scientific growth and advancing our collective efforts in combating parasitic diseases.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the WAAVP African Foundation for their generous support, which made this enriching experience possible. Your contribution has not only enhanced my professional development but also strengthened the global community dedicated to veterinary parasitology. Thank you once again for your support and belief in my work.

Empowering collaboration and knowledge sharing across the global veterinary parasitology network

Additionally, I had the chance to explore the beautiful city of Curitiba. Highlights included visiting Parque Barrigui, observing the endemic Capybaras, and exploring the Jardim Botânico , truly a celebration of nature and culture.

Looking forward to applying what I have learned and continuing to contribute to this vibrant community!

30th WAAVP Conference
African Foundation Travel Award Bursaries

Elisha Chatanga

I am very grateful to the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology African Foundation (WAAVP-AF) for the travel award that I received to attend this conference. The conference helped me to present my research to an international audience where I received feedback that will help to improve my research. I was also able to listen to other new advances that are being made in veterinary parasitology research that challenged me and provided some insight into new research areas. This conference helped me to network with other researchers and create new collaborations.

I was also privileged to attend the official launch of the FAO guidelines for sustainable tick control and acaricide resistance management in livestock by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations that took place during the conference. This highlighted the linkage that WAAVP as a professional body has with other international institutions.

Together with my fellow awardees of WAAVP-AF Travel Award for the 30th WAAVP Congress, Curitiba Brazil and Professor Rodger Prichard

With Professor Juan Joel Mosqueda Gualito from Autonomous University of Queretaro in Mexico

Prize Awardees at the 30th WAAVP conference 2025

Dr. Guadalupe Miró

Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

WAAVP Excellence in Teaching and Service Award 2025

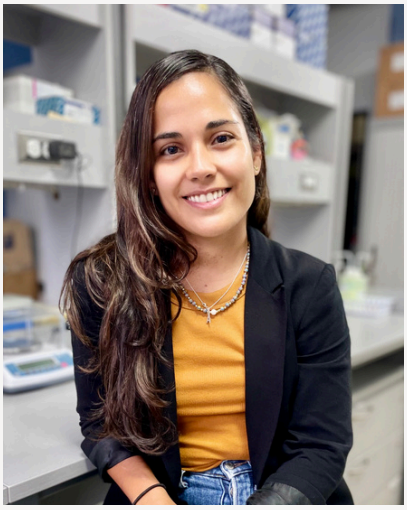
Dr. Miró has devoted nearly 40 years to teaching, mentoring, and advancing veterinary parasitology. She has supervised numerous doctoral theses, trained EVPC residents, and led clinical parasitology services. With 140+ publications, 18 books, and 40+ collaborations, her research includes innovative antiparasitic drug development. An expert in canine leishmaniosis, she co-founded LeishVet and serves as President of ESCCAP Spain.

Prof. Jan Šlapeta

University of Sydney, Australia

WAAVP Research Excellence Award 2025

A leading expert in parasite biodiversity, evolution, and disease transmission, Prof. Jan Šlapeta works in experimental parasitology, molecular diagnostics, and One Health. Notable achievements include discovering *Chromera velia*, advancing parasite taxonomy, and studying dingoes' role in neosporosis. With 240+ publications, mentoring 50+ students, and editorial leadership, he was awarded the 2024 Ian Clunies Ross Memorial Award.



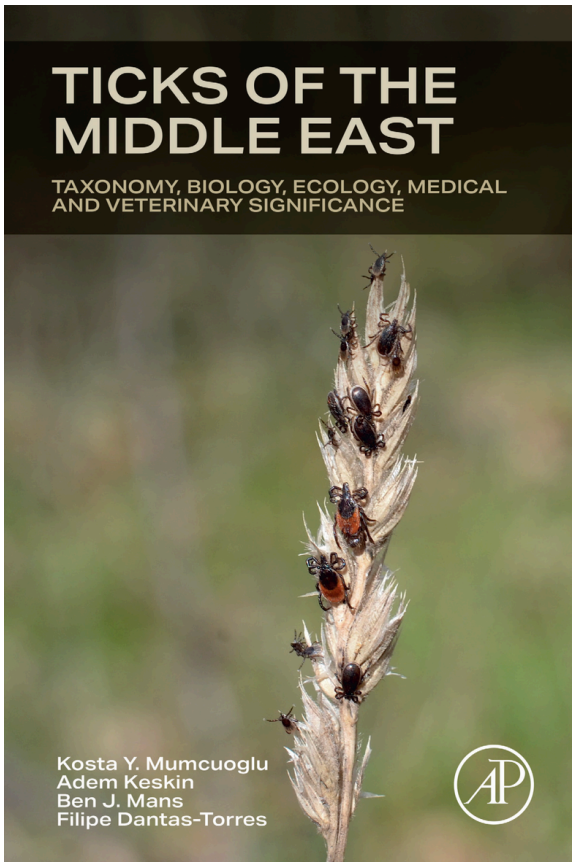
Prof. Alicia Rojas

University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica

Peter Nansen Young Scientist Award 2025

A distinguished veterinary parasitologist, integrates bioinformatics, histopathology, molecular biology, and microscopy to study parasites in animals and humans. She earned her PhD at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, focusing on *Spirocerca lupi*, and conducted postdoctoral malaria research at the Weizmann Institute. With 80+ publications, she serves on TroCCAP's , and received the Odile Bain (2020) and Anneke Levelt-Senger (2022) awards.

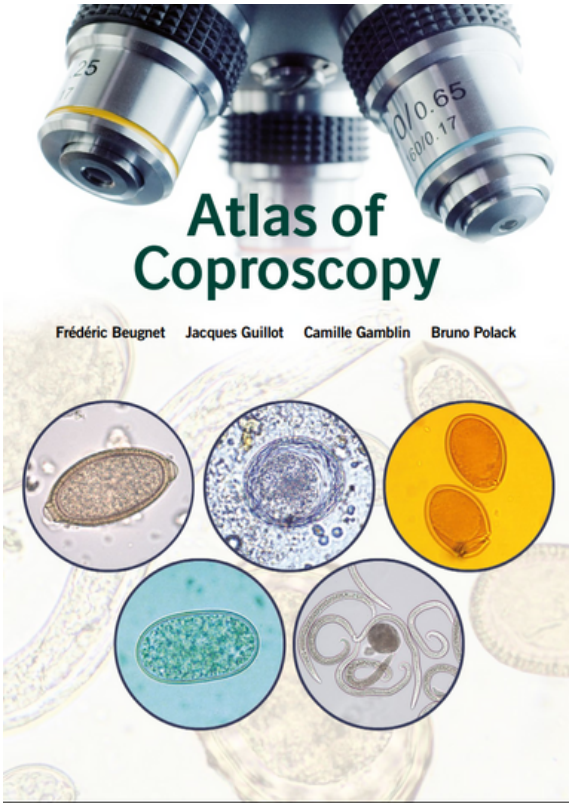
New books in town



Ticks of the Middle East

Ticks of the Middle East compiles expert knowledge on tick taxonomy, distribution, ecology, and medical/veterinary importance in the region. It includes tick research history, geoclimatic context, species maps, and country lists, offering a concise reference on Middle Eastern tick species and tick-borne diseases.

Get your book here



Atlas of Coproscopy

Atlas of Coproscopy is a practical, image-rich reference for parasite identification. Designed for veterinarians and lab technicians, it combines clear visuals with concise descriptions. Its balance of clarity, depth, and usability makes it an indispensable tool for accurate parasitological diagnostics in both clinical and research settings.

Get your book here

Upcoming events

WAAVP conference 2027 in Berlin

In 22 – 26 August 2027, the 31st conference of the WAAVP will take place in Berlin, Germany. The motto of the conference will be "No matter when, no matter how: Veterinary Parasitology units us all".

Accordingly, all areas of veterinary parasitology will be represented and researchers, scientists, stakeholders, practitioners, as well as everyone interested in veterinary parasitology will be most welcome to attend.

For a first glance of the programme, venue and organization, please visit the conference website at 31st WAAVP

Also, feel free to sign up for our newsletter Newsletter sign up!

Upcoming events

VIII International Meeting on Apicomplexa in Farm Animals

ApicoWplexa 2026 in Lodi, Italy, invites researchers, students, and professionals to explore advances in managing apicomplexan parasites affecting livestock. This renowned conference fosters collaboration and innovation, featuring cutting-edge research on One Health, parasite biology, host interactions, diagnostics, drug development, and vaccine strategies within a vibrant scientific community.

Find more information on the [conference´s website]

Upcoming events

Conferences, courses and symposia

British Society of Parasitology Spring meeting 2026
7-9 April Glasgow, Scotland
Link to more information

XVII Parasitology Summer Course

27 June - 3 July, 2026
Basilicata, Italy
https://www.parasitology.ro/fipars/

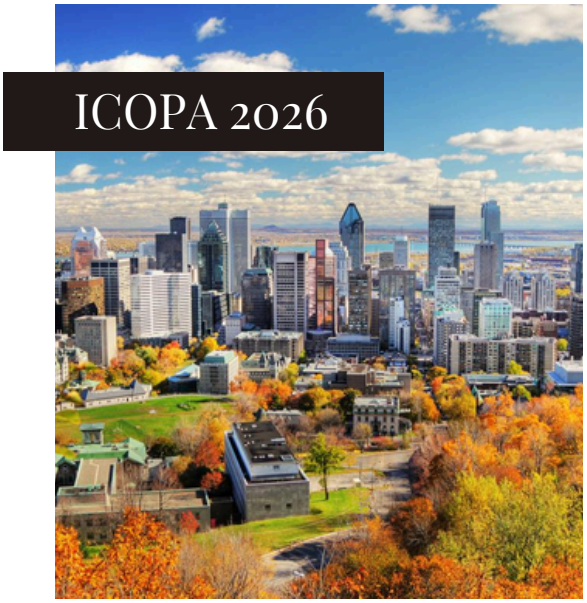
Australian Society for Parasitology Annual Conference
29 June - 2 July, 2026
Queensland, Australia
https://www.parasite.org.au/conferences/

Field Parasitology Summer School

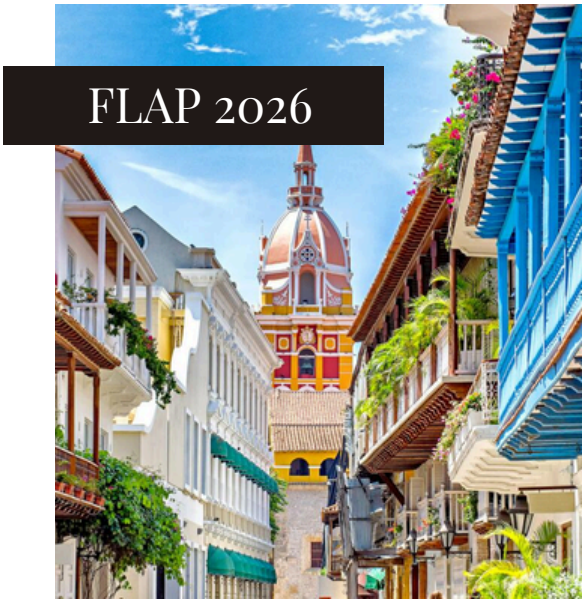
23-31 July, 2026
Danube Delta, Romania
https://www.parasitology.ro/fipars/

Upcoming events

Conferences, courses and symposia



International Congress of Parasitology
16-21 August, 2026
Montreal, Canada
www.icopa2026.org



28th Congress of the Federación Latinoamericana de Parasitología
27-30 October, 2026
Cartagena de Indias, Colombia
https://www.flap2026.com/

WAAVP

Social networks

Follow our social network accounts for parasite-related content! Also, share your pictures about lab life, job opportunities, work and parasites with the hashtag **#worldparasitology**

@worldparasitology

@worldparasitology

@worldparasitology

Information

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WAAVP Newsletter submission deadlines:

The WAAVP Newsletter is published twice a year with issues in April and November. Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome and should be submitted by the first day of the month prior to issue, as follows:

Next newsletter release dates:
April 15th, 2026
Submission deadline:
March 1st, 2026