

sDiv working group meeting summary

writing retreat

"sNiche"

Lauren, Karen and I worked to integrate stochasticity into community ecology in a more comprehensive way. While the concept of stochasticity is fully embraced by population ecologists, the same is not yet true for community ecologists. Based on what we know about stochasticity from the population level, we have now created a framework (both visual and verbal) to describe how stochasticity has both direct and propagating effects on communities of organisms. In this framework we emphasize that stochasticity has structure and can produce predictable outcomes for communities.

Our writing retreat was sponsored by iDiv but occurred in the Cleveland, OH, USA. Remaining in the United States resulted in several positives. First, this greatly benefitted an early career female scientist, Lauren Shoemaker, who is currently a graduate student and is defending in the next few months. She did not have time to make the overseas trip, so funding the retreat within the United States allowed our group to make progress on the synthesis paper while not causing undue stress to Lauren as she finishes up her PhD. Additionally, our retreat was very productive because we did not have to deal with jet lag so we could be at our highest level of productivity. Finally, we also greatly reduced our CO₂ footprint. By keeping the writing retreat in the US and visiting one of the three members who participated in the retreat, we reduced our CO₂ footprint by 217 tonnes of CO₂ (221 tonnes CO₂ for all three of us to fly to Leipzig, as compared to 4 tonnes of CO₂ for two of us to travel to Cleveland).

One additional benefit to having the retreat in Cleveland was that we were able to pitch our ideas to a new audience that was not present when we initially developed the ideas nor have helped us develop the project. We presented our paper to the joint Karen Abbott/Robin Snyder lab group meeting and the students, postdocs and faculty all provided great comments on how to improve our message for our readers. The manuscript will be much better for having discussed it with a new audience.

Thank you again for funding this writing retreat!

LaurenS

(Lauren Shoemaker and Lauren Sullivan – we are very happy our names fit the sDiv "s" theme but backwards)