

Newsletter, December 2023



SORTEE

Society for Open, Reliable, and Transparent
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

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SORTEE leadership for 2024 - Board of Directors

Congratulations to the SORTEE members elected to three-year terms on the board of directors for 2024-2026! These newly elected board members are:

Open seat:

Saeed Shafiei Sabet is an Assistant Professor and reader in Animal Behaviour at University of Guilan, Iran, interested in anthropogenic noise impacts, bioacoustics, animal welfare, and open science.

Early career seat (<10 years post PhD):

Matthieu Paquet is a researcher working on behavioural ecology and population dynamics at the Theoretical and Experimental Ecology Station (SETE, CNRS).

Later career seat (>10 years post PhD):

Malgorzata (Losia) Lagisz is a Research Fellow at the University of New South Wales Sydney, where she works on meta-research and evidence synthesis.

Our new board members listed above will replace the last of the founding board members whose terms are coming to end:

Rose O’Dea, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Melbourne in Australia. Rose has served as SORTEE co-founder, member of the inaugural conference and media committees, chair of the membership committee in 2021, SORTEE secretary in 2022, and President-Elect followed by President in 2023. Although Rose’s term on the board is ending, in 2024 she will continue to serve on the executive committee as president, as well as chair of the member engagement committee.

Dom Roche, a senior policy advisor at the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Dom was a founding member, served as SORTEE president in 2022, and has led SORTEE's fundraising efforts since our founding. Dom will continue to lead the fundraising committee next year, and will serve on the executive committee as past-president. SORTEE's financial stability is in large part thanks to the work of Dom and we are grateful that he is continuing this work.

Tim Parker, a professor at Whitman College in the US. Tim was a SORTEE co-founder, SORTEE's first president in 2021, chaired the committee that put on SORTEE's first conference in 2021, and served as the Media Committee chair in 2023. We are grateful for the solid foundation that Tim has laid for SORTEE's activities. Fortunately for us, Tim will continue to offer his help and wisdom as the chair of the media committee in 2024.

SORTEE leadership for 2024 - Executive committee

Executive committee positions are selected by the members of the Board of Directors. For this coming year, the positions will be as follows:

President: Rose O'Dea

Past-president: Dom Roche

Treasurer: Alexa Fredston

President-Elect: Ed Ivimey-Cook

Secretary: Kaija Gahm

SORTEE leadership for 2024 - Committee chairs

SORTEE runs on the work of volunteers, and we are fortunate that multiple highly capable SORTEE members have volunteered to lead our committees, where the bulk of SORTEE's work gets done. Our 2024 committee chairs are as follows:

Advocacy: Joel Pick

Conference: Marija Purgar

Diversity, equity, inclusion: Brooke Long-Fox

EcoEvoRxiv: Dan Noble

Education and outreach: Iain Moodie

Fundraising: Dom Roche

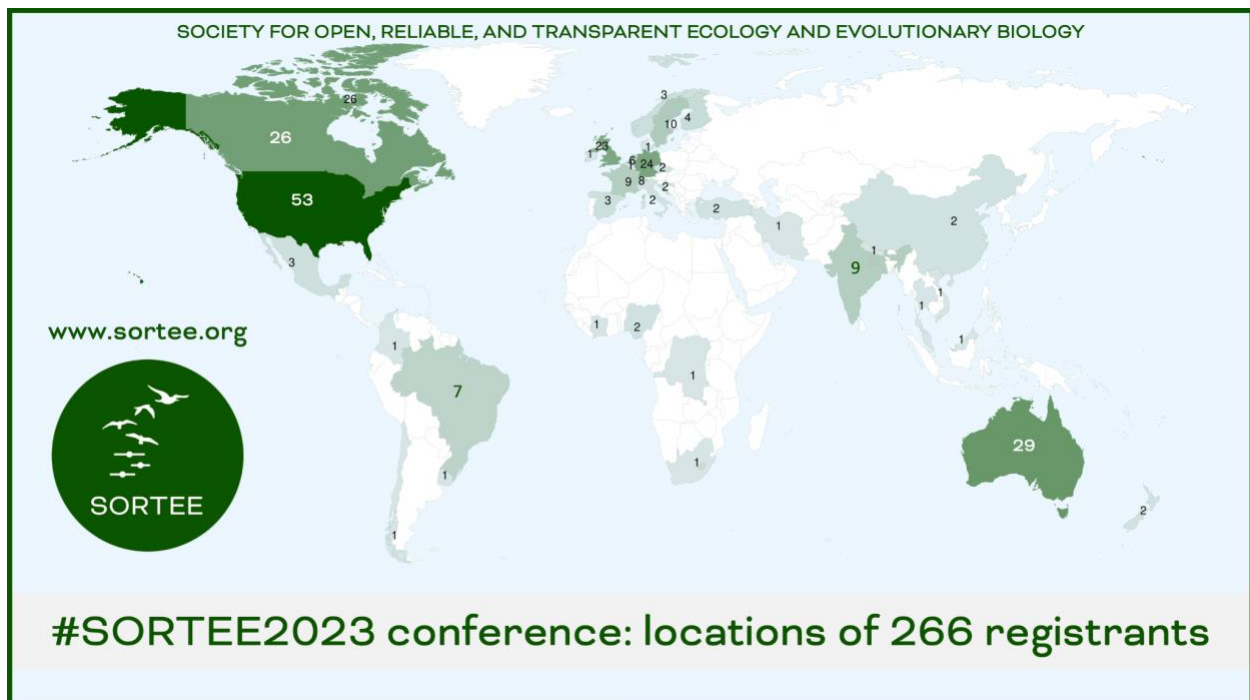
Media: Tim Parker

Member engagement: Rose O’Dea

2023 SORTEE Conference recap

Thank you to all who participated in our conference this year!

The SORTEE 2023 annual conference was held over 25 hours virtually on October 17-18, with **266 registrants attending from 36 countries across 6 continents.**



The conference consisted of **8 unconferences, 5 hackathons, and 5 workshops.** To view the full list of events, you can access the [conference information pack](#).

We are thankful to our wonderful conference event facilitators: Aldo Compagnoni, Alexa Fredston, Alfredo Sánchez-Tójar, Alice Rosen, Antica Culina, Benno Simmons, Celia Charron, Christina Hernández, Connor Bernard, Daniel Noble, David Mellor, Kaija Gahm, Losia Lagisz, Marija Purgar, Matthew Grainger, Nick Moran, Oliver Spacey, Rachel Turba, Rob Salguero-Gómez, Rose O’Dea, Rose Trappes, Samuel Gascoigne, Shinichi Nakagawa, Tim Parker, Easton White, Edward Ivimey-Cook, Ella Boycan, Elliot Gould, Eric Scott, Erin Macartney, Erola Fenollosa, Gregor-Fausto Siegmund, Joel Pick, José Capa Salinas and Judy Che-Castaldo!

A report of the unconference session on "Complexities of reuse and synthesis in the open data landscape" can be found [here](#).

Six of these events benefited from American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. The University of New Hampshire covered the costs of ASL interpretation and we are really thankful to the interpreters Halene Anderson, Esther Leonard, Shawna Chrostowski, and Erin Spear.

Also thanks to our volunteers Alexa Fredston, Arpita Ghosh, Caleb Onoja, Dom Roche, Gregor-Fausto Siegmund, Kaija Gahm, Leonardo Capitani, Losia Lagisz, Matt Jones, Natasha Gownaris, Patrice Pottier, Saeed Shafiei Sabet, Swastika Issar, Tim Parker, Tom Ratz and Varvara Vladimirova!

If you registered for the conference and haven’t filled up our feedback form, **please share your thoughts with us in this [short anonymous survey](#)**. We have got very few responses and are eager to get your feedback as we will soon start planning the 2024 event.

Do you have any questions or suggestions regarding the conference? Write to us! (conf.sortee@gmail.com)

We hope to meet you next year!

The [SORTEE Conference Committee](#)

Edward Ivimey-Cook (Past Chair)

Elina Takola (Content submissions & selection)

Ineta Kačergytė (Platform manager)

Marija Purgar (Registration & messaging, Chair 2024)

Matthieu Paquet (Chair)

Juliette Tariel-Adam (Program manager)

Rachel Turba (Advertiser)

Workshop and Webinar Series

We had two exciting workshops over the past few months, one on creating dashboards with R (44 participants) and one on preparing and publishing open datasets (15 participants). We will resume our series in January and are discussing how best to focus these events to encourage open science practices and suit the needs of our members.

Help us to help you! You can [propose a workshop or webinar](#) if you have a speaker and topic in mind, or can [request a workshop](#) on a particular topic and we can try to find a good fit. Missed a workshop or webinar and want to learn more about it? You can check out relevant resources for previous events on our [OSF repository](#).

Resources for open science

One of the goals of The Education and Outreach Committee is to provide resources that help to guide scientists in their open science pursuits. We currently maintain a [reading list](#) and public repository on the reference manager [Zotero](#), to which you can submit resources. We would love to hear your thoughts on what types of resources would benefit you – and in what format. Please share any and all thoughts in this [brief survey](#). For example,

one idea for our committee for 2024 is creating E&E-specific primers on open science practices.

SORTEE Awards

(a version of this text appears on both the [SORTEE blog](#) and the [PeerJ blog](#). PeerJ donated APC waivers to support this award)

During the 2023 SORTEE Conference, we announced the winners of our Student Award and Researcher Award. These awards have been renamed and redesigned to increase transparency, equity and inclusion. In the new award process, nominations were initially assessed for eligibility, then eligible candidates were entered as finalists into a lottery to select the winner for each award. The lottery was run using a random 'spin the wheel' program, requiring one re-spin to ensure fulfilment of SORTEE's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy. The winner of the Student Award was: **Euan Young** affiliated with the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. The winner of the Researcher Award was **Birgit Szabo** affiliated with the University of Bern in Switzerland. Congratulations to both!

Birgit Szabo

PostDoc at University of Bern, Switzerland



Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your research interests?

I consider myself a Cognitive Ecologist. My research interests focus on animal cognition and behaviour. I am fascinated by how animals learn, individually and socially, and how the acquired information can help them to cope with the challenges of everyday life. My research asks questions such as how sociality influences learning ability, how parental care affects offspring behavioural and cognitive phenotype, how the sexes learn in different context and how a species ecology shapes its cognitive ability. I am excited about the comparative approach to find out how species differ in their cognition and how cognitive abilities have evolved in different taxa. In this context I am very interested in individual differences and how these might reflect necessary variation to cope with different challenges that might arise within an individuals lifetime but also across generations. I am also interested in how we can use both behaviour and cognitive ability to develop and improve animal welfare and conservation measures.

You won the Researcher PeerJ Award at SORTEE 2023, can you tell us what you have been doing that led to this award?

I have been dedicated to OS practices since starting my PhD at Macquarie University, Australia in 2016 during which I studied the influence of sociality on cognition in lizards. I have been consistently incorporating more and more ORT practices since then. Starting from my first publication out of my PhD, I have made both the raw data as well as the R code I used to analyse data publicly available on different repositories and I continue to do so until this day. Even though a doi to all this material is included in every publication, I also provide a direct link to the data and code on my website to circumvent potential issues with paywalls. My contributions always include meta-data to explain the various data included and the code is simple and fully annotated for easier reuse. I published my first preprint in 2019 and since then I continue to do so for all my first author papers. Since moving to the University of Bern, where I now study social evolution and its link to behaviour, cognition and stress coping as well as

welfare in the Tokay gecko (all understudied fields in reptiles), I am also able to publish open access. Nevertheless, I provide earlier, unformatted versions of my articles and associated supplementary material that are not published open access through my website and/or Researchgate. Finally, I always aim to provide the most comprehensive description of my methods following the ARRIVE guidelines as well as providing detailed information on the animals used to improve reproducibility as I test the same individuals across multiple studies to refine methods and reduce the number of test animals without compromising statistical power. Furthermore, I always aim to collect data blind but if this is not possible I always perform inter-observer reliability testing.

Why is open science important to you?

To me, open science is the path to reliable and reproducible research outcomes and better science. I believe that science is a community effort not a single person game. By openly sharing information we are able to work together towards true discoveries and advances in science. We face a reproducibility crisis and only by working together can we overcome this crisis. Open Science also helps in educating each other. By making analysis code freely available in an annotated form we can learn new ways of analysis and improve our own research.

What are your next steps?

In the future, I want to incorporate even more ORT practices in my workflow and preregister studies as well as use version control and power analysis more regularly. I have also joined the ManyManys group because I think that this new movement of big lab collaborations will be the future of science.

Euan A Young

PhD candidate at the University of Groningen, Netherlands



Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your research interests?

My PhD research is driven by an interest in two broad questions. Firstly, can an evolutionary perspective inform our understanding of among-individual variation in human health and disease? Secondly, can humans themselves be used as a model for understanding evolutionary processes? To these ends, I use a data-driven approach that uses both historical and contemporary sources.

You won the Student PeerJ Award at SORTEE 2023, can you tell us what you have been doing that led to this award?

In the publishing of my PhD first chapter, we aimed to keep the process as open as possible. The study was initially uploaded as a pre-print and then finally published open access, with code, data, and reviewer comments all available for readers to view.

Why is open science important to you?

In particular, the sharing of data and code is very important to me. My research relies a lot on the data handling and statistical analysis that occurs after the data has been collected. When embarking upon such research, you become aware of how many decisions these steps entail. Of course, these details would be included in any published article, but with the sharing of code and data we can allow the verification of these steps with more transparency. This gives others the opportunity to check our work directly and replicate, if desired, increasing the transparency and robustness of scientific findings.

How will you continue to build on this research?

I am very proud to have my first paper published adhering to open-science principles, but I am aware there is always more that we can do, for example, pre-registering articles, and keep fighting to make science more inclusive.

SORTEE partnerships in 2024

We are thrilled to announce that the data repository [Dryad](#) and the Spanish Ecological Association of Terrestrial Ecology ([AEET](#)) are partnering with SORTEE in 2024, joining other organizations that support SORTEE's mission! Donations by partner organizations help support SORTEE's core activities and services, including SORTEE's annual conference, our workshop and webinar series, EcoEvoRxiv, and meet-ups at in-person conferences. Check out our supporters webpage [here](#).

Share your SORTEE story

If you have not already appeared in the '[SORTEE Voices](#)' feature in the blog section of our website, please [fill out the survey](#) and show public support for SORTEE.

Add links to sortee.org on your website

If you have a website, please consider adding a link to sortee.org. The more websites that link to sortee.org, the higher our search engine rankings will be. This will help people searching on Google or other search engines find us more readily. Thanks!

Submit to the SORTEE Newsletter

We welcome submissions to our newsletter. If you know of anything that SORTEE should or could announce (events, publications, announcements, ideas) in our newsletter, please let us know by sending an email to sortee.media@gmail.com (We do not advertise commercial services or products)

Free conference on pre-registration 4-5 March

['The promises and pitfalls of preregistration'](#) will be a hybrid meeting from 4-5 March 2024, hosted by The Royal Society in London. Register for free [here](#); multiple SORTEE members will be attending in-person!

2023 SORTEE leadership team

Rose O’Dea (President and President-Elect)

Ed Ivimey-Cook (Secretary)

Alexa Fredston (Treasurer)

Dominique Roche (Past-President, Fundraising Committee Chair)

Kaija Gahm (Board member)

Tim Parker (Board member, Media Committee Chair)

Patrice Pottier (Board member)

Alfredo Sánchez-Tójar (Board member)

Bawan Amin (DEI Committee Chair)

Antica Culina (Advocacy Committee Chair)

Natasha Gownaris (Education and Outreach Chair)

Daniel Noble (EcoEvoRxiv Committee Chair)

Matthieu Paquet (Conference Committee Chair)