



Ole Seehausen receives “Kilham Memorial Award” from the International Society of Limnology

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Topics: Biodiversity | Ecosystems | Organisation & Staff

Ole Seehausen, Head of the Department of Fish Ecology and Evolution at Eawag in Kastanienbaum and Professor of Aquatic Ecology at the University of Bern has been awarded the “Kilham Memorial Award” by the International Society of Limnology (SIL). Last week, at the 33rd SIL Congress, he gave the Kilham Memorial Lecture in Turin.

The International Society of Limnology promotes, worldwide, a greater understanding of freshwater ecosystems and the improved management of these important habitats. The “Kilham Memorial Award”, which is conferred every three years and comes with a \$1,000 prize, was named after Peter Kilham – a former professor of biology at the University of Michigan. Peter Kilham devoted a large proportion of his career to studying the ecology of African lakes. The prize is given in recognition of innovative scientists in the field of limnology.

Evolutionary ecologist Ole Seehausen primarily focuses his research on the various evolutionary processes and ecological mechanisms that give rise to or preserve biodiversity, or which lead to a loss in biodiversity. He is interested in the ways in which nature conservancy can benefit from a better understanding of these processes. For over 25 years, he has been researching the fascinating speciation of the cichlid and the loss of many cichlid species in African lakes. In parallel with this work, he is also looking at similar processes in fish found in the lakes of the European Alpine foothills.

Fish species diversity in lakes can only arise as a result of evolution in each individual lake



Ole Seehausen giving his Kilham Memorial Lecture at the SIL congress on 4 August 2016 in Turin.

In his Kilham Memorial Lecture entitled “Ecological isolation despite geographical connectedness: evolution-dependent species richness in large and deep lakes” last Thursday, he made special reference to the fact that the unique diversity of fish species in large and deep lakes can only arise through evolution in each individual lake. The reason for this is that lakes are almost always populated by species of fish that live in rivers. Such fish are generally not adapted to live in the deep and open waters of lakes. Biodiversity that is still in its infancy is often lost again very quickly if the habitats are changed, for example in the case of high levels of nutrients entering the lakes. Very little research has been carried out to date on just how the loss of this biodiversity – which is very specific to each individual lake – affects the functioning of lake ecosystems.

Related Links

Kilham Memorial Lectures

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