Summer in Mallorca: A complete ASLO science, social and nature experience

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ASLO and the local and scientific committees continue working on the forthcoming aquatic sciences meeting in Palma. Given the uncertainty that the current COVID-19 pandemic situation poses for travelling and social-distancing measures, we are currently planning for a hybrid meeting, *i.e.*, combining an in-person meeting with online participation. We are aiming to provide a physical venue for limnologists and oceanographers from around the world to meet, discuss and share their science, however this year there will be added online components and possibilities. Re-scheduling of the ASLO meeting to early summer offers participants the potential to complement their scientific discussion during the meeting with plenty of social and outdoor activities.

The pleasant seawater temperature (23-24 °C) at the Mallorcan coasts at the end of June and its astonishing transparency attracts tourists from all over the world. When swimming, snorkeling or diving at sandy beaches, over *Posidonia oceanica* meadows or rocky shores, one can get a closer look at the biodiversity of Mediterranean shallow sea waters, where cuttlefish, groupers, morays, octopus, sponges, scorpion fish, or barracudas abound. The usually calm summer weather also provides plenty of opportunities for sailing and other recreational and water adventure sport activities. In addition, Mallorca has turned into one of the most popular cycling destinations in the world due to its diverse orography, with scenic roads of different inclination levels.

The extension of the island's aquatic ecosystems can be contemplated while hiking, trekking or canyoning from the many viewpoints in the astounding "Serra the Tramuntana", the island's major mountain range and UNESCO World Heritage site. Numerous hiking trails of different levels of difficulty spread through the mountain range, offering impressive views (Fig. 1), and a close-up of the island's flora and fauna, including endemic species such as the small toad "ferreret" inhabiting small isolated ponds in the Serra. The Balearic islands' location is also vital for migratory birds, with more than 300 different species stopping over in the archipelago to rest, feed or breed when travelling between Africa and Europe. Well-known bird-watching spots are located in the coastal salt-marshes, such as the "S'Albufera", or the mountain ranges, where the popular "voltor negre" (black vulture) can be spotted. Mallorca is one of Europe's most beautiful climbing venues, with routes on limestone rock at every grade. Also, it is the birthplace of psicobloc (deep-water soloing), with about 400 routes along the numerous sea cliffs, including "Es Pontàs", a natural rock arch over the sea famously climbed by Chris Sharma and only accessible for very experienced climbers. Stunning karst caves located around the island, such as the Drach caves, populated with lagoons and slow growing speleotherms, and where Émile G. Racovitza initiated the scientific discipline of biospeology. Coastal sea salterns add to the rich geological and biological diversity of the island.

To complete the active science and nature experience before, during or after the conference, one can socialize while enjoying the local food in the numerous restaurants of Palma city, or follow a tapas route, such as the “ruta Martiana” on Tuesdays night. Located in the narrow streets of the old city center, each bar of this famous “tapas” route offers one drink and one tasty “tapa” or “pintxo” for an economic price, an opportunity to check the different specialities of the bars and get closer to the local culture. The vibrant social scene of the city rounds off with live music bars and cocktail bars with a great atmosphere and architecture to enjoy in good company.

ASLO preparations continue with the aim to meet you in person, and we hope that all participants can experience summer in Mallorca to the fullest.

Figure 1. Hiking trails offer breathtaking panoramic views, such as those at Sa Talaia. Photo by Iris E. Hendriks.