

Programme (Subject to change: 24-08-2026)

Wednesday, 2 September 2026		
Time	Event / Talk	Venue
09:00 – 13:00	Registration	Patio
10:00 – 12:00	Public PhD Defense – Julia Camacho Garcia	Promotiezaal
13:00 – 13:10	Opening of Meeting	Promotiezaal
13:10 – 14:00	Invited Talk · Dr. Zuzana Musilová <i>Evolution in the dark: adaptation of deep-water cichlids</i>	Promotiezaal
14:00 – 15:30	Session 1 · Speciation Genomics & Sex Determination	Promotiezaal
14:00	Kristina Sefc - <i>In search of the molecular basis of carotenoid-based color diversity</i>	
14:15	Sing Wei Lim - <i>Characterising a recent hybrid zone between native and introduced populations of Maylandia zebra and Maylandia callainos in Lake Malawi National Park</i>	
14:30	Moritz Blumer - <i>Genetics of repeated ecotype separation in Labeotropheus</i>	
14:45	Maria del P. Gonzalez-Garcia - <i>Spleen transcriptomics reveals immune gene expression patterns associated with divergence in the Midas cichlid species complex</i>	
15:00	Juan Sebastián Echeverry Pérez - <i>Chromosomal architecture and evolutionary dynamics of MHC genes across cichlid fishes</i>	
15:15	Patrick McGrath - <i>Fine-mapping of a sex-determining locus to a 200 kb interval in Lake Malawi cichlids identifies a candidate long non-coding RNA on the Y chromosome</i>	
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee Break	Patio
16:00 – 18:00	Session 2 · Ecology, Conservation & Biodiversity	Promotiezaal
16:00	Pascal Hablützel - <i>A mobile molecular laboratory reveals previously undocumented genetic diversity of cichlid fishes while simultaneously strengthening capacity building in biodiversity hotspots of the Global South</i>	
16:15	Sullamithe Mercy Manduwa - <i>eDNA metabarcoding for fish in Lake Malawi</i>	
16:30	Rodgee Mae Guden - <i>From DNA fragments to biodiversity patterns: evaluating the effects of library preparation on eDNA signals across biological scales</i>	
16:45	Els De Keyzer - <i>Hybrid genomes facilitate invasive success: ancestry and genetic diversity in flowerhorn cichlids from Lake Matano</i>	
17:00	Elysée Rutakaza Nzigire - <i>Cichlid gut contents as reservoirs of freshwater diatom biodiversity and biogeographic information in the Edward–George system</i>	
17:15	Betzi Perez - <i>First report of the scale-dwelling trematode <i>Dulcitransversotrema patialense</i> in cichlids from Lake Nicaragua: a case of co-introduction via the non-native Asian snail <i>Melanooides tuberculata</i>?</i>	
17:30	Alexus Roberts Huggis - <i>Investigating eco-evolutionary influences on patterns of functional trait covariance through time</i>	
17:45	Sam Van Wassenbergh - <i>How different are suction kinematics in algae-feeding Malawi cichlids?</i>	
18:00 – 19:30	Poster Session	Chapel
18:00 – 19:30	Reception	Chapel

Thursday, 3 September 2026

Time	Event / Talk	Venue
09:00 – 10:00	Invited Talk · Dr. Alex Jordan <i>Behavioural evolution in an adaptive radiation: diversity arises through reorganisation of conserved behavioural, cognitive, and neural elements</i>	Promotiezaal
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee Break	Patio
10:30 – 12:30	Session 3 · Social Behaviour & Communication	Promotiezaal
10:30	Scott Juntti - <i>Olfactory and hormonal control of parental care in <i>Astatotilapia burtoni</i></i>	
10:45	Timo Thünken - <i>From traits to processes: an integrative perspective on inbreeding using a cichlid fish model</i>	
11:00	Nikko Alvin Cabillon - <i>Behavioral switch as an evolutionary adaptation to parental care in cichlid larvae</i>	
11:15	Niah Holtz - <i>Evolution and genetic basis of complex spatiotemporal behaviors in cichlids</i>	
11:30	Hannah Kriebeler - <i>Controlled digital stimuli reveal neural activation patterns in the social decision-making network of wild <i>Lamprologus ocellatus</i></i>	
11:45	Hugo Gante - <i>Social selection drives the evolution of facial color patterns in cooperative breeding cichlids</i>	
12:00	Yuki Yoshio - <i>The role of predation risk and nest resource in driving social complexity in group-living cichlids</i>	
12:15	Jan Häge - <i>Rapid color change in cichlid fishes: using computer vision to study behavioral diversity and evolution</i>	
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break	Patio
13:30 – 15:00	Session 4 · Functional Ecology, Physiology & Morphology	Promotiezaal
13:30	Peter Dijkstra - <i>Social history and stress adaptation: oxidative stress and mitochondrial adaptation in cichlid fish</i>	
13:45	Hans Hofmann - <i>Resilient brains: behavioral and neuroendocrine homeostasis in highly variable environments</i>	
14:00	Mwamad Salim M'balaka - <i>Declining cichlid stocks in inland shallow lakes: a case of Lake Malombe in Southern Malawi</i>	
14:15	Nathan Vranken - <i>Taxonomy, convergence, and parasites: the emergence of eco-morphological similarity and how to preserve it</i>	
14:30	Abdul Noor Luttamaguzi - <i>Comparative study of in vitro effects of methanol leaf extracts of <i>Azadirachta indica</i>, <i>Moringa oleifera</i> and <i>Bidens pilosa</i> against <i>Gyrodactylus</i> spp. of <i>Oreochromis niloticus</i> fingerlings</i>	
14:45	Jens Boyen - <i>Evolution of omega-3 fatty acid metabolism in the Lake Malawi cichlid radiation: copy number stability and dietary responses</i>	
15:00 – 15:30	Global Perspectives Session (pre-recorded flash talks)	Promotiezaal
16:00 – 17:00	CichliDome Consortium Meeting	TBC
16:00 – 17:30	Zoo Excursion (limited to 45 places)	Antwerp Zoo
19:00 – 23:00	Conference Dinner	Universiteitsclub

Friday, 4 September 2026		
Time	Event / Talk	Venue
09:00 – 10:00	Invited Talk · Dr. Andrés Bendesky <i>The evolution of social behaviors in nature and under domestication</i>	Promotiezaal
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee Break	Patio
10:30 – 12:30	Session 5 · Development, Evo-devo & Phenotypic Evolution	Promotiezaal
10:30	Chengwei Ulrika Yuan - <i>Transcriptional divergence during cichlid embryogenesis</i>	
10:45	Lily Fogg - <i>Developmental trajectories and pigmentation gene evolution in adaptive diversification of cichlid fishes</i>	
11:00	Irene Cecilia Soto Bajo - <i>Mechanisms of craniofacial diversification in cichlid fishes of Lake Malawi</i>	
11:15	Clement Mlay - <i>Community-level divergence in ontogenetic diet shifts in cichlid adaptive radiation</i>	
11:30	Charlotte E.T. Huyghe - <i>Linking trophic niche with digestive adaptations across the Lake Tanganyika cichlid radiation using transcriptomics and metagenomics</i>	
11:45	Callum Bucklow - <i>Whole body elongation drives coordinated vertebral shape evolution in Lake Malawi cichlid fishes</i>	
12:00	Suhaib Yattoo - <i>Genomic mechanisms underlying variation and divergence of a sexually selected pigment ornament in cichlids</i>	
12:15	Sophie Smith - <i>Chromosome rearrangements and sex chromosome turnover in the Lake Tanganyika cichlid tribe Tropheini</i>	
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break	Patio
13:30 – 14:30	Invited Talk · Dr. Pooja Singh <i>Building blocks of cichlid adaptive radiation</i>	Promotiezaal
14:30 – 15:00	Coffee Break	Patio
15:00 – 16:15	Session 6 · Adaptive Radiation & Comparative Genomics	Promotiezaal
15:00	Axel Meyer - <i>Evolution and unexpected maintenance of a transspecies color polymorphism</i>	
15:15	Miguel Almeida - <i>Transposable elements and the emergence of regulatory divergence in cichlids</i>	
15:30	Khuma Heals Kabowa - <i>Cryptic adaptive diversification of Malawi Squeaker Catfishes (<i>Synodontis njassae</i>)</i>	
15:45	Pío Sierra - <i>Near-complete genomes for nine haplochromine cichlid fishes reveal a novel centromeric satellite structure organised around a pair of inverted elements</i>	
16:00	Francisco Campuzano-Jiménez - <i>Recent demography and positive selection in Lake Malombe</i>	
16:15 – 16:30	Closing Words	Promotiezaal
17:00 – 19:00	PhD Defense – Sophie Gresham	Promotiezaal