



BAT 1K NEWSLETTER

In this issue:

1. Bat1K community meetings- “Batellites”
2. Sequencing update
3. Bat1K Research Profile



Bat photo credit: Daniel Whitby



Dear Bat1K member,

Welcome to our 8th Bat1K Newsletter! Here, we will inform you about what Bat1K has been up to. Keep on reading this Newsletter to learn more about our “batellites” and sequencing updates. We also have our research profile column - this time featuring *Dr Jorge Ortega* – one of our newest members and collaborators!

Bat1K wishes you a prosperous, happy New Year.
Stay safe and healthy!

Did you know? Bat1K is on  **slack**

Come and join our Bat1K community on Slack! Here you can communicate with fellow members and easily get in touch with us. Click [here](#).

1. Bat1K community meetings – “Batellites”

We are very happy to introduce you to one of our newest initiatives – our “batellite” meetings.

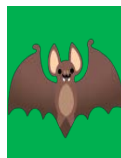
The batellites are open Bat1K community meetings. The naming stems from our first open Bat1K meeting, which was a satellite to the Biodiversity Genomics Meeting 2020. We were thrilled to have >100 people join us and take part in engaging talks and a thrilling scientific exchange with our community. In order to strengthen our community, we aim to arrange regular batellite meetings (every ~1-2 months).

The last batellite took place in November 2020 and we were happy to talk with you about the Bat1K COVID bat genomes that are underway, and research regarding Sars-CoV-2.

In the future, you will be able to access all batellite talks via our website (if permitted by the respective speakers). Being aware of the different timezones our members live in, Bat1K will also vary the timing of our meetings.

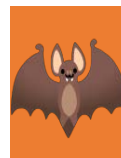
For updates on our upcoming batellites please watch your mail and the Bat1K Slack channel!

2. Sequencing update



Completed families:

- Emballonuridae
- Molossidae
- Pteropodidae
- Rhinolophidae
- Vespertilionidae
- Phyllostomidae



Underway:

- Thyropteridae
- Noctilionidae
- Natalidae
- Mormoopidae
- Miniopteridae
- Hipposideridae

Would you like to get involved in hosting future batellites?

Or would you like to give a talk during our meetings?

For ideas and suggestions please contact bat1kconsortium@gmail.com



Our website is currently being redesigned! We hope to have it back up and running asap! Contact us via mail or slack

3. Bat1K research profile

Dr Jorge Ortega

Bat1K member and collaborator Dr Jorge Ortega is a researcher and professor at Instituto Politecnico Nacional, Mexico City.

Dr Ortega has been working with bats for around 30 years and just recently started to focus his attention on the field of genomics.

New Project

Dr Ortega's current research goal is to sequence the genomes of all endemic Mexican bats. Mexico, a mega diverse country, is home for over 120 bat species, 17 of which are endemic to Mexico. This is being enabled by a grant from the Mexican council for science and technology, awarded to Dr Ortega in October 2020.

Bat1K is pleased to say that we are partnering with Dr Ortega in these efforts and will sequence at least four of the endemic Mexican bats to reference-quality standard in 2021, funded by Bat1K executive committee member Gene Myers at the [Max Planck Institute, Dresden](#).

Dr Ortega first got in contact with bats during his undergraduate studies when he was intending to produce a taxonomic list of mammals, tracking down rodents and bats. When Dr Ortega discovered bats' uniqueness, they "just caught his heart" and when he finished his PhD it was clear his work would mainly focus on bats.

Now, his specific research interests are to understand population genetics of mammals in Mexico. Dr Ortega aims to shed light on the genomics of the different bat species and to assess their diversity. He is also planning to compare the endemic Mexican bat genomes with other widespread bat genomes previously generated by Bat1K.

Why Bat1K genomes?

The quality of Bat1K genomes is what makes them special, says Dr Ortega. He thinks they are crucial to assess genes associated with the unique bat traits, such as echolocation and the immune system, as well as ecological factors and feeding habits.

Bat1K is very pleased to be able to work with Dr Ortega to help catalogue the genetic diversity of bats in Mexico.



Favourite - story

Dr Ortega described for us one of his nicest bat memories: When teaching the vertebrate course at undergraduate level he went on a field trip with his students to catch nectar feeding bats. They successfully caught several species and it was his students' first real contact with bats, being able to have a close look at them and feed them with sugar water to observe their tongues.



bat photo: Daniel Whitby