



Attending Your First Virtual SICB!

By the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology
Student and Postdoctoral Affairs Committee

Welcome to SICB!

This year, SICB is going to look a little bit different, but hopefully, it will still be as rewarding as any other year. Here are some tips to help you make the most of your first (virtual) SICB.

SICB Virtual Meeting Schedule

This year's SICB meeting will take place over the course of two months. The first week of January (normally the dates of the in person SICB meeting) is devoted to Plenary lectures and symposia. Regular talks and posters will be available online for the duration of the meeting. Workshops will occur on specific dates from January 11th through February 28th.

Planning Your Meeting

Seeing all the talks and posters available at once can be overwhelming. It may be helpful to look at the program ahead of time and make a manageable list of the talks and posters you really want to see. The online platform should assist in making such a (digital) list. Then you can space out those talks as you like and prioritize sessions where those presenters will be available.

For synchronous events, be aware of your time zone! You don't want to miss out on an event because you were confused about the time.

Networking

SICB prides itself on being a student-friendly society. It's a place where you can (and should!) reach out to people you want to talk to, be they fellow students and postdocs or senior researchers. There are plenty of ways to do this in the virtual meeting:

- You can post on the discussion board associated with each talk or poster.
- If you don't want to post publicly, that's ok. You can directly message conference attendees through the conference platform.
- You can attend the conference socials and divisional business meetings and meet people there.
- Sending an email is still a perfectly good way of reaching out.

Most SICB attendees will be happy to chat! So don't be shy! Even later-career scientists get a lot of joy out of meeting new attendees at SICB.

Pacing Yourself

The SICB annual meeting can be intense. It is easy to get swept up in the bounty of interesting talks and posters, workshops and socials. The constant early morning to evening barrage of the first few days can be exhausting. Even during the rest of the meeting, it is easy to succumb to "Zoom fatigue". We mention this because it is important to pace yourself! Do not feel guilty if you need to skip a talk or a session to recover. You can always just read the abstract- or talk to the presenter. Make sure you take breaks. Go for a walk outside. Remember the 20-20-20 rule: after 20 minutes of staring at a screen, take 20 seconds to look at something 20 feet away.