

Fulbright Hungary 2019

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In the spring of 2019, I left Texas with my family of four. We arrived in February to a warmish winter. In Hungary there is a Fulbright Commission that oversees your visit and helps at every step. They organized a four-day orientation on Hungarian culture, history, education, politics and music plus sight-seeing, an opera and a concert. We also learned some helpful Hungarian language lessons (in addition to my Pimsleur training). This orientation was an amazing experience. First, because it was great to meet the other Fulbrighters, all of whom were like minded in one way or another by self-selecting for doing Fulbright, and in Hungary. We all quickly connected and enjoyed interacting. It was also a great crash course on Hungary and helped me understand more about Hungarians even though my father was Hungarian. My research group also quickly brought me on board starting with a party to celebrate my 50th birthday with a homemade cake!

The four months seemed to go slow at first and it took a long time to get all the paperwork submitted and get oriented to the city. We loved using the mass transit and only took a taxi twice (to the airport) in our whole stay (and no Uber etc). I was nervous about not getting a running start, but also took the down time to visit the city with my family. Finally, spring came, and all was resolved so we were able to start our research. We drove around Hungary collecting tadpoles from ponds to examine the consequences of urbanization on their stress physiology. I also gave a few seminars and attended a Herpetology conference. I made fast friends with my main collaborator and strengthened old friendships. Our research was so successful that we got two research papers out of it, one published so far. Our collaboration was so successful that my collaborator/sponsor and I continue to work together on new projects, and I have learned so much from her. One grad student came and stayed with us and attended a conference and plans to come back in December to finish up work on our next collaboration. That trip was an experience of a lifetime. I am so thankful for every minute of it.

First three pictures are sight-seeing in Budapest including our Danube boat ride in front of the Parliament seen here with a fellow Fulbrighter – from Texas. The last two are photographs with my main collaborators and the entire research group.





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