

## The 21<sup>st</sup> International Symposium on Chironomidae

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As requested by many participants during recent years, the next International Symposium on Chironomidae finally will be organized in Japan. The 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the symposium will be held in Tsukuba, expected between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, 2021, after the fever of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games has cooled down.

Tsukuba is a science city with a population of about 230 000, located approximately 50 km from Tokyo. A large number of national science institutes, including for example the Japanese Aerospace Agency (JAXA) and many private research companies, are settled in Tsukuba. For this reason, Tsukuba welcomes about 7,000 foreign residents, mostly researchers, giving the city an international ambiance.



Expo center in the middle of Tsukuba city. Photo: Richard Cornette.

The climate of Japan in summer is very hot and humid, harboring an exceptional biodiversity of insects, and of course chironomids! Thus, we have chosen to organize the symposium in early summer to avoid the hottest temperatures, which could be unpleasant to many participants. However, this period corresponds to the end of the rainy season and we should expect some rainy days during the symposium.

Tsukuba city is also famous for the twin peaks of mount Tsukuba, 877 m above sea level. Despite its low altitude, mount Tsukuba is one of the 100 most famous mountains in Japan. This is due to its sacred character since the antiquity, as for mount Fuji. The nature on mount Tsukuba, situated within the associated Shinto shrine, has always been protected and still hosts a remarkable fauna and flora.

Tsukuba is also near to lake Kasumigaura, the second largest lake in Japan. Lake Kasumigaura used to be a



Mount Tsukuba in spring. Photo: Richard Cornette.

brackish-water lagoon, but it was disconnected from Pacific Ocean and is now freshwater. Lake Kasumigaura is a place for massive swarms of Chironomids, such as *Chironomus plumosus* in the spring and formerly *Prosilocerus akamusi* in the autumn.

Tsukuba's proximity to Tokyo facilitates the access to all touristic places around the Japanese capital. One day trips can be planned for example to the ancient and traditional city of Kamakura or to the world heritage shrines and temples of Nikko, which is also the gate for hiking in the mountains of Nikko national park.

We plan to organize the symposium through sessions focusing on different topics such as systematics, ecology, biomonitoring and recent advances in molecular biology. Tsukuba national museum of nature and science holds Manabu Sasa's collection of Chironomidae specimens, and the symposium could be an occasion to make this collection directly accessible to the expertise.

Tsukuba is located one hour from Tokyo-Narita international airport and about two hours from Tokyo-Haneda international airport by bus.

We will provide more information in the future, but please note the dates of the Symposium in your calendars.

The organizing staff is looking forward to welcome the community of researchers working on chironomids to Tsukuba. See you in 2021!



Traditional Japanese fishing boat on lake Kasumigaura. Photo: Richard Cornette.



UNESCO World heritage Toshogu shrine in Nikko. Photo: Richard Cornette.