

## Tupper 4pm seminar

Tue, March 27, 4pm seminar speaker will be Andy Jones, STRI postdoctoral fellow **Linking dispersal, recruitment, and fertility to the local genetic neighborhood: a case study of *Jacaranda copaia* on BCI**

## Bambi seminar

Thu, Mar 29, Bambi seminar speaker will be Birgit Koehler University of Goettingen **Impact of elevated nitrogen input on soil trace gas fluxes of a tropical lowland forest**

## Paleo-Talk

Wed, Mar 28 Paleo-talk speaker will be Carlos Santos, at 4pm, CTPA **Marine ingresson during Late Eocene in Northwestern South America**

## Arriving next week

Katrin Petschl, volunteer from the University of Ulm, to work with Elisabeth Kalko in comparative community studies of bats, on BCI.

Fabienne Zeuglin, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich), to study the functional significance of tree diversity for nutrient dynamics in a tropical plantation-Subproject of The Sardinilla Experiment, at Tupper.

Windsor Aguirre, Stony Brook University, to study the molecular systematics and historical biogeography of tropical marine fishes, at Naos.

Mirco Plath, ETH Zurich, to study the sustainable agroforestry for carbon sequestration to improve small farmers' livelihood in the tropics, at Tupper.



Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panamá

[www.stri.org](http://www.stri.org)

March 23, 2007

## STRI-led research team wins scientific prize

A team of scientists led by STRI has just won a prestigious international award for their research in the Amazon. The International Association of Landscape Ecologists, a leading organization that studies how humans alter natural landscapes, named "Rapid decay of tree-community composition in Amazonian forest fragments," by William Laurance and his colleagues as its 2006 "Outstanding Paper in Landscape Ecology".

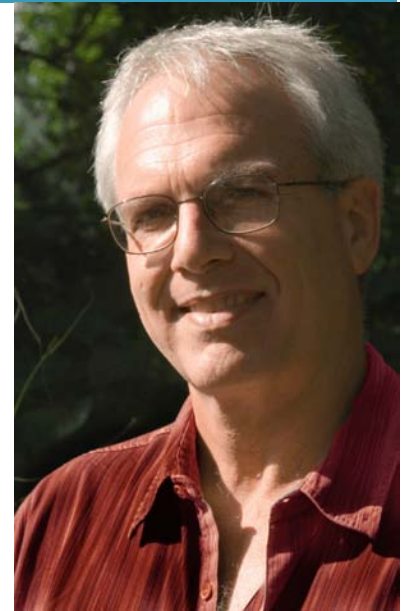
Published by the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (Dec 12, 2006) the study describes the remarkably potent impacts of habitat fragmentation on the Amazon ecosystem. These forests are being rapidly felled and fragmented into small "islands" for timber operations, cattle ranches and industrial soy farms. The most striking finding is the remarkable speed at which tree communities are changing in forest fragments.

"Rainforest trees can live for centuries, even millennia," said Laurance, "so none of us expected things to change too fast." "When you fragment the rainforest, hot winds from the surrounding pastures blow into the forest and kill many trees, which just can't handle the stress," said Henrique

Nascimento, a coauthor of the study from Brazil's National Institute for Amazonian Research (INPA).

Un equipo de científicos liderados por STRI acaban de ganar un prestigioso premio internacional por sus investigaciones en el Amazonas. International Association of Landscape Ecologists, una organización líder que estudia cómo los humanos alteramos los paisajes naturales, seleccionaron a "Rapid decay of tree-community composition in Amazonian forest fragments" por William Laurance y sus colegas, como el "Mejor Artículo en Ecología de Paisajes" para 2006.

Publicado por *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (12 de diciembre, 2006) el estudio describe los potentes impactos de fragmentación de bosques en los ecosistemas del Amazonas. Estos bosques se talan rápidamente y se fragmentan en pequeñas "islas" debido a operaciones madereras, ganadería y fincas industriales de soya. El hallazgo más sorprendente, dicen los autores, es la velocidad a la que las comunidades de árboles se convierten en fragmentos de bosques.



"Los árboles de bosques tropicales pueden vivir por siglos, incluso milenios, dice Laurance, "así que ninguno de nosotros esperaba que las cosas cambiaran tan pronto. Pero en sólo dos décadas—un abrir y cerrar de ojos en la vida de un árbol de mil años, el ecosistema ha sido degradado seriamente."

"Cuando se fragmenta el bosque tropical, los vientos calientes provenientes de pastos aledaños soplan dentro del bosque y mata muchos árboles, los cuales no pueden soportar el estrés" dijo Henrique Nascimento, un coautor del estudio del Instituto Nacional del Brasil de Estudios Amazónicos (INPA).

## Congratulations!

To Poly and Jeremy Bowman, for the birth of their son Mathew on Sunday, March 18. He weighed 6lb 13 oz and measured 50cm.

## New publications

Davidar, Priya, Rajagopal, B., Mohandass, Dharmalingam, Puyravaud, Jean-Philippe, Condit, Richard S., Wright, S. Joseph, and Leigh, Jr., Egbert Giles. 2007. "The effect of climatic gradients, topographic variation and species traits on the beta diversity of rain forest trees." *Global Ecology and Biogeography Online*.

Mallet, James, Beltran, Margarita, Neukirchen, Walter, and Linares, Mauricio. 2007. "Natural hybridization in heliconiine butterflies: the species boundary as a continuum." *BMC Evolutionary Biology* 7.

Puebla, O., Bermingham, Eldredge, Guichard, F., and Whiteman, E. 2007. "Colour pattern as a single trait driving speciation in *Hypoplectrus* coral reef fishes?" *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences Online*.

Stutchbury, Bridget J. M., Morton, Eugene S., and Woolfenden, Bonnie. 2007. "Comparison of the mating systems and breeding behavior of a resident and a migratory tropical flycatcher." *Journal of Field Ornithology* 78(1): 40-49.

Wells, Konstans, Kalko, Elisabeth K. V., Lakim, Maklarin B., and Pfeiffer, Martin. 2007. "Effects of rain forest logging on species richness and assemblage composition of small mammals in Southeast Asia." *Journal of Biogeography Online*.

## New 'in-house' entomology journal

(<http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=1752-458X&site=1>)

*Insect Conservation and Diversity* will launch its first issue in 2008. The new journal will be published by Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the Royal Entomological Society. It will focus on wild arthropods (as opposed to agricultural or pest insects treated in *Agricultural and Forest Entomology*) and on explicit relations between arthropod conservation and diversity (as opposed to the general ecological emphasis found in *Ecological Entomology*).

Key topics will include Biogeography; Climate change (and its impacts on distributions and range); Conservation genetics; Global biodiversity; Integrating conservation science and policy; Long-term planning and implementation.

Publishing four issues per year, the journal will be edited by Simon R. Leather (Imperial College London, UK), Yves Basset (Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panama) and Bradford A. Hawkins (University of California, Irvine, USA). Online submission is available now through Manuscript Central (<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/icdiv>). The online manuscript submission and review process leads to faster

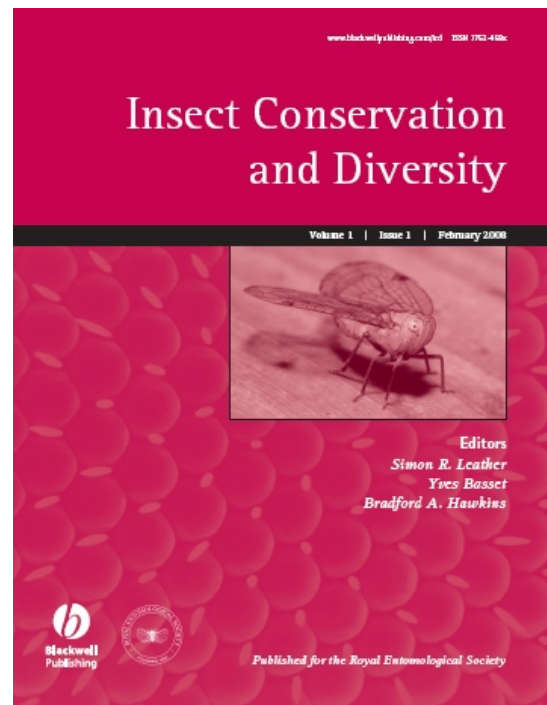
decision times and greater simplicity for authors and reviewers. There are no page charges and articles are published online ahead of print (Online Early). For more information, please contact Yves Basset at: [bassety@si.edu](mailto:bassety@si.edu)

*Insect Conservation and Diversity* publicará su primer número en 2008. La nueva revista será publicada por Blackwell Publishing en nombre de Royal Entomological Society. Se enfocará en artrópodos silvestres (a diferencia de insectos de agricultura o insectos de plagas tratados en *Agricultural and Forest Entomology*) y sobre las relaciones explícitas entre la conservación y la diversidad de artrópodos (a diferencia del énfasis ecológico general que se encuentra en *Ecological Entomology*).

Los tópicos clave de la revista serán biogeografía; cambio climático y sus impactos en sus distribuciones y rangos; genética de conservación; biodiversidad global; ciencia y políticas de conservación integrativa; y planeamiento y puesta en marcha a largo plazo.

## ELTI meets at Bocas

The staff and steering committee of the Environmental Leadership and Training Initiative (ELTI) met at the Bocas Station to initiate its planning process. ELTI is a new joint initiative of STRI's Center for Tropical Forest Science and the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies that aims to strengthen the capacity of policy makers in tropical Latin America and Asia to protect biodiversity. ELTI will offer courses for individuals and institutions and will establish a



## More publications

Rusch, Douglas B., Halpern, Aaron L., Sutton, Granger, Heidelberg, Karla B., Williamson, Shannon, Yooseph, Shibu, Wu, Dongying, Eisen, Jonathan A., Hoffman, Jeff M., Remington, Karin, Beeson, Karen, Tran, Bao, Smith, Hamilton, Baden-Tillson, Holly, Stewart, Clare, Thorpe, Joyce, Freeman, Jason, Andrews-Pfannkoch, Cynthia, Venter, Joseph E., Li, Kelvin, Kravitz, Saul, Heidelberg, John F., Utterback, Terry, Rogers, Yu-Hui, Falcon, Luisa I., Souza, Valeria, Bonilla-Rosso, German, Eguiarte, Luis E., Karl, David M., Sathyendranath, Shubha, Platt, Trevor, Bermingham, Eldredge, Gallardo, Victor, Tamayo-Castillo, Giselle, Ferrari, Michael R., Strausberg, Robert L., Nealson, Kenneth, Friedman, Robert, Frazier, Marvin, and Venter, J. Craig. 2007. "The Sorcerer II Global Ocean Sampling expedition: Northwest Atlantic through Eastern Tropical Pacific." *PLoS Biology* 5(3): 399-431.

Sorensen, M.V. 2007. "New kinorhynchans from Panama, with a discussion of some phylogenetically significant cuticular structures." *Meiofauna Marina* 15: 51-77.

## STRI on TV

Stanley Heckadon will participate at the TV show Causa Común on Sunday, March 25 at 12:30pm, Channel 13, Telemetro.

## Miscellaneous

For sale: Silver BMW 4x4 2006, gasoline 9,600 km, like new. Interested please call Humberto at 6671-4787.

network to promote the exchange of information among key conservation actors. A potential partnership with the Biological Dynamics of Forest Fragments Project and a course for forest managers in Indonesia was also discussed.

El personal y el comité directivo de la Iniciativa de Entrenamiento y Liderazgo Ambiental (ELTI) se reunió en

la Estación de Bocas para iniciar su proceso de planeamiento. ELTI es una nueva iniciativa entre el Centro de Ciencias Forestales de STRI y la Escuela de Forestería y Ciencias Ambientales de la Universidad de Yale que se propone reforzar la capacidad de los tomadores de decisiones en los trópicos de América Latina y Asia para proteger la biodiversidad. ELTI

ofrecerá cursos para individuos e instituciones y establecerá una red para promover el intercambio de información entre actores clave en conservación. También se discutió una asociación potencial con el Proyecto de Dinámica Biológica de Fragmentos de Bosques y un curso para administradores de bosques en Indonesia.



## UK awards STRI to further sea turtles study

Recognizing the success of the four-year collaboration of STRI and Heriot-Watt University (UK) on the Las Perlas Darwin Project, the British Embassy has awarded a grant to STRI's Hector Guzman to focus on important additional studies of the sea turtles in Las Perlas.

The UK-funded Darwin Initiative Project started in 2003 and, extending into 2008, has already met many of its objectives of mapping and studying the biodiversity and fisheries of the Archipelago with an aim to assist appropriate decisions on the sustainable management of these valuable resources.

Four sea turtle species nest in Las Perlas. The project aims to identify the most important areas for sea turtle nesting to focus protection efforts. It is also hoped that important information about the turtles

migratory behavior will be revealed. Four of the world's seven species of sea turtles occur in Panama: the hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), green (*Chelonia mydas*), olive (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) and loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*). The route the sea turtles take after nesting in Las Perlas is unknown as well as the beaches preferred for nesting.

Al reconocer el éxito de los cuatro años de colaboración entre STRI y la Universidad de Heriot-Watt del Reino Unido en el Proyecto Darwin de Las Perlas, la Embajada del Reino Unido otorgó fondos a Héctor Guzmán, de STRI, para concentrarse en estudios adicionales importantes sobre tortugas marinas en Las Perlas.

El Proyecto de la Iniciativa Darwin con fondos del Reino Unido, que empezó en 2003 y se extiende hasta 2008 ya ha

logrado muchos de sus objetivos de mapeo y estudio de la biodiversidad y pesquerías del Archipiélago con un enfoque en apoyar las decisiones apropiadas sobre manejo sostenible de estos valiosos recursos.

Cuatro especies de tortugas marinas anidan en Las Perlas. El proyecto busca identificar las áreas más importantes de nidación de tortugas para dirigir los esfuerzos de protección. También se espera que el estudio revele información importante sobre el comportamiento migratorio de las tortugas. Cuatro de las siete especies de tortugas marinas que hay en el mundo están en Panamá: *Eretmochelys imbricata*, *Chelonia mydas*, *Lepidochelys olivacea* y *Caretta caretta*. La ruta que las tortugas marinas siguen luego de anidar en Las Perlas es desconocida, al igual que las playas que prefieren para anidar.

# Sponge bath that kills

Story: Andia Chaves  
 Edited by M Alvarado &  
 ML Calderon  
 Photo: MA Guerra

science in progress:

Sponges that simultaneously excavate and encrust calcareous substrata, such as the Caribbean *Cliona delitrix*, strongly compete for reef space, killing and displacing stony corals.

Previous studies by Andia Chaves from Universidad Nacional de Colombia showed that the organic extract of this sponge readily kills coral tissue. And through culture in the laboratory, she found that dissociated cells of the sponge kill those of the coral *Siderastrea radians*.

To find out the mechanisms of coral cellular death, Chaves experimented at STRI's Bocas del Toro Research Station with cell cultures of both

sponge and corals looking if coral cell death occurs from a decrease in pH (assumed to occur when sponge epithelial cells excavate carbonate substrata), or through the cell contact-stimulated release of allelochemical compounds from the sponge.

The results from her studies would allow having a clearer picture of how these sponges kill coral tissue, and their place as an indicator of coral reefs health and bio-erosion. Also, through experiments of contact between coral and sponge cell aggregates, she intends to find and describe possible histo-incompatibility processes during tissue contact.

Esponjas como *Cliona delitrix* del Caribe que excavan y se incrustan en el substrato calcáreo, compiten agresivamente por espacio en el arrecife, matando y desplazando corales de roca.

Estudios previos de Andia Chaves de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia mostraron que el extracto orgánico de esta esponja mata inmediatamente el tejido del coral. Y a través de cultivos en el

laboratorio, Chaves encontró que células desasociadas de la esponja matan a aquellas del coral *Siderastrea radians*.

Para conocer los mecanismos de la muerte de las células de los corales, Chaves experimentó en la Estación de Investigaciones de STRI en Bocas del Toro con cultivos de células de ambos, la esponja y los corales

viendo si la muerte de las células de los corales ocurren por una disminución del pH (que se asume que ocurre cuando las células epiteliales de la esponja excavan el substrato carbonado), o a través del contacto de células estimulado por la liberación de alelo-químicos de la esponja.

Los resultados de sus estudios ayudarán a tener una idea más clara sobre cómo estas esponjas matan el tejido de los corales, y su papel como bio-indicadores de la salud y bio-erosión en arrecifes coralinos.