

News and Announcements items from 2019

Former graduate student recognized for outstanding thesis

Amanda Driscoe recently won the *Outstanding Master's Thesis Award in the Life and Biological Sciences* from the Graduate College. Her thesis was titled "Host plant associations and spatial autocorrelation as drivers of genetic differentiation among populations of a regionally host-specific insect herbivore". Amanda graduated earlier this year and was a student in the Population and Conservation Biology M.S. program. She was advised by **Dr. Jim Ott**. Her thesis research was also recently published in the journal, *Molecular Ecology*, another noteworthy accomplishment. Currently, Amanda is studying for a Ph.D. at the University of Notre Dame where she is using genomic data to understand the roles of geography, climate and host plant on genomic variation in specialized herbivorous insects. Best of luck to Amanda in her future research endeavors! (Posted 11-22-2019)

Graduate Students present research at national meeting

Bria Marty and **Toni MacCrossan** recently presented their research at the national meeting of the National Association of Biology Teachers held in Chicago. Bria won second place in the Graduate Student Poster Competition. Both are advised by **Dr. Kristy Daniel**. Other good news from the Daniel lab: undergraduate student Victoria Reyes has been awarded a Tri-Beta Research Grant. Congratulations to Victoria, Toni, and Bria! (Posted 11-21-2019)

Graduate student wins award for stellar dissertation

Dr. Katherine (Kate) Bell recently received the *Outstanding Dissertation Award* from the university. Kate's dissertation was titled "The Genomics of Speciation" and it was advised by **Dr. Chris Nice**. Kate completed her dissertation and graduated with a Ph.D. in Aquatic Resources and Integrative Biology in December 2018. Her dissertation research has already been published in various top-ranked journals. Kate is currently a post-doc in the Department of Entomology at the University of Maryland. Congratulations to Kate and best of luck to her in all current and future research endeavors! (Posted 6-26-2019)

Faculty member garners university support for her "big idea".

The provost recently announced that **Dr. Shannon Weigum's** proposed initiative to establish a *Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship* has been selected for fundraising support. Congratulations to Dr. Weigum! Her proposal was one of only five that were selected as part of the university's Big Ideas competition. (Posted 6-25-2019)

Former student helps capture huge python in Florida

You may have seen this picture already. It gathered worldwide media attention this week ... and there's a Texas State connection. The person on the far left is **Kristin**

Dyer (B.S., Wildlife Biology, 2018). The snake is a 17-foot Burmese python captured in a nature preserve in south Florida. Burmese pythons are an invasive species likely causing much harm to [ecosystems and native wildlife species in the Everglades and elsewhere](#). Kristin is part of a research team searching for ways to control the species. Note that Kristin is wisely on the tail end of the huge snake. (*Posted 4-9-2019*).

Graduate student in Biology awarded the Dorothy Coker Fellowship

Jackie Tleimat recently received the Dorothy Coker Fellowship from the College of Science and Engineering. This is a highly competitive award given to support the research of a graduate student. Jackie is an M.S. student in the Wildlife Ecology program and is advised by **Dr. Sarah Fritts**. Congratulations to Jackie! (*Posted 3-25-2019*).

Graduate students awarded Freeman Fellowships

Rebecca Rylander and **Stephen Harding** were awarded Freeman Fellowships from the university. The fellowships are intended to support graduate students whose research involves the university-owned Freeman Ranch. Rebecca (advised by **Dr. Sarah Fritts**) and Stephen (advised by **Dr. David Rodriguez**) are both students in the Aquatic Resources and Integrative Biology Ph.D. program. (*Posted 3-11-2019*)

Another successful year for the Biology Student Colloquium

The Biology Department's annual student research colloquium took place on Friday February 22. The colloquium provided an opportunity for graduate and undergraduate students to present their research. It was organized by students from the **Tri-Beta Biological Honor Society** along with much assistance from faculty members, **Dr. Susan Schwinning** and **Dr. Erica Nierth**. At this year's colloquium, **Stephen Harding** won best talk by a Ph.D. student, **Timothy Cioffi** won best talk by an M.S. student, and **Meaghan McCormack** won best poster. Congratulations to these students! And many thanks to all the student and faculty volunteers that contributed to making the colloquium a success. (*Posted 3-2-2019*)

Student group wins award at recent meeting

The Texas State University student chapter of the Wildlife Society recently won recognition as the best student chapter in the entire state. The Wildlife Society is a national-level professional organization of wildlife biologists, academicians, graduate and undergraduate students. Many universities (nine in Texas) have student chapters that are primarily run by undergrad students. The award is a great accomplishment for our students, particularly the officers (**Sonia Duran, Amanda Jackson, Joshua Robledo, Rachel Alexander, and McKenna Steiner**) as well as other members and the faculty adviser, **Dr. Scott Walter**, that continue to make this student organization top-notch. In addition to the group award, **Katherine Underwood** won 3rd place in the art competition. (*Posted 2-26-2019*)

Graduate students win awards

At the recent meeting of the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society, **Sara Weaver** and **Lisa Koetke** won first and second place awards in the Clarence Cottam awards competition. The awards recognize Sara and Lisa for giving

outstanding oral presentations of their research. Sara's talk was titled *Ultrasonic acoustic deterrents reduce bat fatalities at wind turbines in south Texas*, and Lisa's talk was *Population growth when carrying capacities vary*. Their graduate advisers are **Dr. Ivan Castro-Arellano** and **Dr. Butch Weckerly**, respectively. (Posted 2-26-2019)
