Tupper 4pm seminar
Tuesday, March 31, 4pm
seminar speaker will be
Sunshine Van Bael, STRI
Effects of insectivores on
insect herbivores and plants
at local and global scales

Paleo-Talk
Wednesday, April 1st, Paleo-
talk speaker will be James
Wilson, STRI intern, at the
CTPA, Ancon, 4pm
Trachyte Mesa, Henry
Mountains, Utah: A brief
overview of laccoliths and
presentation of magnetic
data

Bambi seminar
Thursday, April 2nd Bambi
seminar speaker will be Joseph
Holtum, James Cook
University
Title to be announced

Arrivals
Veronica Zamora, Leiden
University, Netherlands, and
Patrick Jansen, STRI, to
participate in the project
“Rodents as conditional
mutualists of trees: When are
agoutis effective seed
dispersers?”

James Voirin, Max Planck
Institute for Ornithology -
Seewiesen, to study sleep in
the three toed sloth (Bradypus
variegatus), on Bocas.

Jose Andrade and Roberth Us,
Centro de Investigación
Científica de Yucatan, A.C., to
study Crassulacean acid
metabolism (CAM) in tropical
plants, at Tupper.

Departures
William F. Laurance to
Cambridge, Mass to give
lectures at Harvard University

“Corals are declining
and fish are declining”

A group of international
scientists including STRI’s D.
Ross Robertson and led by
Michelle Paddack at Simon
Fraser University in Burnaby,
Canada, teamed up to analyze
data of reef fish over a 53-year
period, and reported their
results in the article “Recent
region-wide declines in
Caribbean reef fish abundance” published by
Current Biology (online) on
March 19. See complete
citation in “New publications”.

“The study shows that
populations of Caribbean reef
fish have plummeted between
32% and 72% over the past
decade in response to
widespread disappearance of
coral. If the trend continues, it
could worsen the already
unprecedented deterioration of
reef habitats and disrupt
Caribbean countries that rely
on the fish as a source of food
and income.”

“The declines don’t appear to
be caused by overfishing,
because the losses were similar
for fished and non-fished
species. Paddack says that
doesn’t mean fishing doesn’t
have an impact but that
something even bigger is
influencing the entire sea. The
researchers suggest that the
culprit is unprecedented loss
of coral reefs over the past
two decades. Even though the
reduction in fish populations lags
nearly 20 years behind the coral
loss, the consistency in
fish declines across a wide range
of species points to the loss of
coral as the cause, they say.”

Information taken from “Reef
fish threatened by coral loss” by
Jackie Grom. ScienceNOW Daily

“Las disminuciones no parecen
ser causadas por la sobrepesca,
devido a que las pérdidas son
similares en las especies que se
pescan y en las que no. Paddack
opina que eso no significa que la
pesca no tenga un impacto, pero
que algo aún mayor está
afectando a todo el mar. Los
investigadores sugieren que la
responsabilidad cae sobre la
pérdida sin precedentes de
arrecifes coralinos durante las
últimas tres décadas. Aun
cuando la reducción en las
poblaciones de peces tiene 20
años de atraso con respecto a la
pérdida de corales, la
consistencia en las
disminuciones de peces a través
de una amplia gama de especies
indica que la pérdida de corales
es la causa, aseguran los
autores.”


New publications


"Ranere, an archaeologist from Temple, joined in the study to find rock shelters or caves where people lived in that region thousands of years ago. His team carried out excavations in four of the 15 caves and rock shelters visited in the region, but only one of them yielded evidence for the early domestication of maize and squash.

"...Previously, the earliest evidence for the cultivation of maize came from Ranere and Piperno’s earlier research in Panama where maize starch and phytoliths dated back 7600 years."
New publications


STRI in the news


Amphibian Rescue project established in Panama

Non-profit zoos and organizations African Safari (Puebla, Mexico); Cheyenne Mountain Zoological Society Zoo (Colorado Springs, Colorado); Houston Zoo Inc, (Houston, Texas) and Zoo New England (Boston, Massachusetts); Defenders of Wildlife dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities and committed to saving imperiled wildlife, based in Washington, DC, US; the Smithsonian Institution established by the US Congress in Washington, DC, acting through the National Zoological Park (NZP) and STRI; ANAM, and the Summit Municipal Park, a city-managed zoological and botanical garden located in Panama City, Panama; signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to develop a Panama amphibian rescue and conservation project in Panama.

This MOU establishes a broad framework for joint communication and collaboration between the parties to advance conservation and scientific understanding of amphibians in Panama. The Parties agree to work cooperatively for the establishment and advancement of the Panama Amphibian Rescue and Conservation Project in a relationship of mutual support. The Parties agree that the goals of this project are to prevent impending amphibian extinctions; and develop strategies and techniques to mitigate the disease threat to eventually return these species to nature.

El convenio establece un marco amplio para una amplia comunicación y colaboración entre las partes para promover la conservación y el conocimiento científico de los anfibios en Panamá. Las partes se comprometen a trabajar en forma cooperativa para el establecimiento del proyecto en una relación de apoyo mutuo. Las partes también se comprometen a mantener, como objetivos del proyecto, la prevención de las extinciones de anfibios y el desarrollo de estrategias y técnicas para mitigar la amenaza de enfermedad para eventualmente regresar estas especies a su ambiente natural.
“Working with governments in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape (ETPS) to address marine conservation challenges requires the collaboration of accomplished scientists, committed conservationists, and effective communicators. Some rare individuals fit into all three of these categories; Héctor Guzmán of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama is such an individual.”

Guzman is best known for his marine research, but he also works on conservation issues. He monitors important habitats in both Pacific and Caribbean Panama and has made important scientific contributions by explaining low species and habitats function and what they require to remain healthy.

Guzman uses science to support policy changes to protect the marine environment. His work on indicator species in Coiba National Park significantly contributed to the Coiba Management Plan to establish a new zoning system for Coiba.

Now, he has taken a leading role in the ETPS regional shark tagging network. His work adds important information to scientists focusing on whale sharks and the movements of hammerheads during critically important juvenile life stages.

“Trusted by fishermen, admired by scientific and conservation peers and respected by governments, Hector Guzman is one of the staunchest and most effective supporters of the ETPS and the Marine Corridor.”

Making a real change
Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, March 27, 2009

“Trabajar con gobiernos en la Extensión del Pacífico Tropical Oriental (ETPS) para afrontar los retos de conservación marina requiere de la colaboración de científicos distinguidos, conservacionistas comprometidos y comunicadores efectivos. Pocos individuos caen en las tres categorías: Héctor Guzmán del Instituto Smithsonian de Investigaciones Tropicales es uno de esos individuos.”

Guzmán es mejor conocido por sus investigaciones científicas, pero también trabaja en asuntos de conservación. Monitorea importantes hábitats en el Pacífico y el Caribe de Panamá y ha contribuido a la ciencia al explicar cómo las especies y los hábitats funcionan y qué requieren para mantenerse saludables.

Guzmán se basa en la ciencia para apoyar los cambios en las políticas para proteger los ambientes marinos. Su trabajo en especies insignia en el Parque Nacional Coiba contribuyó al Plan de Manjio de Coiba para establecer un sistema de zonificación nuevo para Coiba.

Ahora, ha tomado un rol de líder en la red de marcado de tiburones de la región de ETPS. Su trabajo proporciona información importante para los científicos que estudian tiburones balena y los movimientos de los tiburones martillo durante críticas etapas de su vida juvenil.

“Los pescadores confían en él, los científicos y pares conservacionistas lo adoran y los gobiernos lo respetan. Héctor Guzmán es uno de los pilares más fervientes y efectivos del ETPS y el Corredor Marino.”