



Smithsonian

100 years of science in Panama



Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panamá

STRI news

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January 28, 2011

Gamboa seminar

Monday, January 31st
Gamboa seminar speaker will be Jessica Stapley, University of Sheffield.

Understanding the genetics of anolis dewlap colour using population genomics and quantitative trait loci mapping

Tupper seminar

Tuesday, February 1st, 4pm
seminar speaker will be Richard Strathmann, University of Washington Friday Harbor Laboratories
Diverse mechanisms for concentration of scarce food by ciliated larvae and their diverse and ancient evolutionary origins

Bambi seminar

Check your e-mails for information on the next Bambi. If you wish to give a Bambi, please contact Meg Crofoot, on BCI.

Arrivals

SI undersecretary for Science Eva Pell and Susan Avery and Klarry Madin, WHOI, to visit STRI facilities and meet with staff.

The CTFS publishes new book

Princeton University Press just published *Trees of Panama and Costa Rica* authored by Richard Condit, Rolando Pérez and Nefertaris Daguerre, of STRI's Center for Tropical Forest Science (CTFS). The 552-page monograph is the first field guide dedicated to the diverse tree species of Panama and Costa Rica. Featuring close to 500 tropical tree species, *Trees of Panama and Costa Rica* includes color photos, color distribution maps, and concise descriptions of key characteristics.

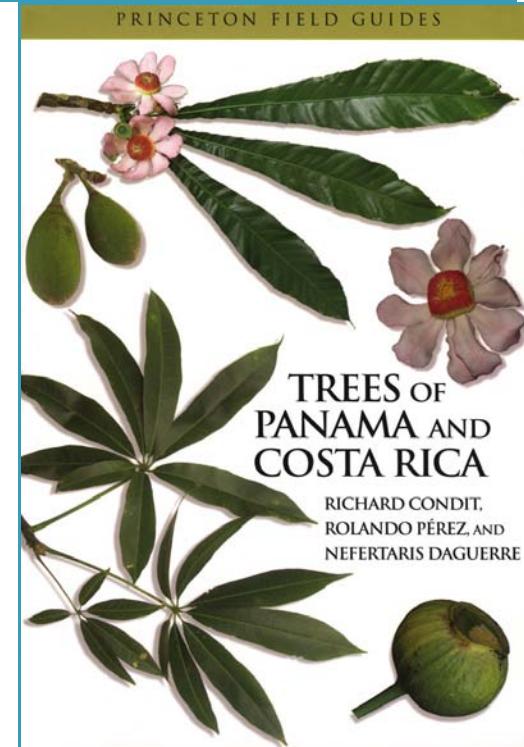
Chapters discuss tree diversity in Central America and the basics of tree identification. Family and species accounts are treated alphabetically and describe family size, number of genera and species, floral characteristics, and relative abundance. Color distribution maps supplement the useful species descriptions, and facing-page photographic plates detail bark, leaf, flower, or fruit of the species featured.

According to Brad Boyle of the University of Arizona, "The lively writing is accessible to non-specialists, while the

broad taxonomic coverage and authoritative species descriptions make this guide useful to professional botanists."

Princeton University Press publicó *Trees of Panama and Costa Rica* [Arboles de Panamá y Costa Rica] cuyos autores son Richard Condit, Rolando Pérez y Nefertaris Daguerre, del Centro de Ciencias Forestales del Trópico de STRI (CTFS). El libro de 552 páginas es la primera guía de campo dedicada a las diversas especies de árboles de Panamá y Costa Rica. Con cerca de 500 especies de árboles, esta guía incluye fotos a colores, mapas de distribución a color, y descripciones concisas de características clave.

Los capítulos discuten la diversidad de árboles en Centroamérica y su base de identificación. Las descripciones de las familias y las especies aparecen en orden alfabético describiendo el tamaño de la familia, el número de géneros y



especies, las características de las flores y la abundancia relativa. Los mapas de distribución a color son un suplemento útil para las descripciones de las especies y las fotografías muestran el detalle del tronco, las hojas y las flores o las frutas de las especies.

De acuerdo a Brad Boyle, de la Universidad de Arizona, "La vívida forma de escribir hace el libro accesible al público no especialista, y la amplitud de la cobertura taxonómica y la autoridad de las descripciones de las especies hacen de esta guía una herramienta útil para los botánicos profesionales.

Arrivals

Sofia Gripenberg, University of Turku, Finland, to study seed predation by insects in tropical forests – a quantitative food web approach, on BCI and Gamboa.

Theresa Clarin, Germany, to carry out the project “Does social learning affect the dynamics of bat foraging behavior in nature? on BCI.

Corinne Schenkel, University of Zurich, Switzerland, to study biodiversity on Bocas del Toro.

Veronika Cottontail, University of Ulm, Germany, to study emerging infectious diseases: Impact of anthropogenic change on the prevalence of blood parasites in Neotropical bats in Panama, on BCI.

Henry Pollock, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, to monitor the dynamics of avian communities and population in Central Panama, in Gamboa.

Nadja Rueger, University of Leipzig, Germany, to conduct a hierarchical Bayesian analysis to group the tree species at BCI into plant functional types, in Gamboa.

Sarah Richman, University of California at Berkeley, Victoria Flores, Brown University and Christina Buelow, University of Alberta, to participate in a project to study the flexibility in the foraging behavior of the fringe-lipped or frog-eating bat, *Trachops cirrhosus*, on BCI and Gamboa.

Safety number:
212-8211



Luz Latorraca leaves STRI

Human Resources director Luz Latorraca leaves STRI after ten years, to pursue new professional interests. Latorraca joined STRI in 1999, working with Carmen Sucre, Mónica Alvarado and Natacha Chandler (1967-2003) in the transition into the Panamanian labor codes, as part of the Panama Canal Treaties.

Latorraca brought with her a wealth of experience in the field of human resources from SANOFI Winthrop de Panama, BSC de Panamá - Bellsouth, Bacardi Centroamerica, and Shell Quimica de Venezuela. During the past month, Luz shared her responsibilities with Mariechen Lang, who will serve as acting director for Human Resources, effective Monday, January 31st. STRI employees, supervisors and scientists organized a farewell party in honor of Luz on Tuesday, January 25, at STRI's Punta Culebra Nature Center. Luz expressed her joy for the STRI experience that brought her exiting new friends and a unique labor atmosphere. We wish her the best during this new phase of her career. The photo above shows Mirza Murillo, Jens Johnson, Luz and Mariechen Lang.

Luz Latorraca, directora de la Oficina de Recursos Humanos

More arrivals

Paul Schaeffer, Miami University, Ohio, to study the seasonality and life history of metabolic capacity in birds, on Bocas del Toro.

Masha van der Sande, Wageningen University and Research Center, the Netherlands, to participate in explaining the distribution and dominance of lianas and tree species across the Panamanian Isthmus, on Bocas del Toro.

Heiner Roemer, Karl-Franzens Universitat, Austria, to study the sensory ecology of cricket communication, on BCI.

Jean Christophe Domec, North Carolina State University, to study the plant hydraulic continuum from root to leaf: avoidance of catastrophic xylem failure under dynamic conditions, on BCI.

Lilian Alba, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, to study intergroup relationships of white-faced capuchin monkeys, on BCI.

Helmut Elsenbeer, Universitat Postdam and Masha van der Sande, Wageningen University and Research Center, to join the Agua Salud Project-Hydraulic Studies, on BCI.

Saul Gonzalez, Universidad de El Salvador, and Jilma Ríos and Mariana Franco, Universidad de Panamá, to attend a field course on Statistics and Data Analysis, at Galeta.

Departures

Director Eldredge Bermingham to Sun Valley, Idaho, to visit with potential donors.

New publications

Baeza, Juan Antonio. 2010. "Molecular systematics of peppermint and cleaner shrimps: phylogeny and taxonomy of the genera *Lysmata* and *Exhippolytis* (Crustacea: Caridea: Hippolytidae)." *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society* 160(2): 254-265.

Boomsma, Jacobus J. 2011. "Evolutionary biology: Farming writ small." *Nature* 469(7330): 308-309.

Brenes-Arguedas, Tania, Roddy, A., Coley, Phyllis D., and Kursar, Thomas. 2010. "Do differences in understory light contribute to species distributions along a tropical rainfall gradient?" *Oecologia* doi:10.1007/s00442-010-1832-9

Busch, D. Shallin, Robinson, W. Douglas, Robinson, Tara R., and Wingfield, John C. 2011. "Influence of proximity to a geographical range limit on the physiology of a tropical bird." *Journal of Animal Ecology* Online. 10.1111/j.1365-2656.2010.01791.x

Connahs, Heidi, Aiello, Annette, Van Bael, Sunshine, and Rodriguez-Castaneda, Genoveva. 2011. "Caterpillar abundance and parasitism in a seasonally dry versus wet tropical forest of Panama." *Journal of Tropical Ecology* 27(1): 51-58.

Jung, Kirsten, and Kalko, Elisabeth K.V. 2011. "Adaptability and vulnerability of high flying Neotropical aerial insectivorous bats to urbanization." *Diversity and Distributions* doi:10.1111/j.1472-4642.2010.00738.x



Bd invades everywhere

In collaboration with Roberto Ibáñez

A group of scientists led by Vanessa L. Kilburn of McGill University and including Roberto Ibáñez, director of STRI's Amphibian Rescue and Conservation Center in Panama, Oris Sanjur and Eldredge Bermingham, also from STRI, Justin P. Suraci of Simon Frazer University and David M. Green of McGill, has just published an article in EcoHealth on the "Ubiquity of the pathogenic chytrid fungus, *Batrachochytrium dendrobatis*, in anuran communities in Panama." *Batrachochytrium dendrobatis* (*Bd*) has been implicated as the main driver of many enigmatic amphibian declines in neotropical sites at high elevations.

Bd is a waterborne pathogen, and until recently, was thought to be limited by temperature, but the extent to which it persists and causes disease in amphibians at lower elevations in the neotropics is not known. It also is unclear by what mechanisms *Bd* emerged as a pathogenic organism; there is debate as to whether it is

endemic to the region and for some reason its pathogenicity increased, or if it is a new pathogen to the region.

In this research, conducted in western Panama in 2006, several study sites were established along the epidemic gradient caused by *Bd*, including sites where the epidemic had not yet arrived, places right in the middle of the epidemic and others two and 10 years after the epidemic. Other sites were also established along an altitude gradient between 45 and 1,215 meters above sea level.

After analyzing samples obtained from the skin of the frogs using quantitative PCR analyses to detect the fungus, the scientists found that there were infected frogs everywhere, including sites where the fungus arrived years ago, as well as lowland sites. When comparing lowland frog abundance with previous years, the scientists also noticed a decline in frog diversity and abundance.

It is very difficult to know if *Bd*

is an endemic organism or a new, recent arrival. However, based on the results of this study and current knowledge, the scientists maintain the idea that chytridiomycosis is new and invasive and that it is spreading all over the world.

Roberto Ibáñez points out that the results of this research provide evidence that not only amphibians in high elevations are in danger, but those in lowlands as well. This means that the number of endangered species will increase dramatically. This study also reveals that there is very little time to act in favor of amphibian conservation in Panama

Un grupo de científicos liderado por Vanessa L. Kilburn, de McGill University, que incluye a Roberto Ibáñez, director del Proyecto de Rescate y Conservación de Anfibios en Panamá de STRI, Oris Sanjur y Eldredge Bermingham, también del STRI, Justin P. Suraci, de Simon Frazer University, y David M. Green, de McGill University, acaban de publicar un

New publications

Laurance, William F., Kakul, Titus, Keenan, Rodney J., Sayer, Jeffrey, Passingan, Simon, Clements, Gopalasamy R., Villegas, Felipe, and Sodhi, Navjot S. 2010. "Predatory corporations, failing governance, and the fate of forests in Papua New Guinea." *Conservation Letters* 10.1111/j.1755-263X.2010.00156.x

Mora, Andres, Parra, Mauricio, Strecker, Manfred R., Sobel, Edward R., Zeilinger, Gerold, Jaramillo, Carlos, Da Silva, Silane Ferreira, and Blanco, Mauricio. 2010. "The eastern foothills of the Eastern Cordillera of Colombia: An example of multiple factors controlling structural styles and active tectonics." *Geological Society of America Bulletin* 122(11-12): 1846-1864.

Pukazhenth, Budhan S., Della Togna, Gina, Padilla, Luis, Smith, Diorene, Sanchez, Carlos, Pelican, Katharine, and Sanjur, Oris. 2010. "Ejaculate traits and sperm cryopreservation in the endangered Baird's Tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*)."*Journal of Andrology* jandrol.110.011833. doi:10.2164/jandrol.110.011833

Tarwater, Corey E., and Brawn, Jeffrey D. 2010. "The post-fledging period in a tropical bird: patterns of parental care and survival." *Journal of Avian Biology* 41(4): 479-487.

STRI in the news

"Central America: Panama's big ambition" by Rex Dalton. 2011. *Nature* 469: 462-463. <http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110126/full/469462a.html>

artículo en la revista *EcoHealth* sobre la distribución generalizada del hongo patógeno quirídio *Batrachochytrium dendrobatis* (*Bd*), que ha sido implicado como el causante principal de una disminución de anfibios en las tierras altas del Neotrópico.

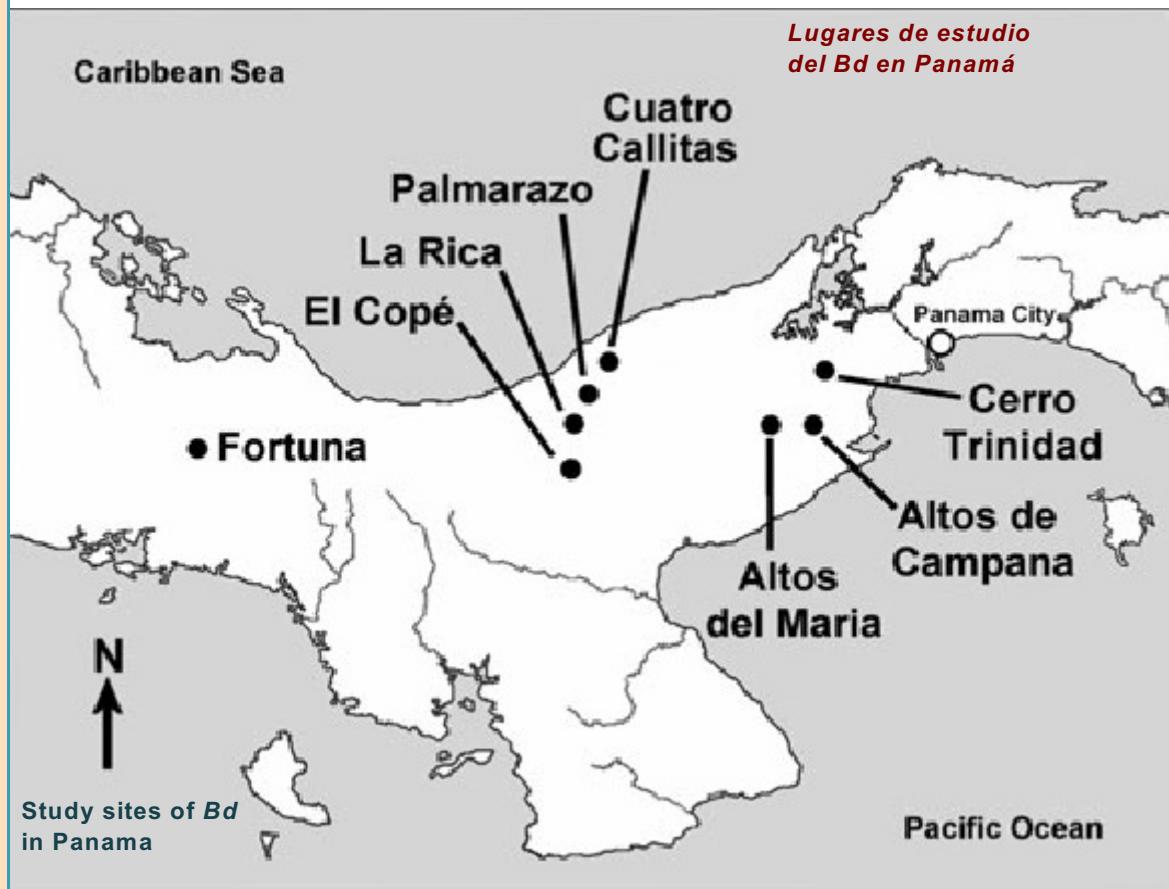
Este patógeno se mueve a través del agua y, hasta el momento, se mantenía la creencia de que estaba limitado por la temperatura, desconociéndose hasta qué punto se mantiene y causa la enfermedad, conocida como quitriomicosis, en los anfibios que habitan las tierras bajas del Neotrópico. Tampoco se sabe con precisión sobre cómo el *Bd* se convirtió en un organismo patógeno; por lo que se debate sobre si se trata de un organismo endémico pre-existente en la región, que por alguna razón aumentó su patogenicidad, o de un patógeno nuevo en la región.

En esta investigación, realizada en el oeste de Panamá en 2006, se establecieron varios sitios de estudio a lo largo de un gradiente del avance de la epidemia causada por el *Bd*, incluyendo sitios donde la epidemia aparentemente no había llegado, sitios en medio del evento epidémico y sitios con 2 y 10 años después de la epidemia. También se establecieron sitios de estudio a lo largo de un gradiente altitudinal entre los 45 y 1,215 metros sobre el nivel del mar.

Al analizar las muestras obtenidas de la piel de las ranas, utilizando la técnica molecular de PCR cuantitativo para detectar el ADN del hongo, se encontró que en todos los sitios de estudio habían ranas infectadas, incluyendo sitios en donde se sabe que el hongo llegó años atrás y sitios en las tierras bajas. Al comparar la abundancia de ranas en tierras bajas con datos de años anteriores, los científicos también notaron una disminución en la diversidad y abundancia de ranas.

Es muy difícil saber si el *Bd* sea un organismo endémico o nuevo que llegó recientemente; sin embargo, basados en los resultados de este estudio y lo que se conoce actualmente, los científicos mantienen la idea de que la quitriomicosis es nueva e invasiva y que el *Bd* está llegando a todas partes del mundo.

Roberto Ibáñez señala que los resultados de esta investigación son muy preocupantes, ya que muestran evidencia de que no solamente los anfibios de tierras altas del Neotrópico resultan afectados por este hongo, sino que también los anfibios de las tierras bajas pueden estar en problemas. Esto implica que el número de especies que están en peligro de extinción, aumentará dramáticamente. También se demuestra una vez más que queda poco tiempo para actuar a favor de la conservación de los anfibios de Panamá.



'Bosques para Agua y Humedales'

Ven a celebrar!

El Día Mundial
de los Humedales

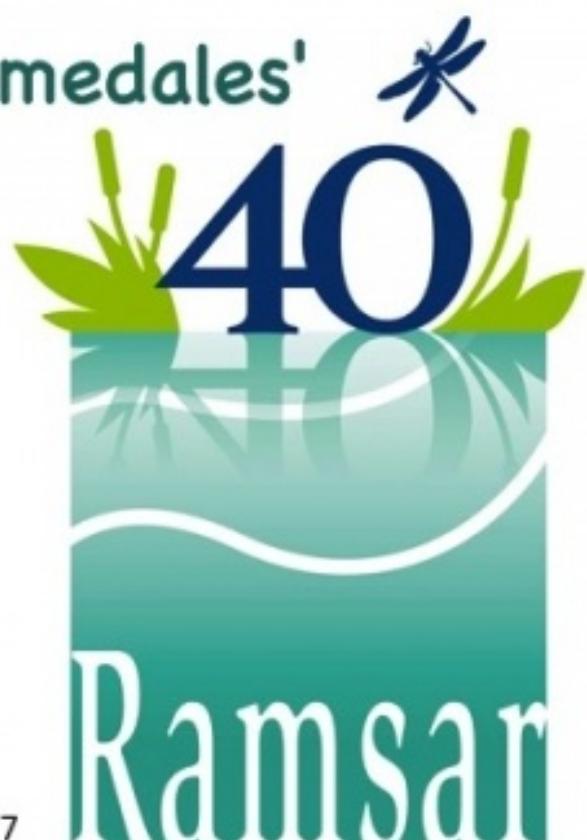
2 de febrero

Organiza Comité Nacional de Humedales

Lugar Convento de los Jesuítas, ruinas
de Panamá La Vieja

Hora De 8:00 am a 1:00 pm

Información info@panamaudubon.org / 232-5977



1971-2011

Invitan:



CONSERVACIÓN
INTERNACIONAL



El Instituto Smithsonian de Investigaciones Tropicales y la
Fundación Avifauna Eugene Eisenmann,

le invitan a la presentación del libro

"GAMBOA,

Una guía para su patrimonio natural y cultural"

Jorge Ventocilla y Kurt Dillon

Centro Earl S. Tupper

Instituto Smithsonian de Investigaciones Tropicales

3 de febrero 2011

5:30 p.m.

Cerrejón de Ancón, Panamá, República de Panamá



100 años
de ciencia en Panamá