STRI news 2004

Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panamá **www.stri.org** January 16, 2004

Tupper seminars

Tue, Jan 20, 11am: Benjamin Turner, University of Florida
The biogeochemistry of soil organic phosphorus
Tue, Jan 20, 1pm, David A. Robinson, Utah State University:
Monitoring and characterizing soil properties and processes using electromagnetic methods
Wed, Jan 21, 11am, Inmaculada Lebron Robinson, US Salinity Lab
Impact of soil properties in ecosystems
Wed, Jan 21 at 1pm, Robert Stallard, Geological Survey, University of Colorado
Soil, water, and biogeochemical processes at the landscape scale in Panama and Puerto Rico

Arrivals

Tiffany Gann, Florida International University, Jan 18 - Feb 1, to work on coupling oligotrophy and peat development: a framework for comparative ecosystem studies of freshwater swamps, at Bocas del Toro.

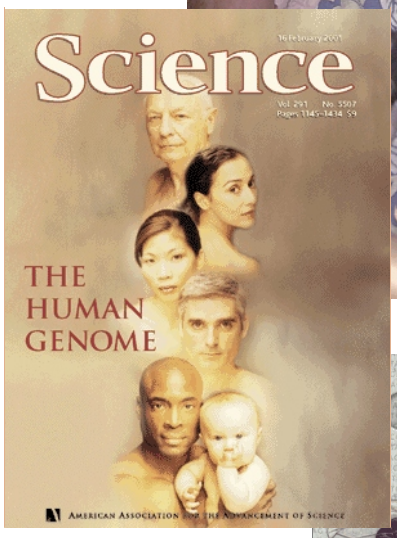
Kai Palenscar, California Academy of Sciences, Jan 21 - Feb 5, to collect Cirripedia (barnacles) for taxonomic phylogenetic and biogeographic studies using morphological and molecular level data, at Bocas and Naos.

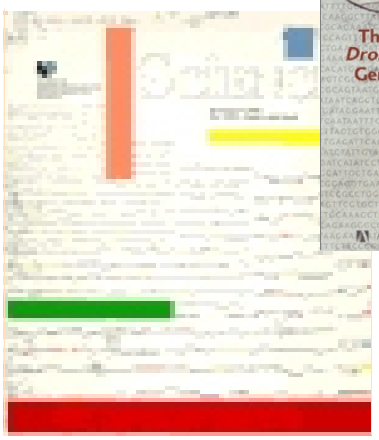
Jennifer Brudno and John Kim, Princeton University, Jan 21 - Feb 1, to study the variation in nitrogen fixation in fertilization plots, in Gigante.

Helen Simcox and Abel Heenan, University of Edinburgh, UK, Jan 22 - Apr 8, to study the effect of predation on reproductive behavior and physiology of live-bearing fish *Brachyraphis episcope* in Gamboa.

J. Craig Venter: Our genomic future

Master of the human genome, and author to more than 200 scientific publications including eight books, 14 articles in *Science*, 11 in *Nature*, six in the *Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences*, John Craig Venter, president and chairman of five scientific institutions, visited STRI on his way to the Pacific to present the seminar "Our genomic future" on Thursday, January 15, at the Tupper Center Auditorium. Members of the local and international media attended the event, along with STRI´s staff and visitors from the local community. Venter is on board the *Sourcerer* II Expedition 2003-2005 that aims to produce genomic letters for marine species in a circumnavigation of the globe that began in the Sargasso Sea. The media had the opportunity to interview Venter, who answered questions ranging from his personal life to ethical issues... "Are you afraid of how other people may use the knowledge generated by you and your colleagues?" —Nobody should be afraid— says the scientist, who´s goal is to make genomics transform medicine. "That's not going to happen in academic babble towers talking about it. People want to know how this affects their lives, and they could only do it by having access to information...My goal is to get it to happen."





New publications

Buchholz, Richard. 2003. "The importance of species: Perspectives on expendability and triage." *Ethology* 109(10): 862-863.

Crawford, Andrew J. 2003. "Relative rates of nucleotide substitution in frogs." *Journal of Molecular Evolution* 57: 636-641.

Denzinger, A., Kalko, Elisabet K.V., and Schnitzer, H.U. 2003. "Ecological and evolutionary aspects of echolocation in bats." In J.A. Thomas, C. Moss, and M. Vater (Eds.), *Echolocation in bats and dolphins*: 311-326. University of Chicago Press.

Dorta, Enrique, Diaz-Marrero, Ana R., Cueto, M.., D'Croz, Luis, Mate, Juan, San-Martin, Aurelio, and Dariasa, J. 2004. "Unusual chlorinated pregnanes from the eastern Pacific octocoral *Carijoa multiflora*." *Tetrahedron Letters* 45: 915-918.

Fernandez-Marin, H., Zimmerman, Jess K., and Wcislo, William T. 2003. "Nest-founding in *Acromyrmex octospinosus* (Hymenoptera, Formicidae, Attini): demography and putative prophylactic behaviors." *Insectes Sociaux* 50(4): 304–308.

Heckadon-Moreno, Stanley. 2003. "La fauna de Azuero según Benjamin Bole, 1932." *"Epocas" Segunda Era (Supplement to La Prensa)* 18(12): 14-15.

Heckadon-Moreno, Stanley. 2003. "La fauna de Azuero según los naturalistas Bole y Aldrich, 1932." *"Epocas" Segunda Era (Supplement to La Prensa)* 18(10): 10-11.

Heckadon-Moreno, Stanley. 2003. "La fauna de Azuero según el naturalista Benjamín Bole, 1932." *"Epocas" Segunda Era (Supplement to La Prensa)* 18(11): 12-13.

Líder del genoma humano y autor de más de 200 publicaciones científicas incluyendo ocho libros y 14 artículos en *Science*, 11 en *Nature* y seis en *Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences* John Craig Venter, presidente y síndico de cinco instituciones científicas, visitó STRI camino al Pacífico y presentó el seminario "Nuestro futuro y la ciencia genómica" el jueves, 15 de enero, en el auditorio del Centro Tupper. Miembros de los medios locales e internacionales asistieron al evento, junto con la comunidad científica de STRI y visitantes locales. Venter se encuentra a bordo de la II Expedición del *Sourcerer* 2003-2005 cuya meta es producir cartas genómicas de especies marinas alrededor del globo, que empezó en el Mar de los Sargazos. Los medios tuvieron la oportunidad de entrevistar a Venter, quien contestó desde preguntas sobre su vida personal, hasta asuntos éticos... "¿No siente usted temor de lo que otras personas puedan hacer con el conocimiento que usted y sus colegas generan?" —Nadie debe temer— contesta el científico, cuya meta es lograr que las ciencias genómicas transformen la medicina. "Y eso no va a ocurrir en torres de babel académicos hablando sobre ello. La gente quiere saber cómo esto afectará sus vidas, y sólo lo sabrán teniendo acceso a la información... Mi meta es lograr que esto ocurra."

(*) De acuerdo a *Biological Abstracts* y la Biblioteca del Congreso el 15 de enero de 2004.

Jason arrives in Panama

Specialists from the Jason Project are arriving in Panama this week, including Robert Ballard, founder and chief scientist of the Jason Foundation for Education. *Jason XV: Rainforests at the Crossroads* will feature STRI research on BCI on 55 hours of live, interactive broadcast, from January 26 through February 6. The program will take about 1.5 million 4th-9th grade students from the US and the world on virtual expeditions. A press conference will be held on Monday, January 19 at the Tupper Center to present Ballard and the Panamanian aeronauts community.

Especialistas del Proyecto Jason están llegando a Panamá esta semana, incluyendo a Robert Ballard, fundador y científico principal de la Fundación Jason para la Educación. *Jason XV: Bosques lluviosos en la encrucijada* mostrará las investigaciones de STRI durante 55 horas de televisión en vivo interactiva, desde el 26 de enero hasta el 6 de febrero. El programa llevará a 1.5 millones de niños de los Estados Unidos y el mundo en expediciones científicas virtuales con los científicos. Se celebrará una conferencia de prensa el lunes 19 de enero para presentar a Ballard y a los argonautas panameños a la comunidad.

More publications

Ibanez D., Roberto, Jaramillo A., Cesar, and Solis, Frank A. 2003. "*Hyla boans*." *Herpetological Review* 34(3): 258.

Jaramillo A., Cesar, and Ibanez D., Roberto. 2003. "*Leptophis nebulosus*." *Herpetological Review* 34(3): 265.

Novotny, Vojtech, Miller, Scott E., Cizek, Lukas, Leps, Jan, Janda, Milan, Basset, Yves, and Weiblen, George D. 2003. "Colonising aliens: caterpillars (Lepidoptera) feeding on *Piper aduncum* and *P. umbellatum* in rainforests of Papua New Guinea." *Ecological Entomology* 28: 704–716.

Sampaio, Erica, Kalko, Elisabeth K.V., Bernard, Enrico, Rodriguez-Herrera, Bernal, and Handlley, Jr., Charles O. 2003. "A biodiversity assessment of bats (Chiroptera) in an upland rainforest in Central Amazonia including methodological and conservation considerations." *Studies on Neotropical Fauna and Environment* 38(1): 17-31.

Schnitzler, H.U., Kalko, Elisabeth K.V., and Denzinger, A. 2003. "The evolution of echolocation and foraging behavior in bats." In J.A. Thomas, C. Moss, and M. Vater (Eds.), *Echolocation in bats and dolphins*: 331-339. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Thies, Wibke, and Kalko, Elisabeth K.V. 2004. "Phenology of Neotropical Pepper plants and their association with their main dispersers, two short-tailed fruit-bats, *Carollia perspicillata* and *C. castanea*, Phyllostomidae." *Oikos* 104: 362-376.

Zotz, Gerhard. 2004. "How prevalent is crassulacean acid metabolism among vascular epiphytes?" *Oecologia* 138: 184-192.