STRI news 2003

Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panamá www.stri.org May 2, 2003

Tupper seminar

Tuesday, May 6, noon seminar speaker will be William F. Laurance, STRI
Some forest-conservation issues in Gabon, Central Africa

Bambi seminar

Thu, May 8, Bambi seminar speaker will be Adam Smith, University of Washington
The ecology and evoution of social behavior in the bee *Megalopta*

Arrivals

Ana Cristina Sánchez, Mellon intern from Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia, May 3 - Aug 3, to work with Bill Laurance, at Tupper.

Joe Williams, Ohio State University, May 4 - Jun 15, to work with Douglas Robinson, on the life history-physiology nexus: constraints on the evolutionary diversifications of avian life histories, in Gamboa.

Guilherme Vasconcellos, Brazil, May 5 - Aug 15, to work with Arturo Dominici, at Bahia Honda.

Boris Baer, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, May 5 - Jun 6, to work with Jacobus Boomsma on the evolutionary ecology of fungus-growing ants, in Gamboa.

Jed Sparks and Alex Guenther, Cornell University, May 7-11, to visit crane sites for future research.

Congratulations!

To David and Rita Roiz, for the birth of their son Javier Antonio, on Tue, Apr 29. He weighted 7lb, 8oz and measured 50 cm.

Heckadon to direct new Office of Communication and Public Programs

During the recent development of STRI's strategic plan, the need to emphasize public outreach was identified as one of STRI's four principal institutional goals. To support this goal, STRI director Ira Rubinoff has announced the creation of the Office of Communications and Public Programs, to be directed by staff scientist Stanley Heckadon-Moreno, who serves as advisor to the Director for Technology Transfer. Heckadon has played a pivotal role in communicating STRI research to the public through public lectures and publications aimed at the public. He served as coordinator of the Panama Canal Watershed Monitoring Project and leads the public program at Galeta. The new office will be supported by Monica Alvarado, head of the Office of Public Information; information specialist Maria Luz Calderon, STRI news editor and manager of the STRI bibliography; Olga Barrio, who will serve as liaison with the planned Gehry Museum, Jorge Ventocilla, Inez Campbell and Argeliz Ruiz, public program leaders at BCI, Galeta and Culebra; and science interpreter Beth King, currently overseeing the JASON project. An oversight committee was established to insure productive communication between scientists and the various administrative columns at STRI. This committee will be chaired by Gisele Didier, assistant to STRI director and will comprise Elena Lombardo from External Affairs, and staff scientists Richard Condit, John Christy, Nelida Gomez, William Laurance, and Stanley Heckadon-Moreno.

Durante el reciente desarrollo de plan estratégico de STRI, se identificó la necesidad de fortalecer la divulgación de las actividades de del Instituto, como una meta institucional de STRI. Para apoyar esta meta, el director Ira Rubinoff ha anunciado la creación de una Oficina de Comunicaciones y Programas Públicos, bajo la dirección del científico Stanley Heckadon Moreno, quien sirve como asesor del Director para Transferencia de Tecnología. Heckadon ha jugado un papel muy importante en la comunicación de las investigaciones de STRI a través de conferencias y publicaciones dirigidas al público. También sirvió como coordinador del Proyecto de Monitoreo de la Cuenca del Canal de Panamá, y lideriza los programas de extensión en Galeta. La nueva oficina contará con el apoyo de Monica Alvarado, directora de la Oficina de Información Pública, la especialista de Información Marialuz Calderon, editora del STRI news y administradora de la bibliografía de STRI; Olga Barrio, quien servirá como enlace con el programado Museo Gehry, Jorge Ventocilla, Inéz Campbell y Argelis Ruiz, líderes de los programas públicos en BCI, Galeta y Culebra, y la intérprete científica Beth King, quien coordina actualmente el Proyecto JASON. Se ha creado un comité para asegurar la comunicación productiva entre los científicos y las diferentes secciones administrativas de STRI. El comité será coordinado por Giselle Didier, asistente del Director, e incluirá a Elena Lombardo, de Asuntos Externos, y los científicos Richard Condit, William Laurance, John Christy, Nélida Gómez y Stanley Heckadon-Moreno.

Condolences

To Vielka Chang-Yau, for the loss of her father Meinaldo Chang Díaz, on Monday, April 28, in Puerto Rico.

New publications

Gonzalez, Maribel, Eberhard, Jessica R., Lovette, Irby J., Olson, Storrs L., and Bermingham, Eldredge P. 2003. "Mitochondrial DNA phylogeography of the bay wren (Troglodytidae: *Thryothorus nigricapillus*) complex." *The Condor* 105(2): 228-238.

Naisbit, Rusell E., Jiggins, Chris D., and Mallet, James. 2003. "Mimicry: developmental genes that contribute to speciation." *Evolution and Development* 5(3): 269-280.

Ortius-Lechner, Diethe, Maile, Roland, Morgan, E. David, Petersen, H.C., and Boomsma, Jacobus J. 2003. "Lack of patriline-specific differences in chemical composition of the metapleural gland secretion in *Acromyrmex octospinosus*." *Insectes Sociaux* 50: 113-119.

Poulsen, Michael, Bot, Adrianne N.M., Currie, Cameron R., Nielsen, Mogens G., and Boomsma, Jacobus J. 2003. "Within-colony transmission and the cost of a mutualistic bacterium in the leaf-cutting ant *Acromyrmex octospinosus*." *Functional Ecology* 17: 260-269.

Web-publications

Panama Canal island a paradise for tropical research" *National Geographic* on April 24 at: **http: news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/04/0424_030424_panama.html**

PNAS: Cryptic species of fig-pollinating wasps

STRI postdoctoral fellow Drude Molbo from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, STRI staff scientist Edward Allen Herre, Carlos Machado, from STRI and the University of Arizona, Jan Sevenster from Leiden University in the Netherlands and Laurent Keller from the University of Lausanne published the article "Cryptic species of fig-pollinating wasps: Implications for the evolution of the fig–wasp mutualism, sex allocation, and precision of adaptation" in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 100(10): 5867–5872. Contrary to prevailing wisdom concerning one of the most famous textbook examples of a tightly co-evolved mutualism, not every fig species is pollinated by its own unique wasp species. In their article, Molbo and collaborators report that two genetically distinct species of wasps are present in at least half of the fig species surveyed. This new result forces a major reassessment of the vast majority of studies that have used figs as model systems. In one stroke, the findings undermine many current ideas concerning the stability and evolution of mutualisms, while simultaneously strengthening other critical parts of modern evolutionary theory. Article is available in .pdf.

Celebrating BCI's 80th anniversary!

The STRI community joined director Ira Rubinoff, deputy director Eldredge Bermingham, associate director Georgina de Alba, staff scientists, fellows and visiting scholars from around the world on Barro Colorado Island on Friday, April 25, to celebrate the reserve's 80th anniversary. The festivities included the opening of the new exhibits "Naturalist Room" and "BCI and its People", a cayuco race on the lake, baseball and volleyball games, and the traditional BCI's BBQ

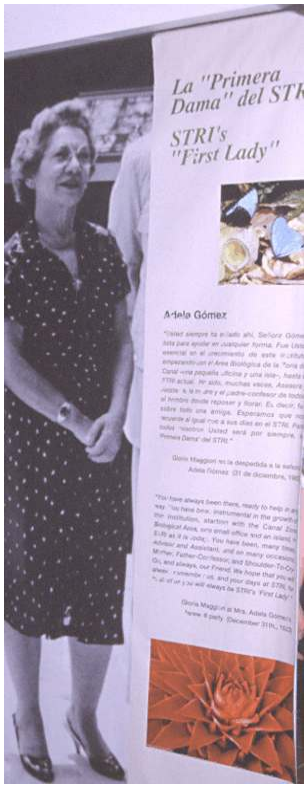
La comunidad de STRI se reunió con el director Ira Rubinoff, el subdirector Eldredge Bermingham, la directora asociada Georgina de Alba, los científicos de STRI, becarios, y académicos visitantes de todo el mundo en Barro Colorado el viernes, 25 de abril para celebrar el 80 aniversario de la reserva. Las festividades incluyeron la apertura de las nuevas exhibiciones "El cuarto del naturalista" y "BCI y su gente", una competencia de cayucos en el lago, juegos de basketball y volleyball, y la tradicional barbacoa de BCI.

On April 17, 1923, the then-governor of the former Canal Zone, J.J. Morrow, declared Barro Colorado Island a biological reserve, one of the first protected tropical rain forests in the New World.

Director Ira Rubinoff talked about the history of BCI since the beginning of the 20th century and highlighted the historical "cordial helpfulness" of Panamanian presidents Porras and Chiari and many other government officials, as cited in Smithsonian´s Annual Reports. To this day, the government maintained support to STRI has made the work of thousands of tropical biologists possible in this country. He also compared 1926's operating budget with today´s budget!

El director Ira Rubinoff habló sobre la historia de BCI desde principios del siglo XX, resaltando la la histórica "ayuda cordial" de los presidentes panameños Porras y Chiari, y muchos otros funcionarios del gobierno, como se cita en Informes Anuales del Smithsonian. Hasta el día de hoy, el apoyo contínuo del gobierno hacia STRI ha hecho posible el trabajo de miles de biólogos tropicales en este país. También comparó el presupuesto de $15,194.96 para nuestras operaciones en 1926 con el presupuesto actual.

El 17 de abril de 1923, el entonces gobernador de la Zona del Canal, J.J. Morrow, declaró Barro Colorado Island reserva biológica, uno de los primeros bosques lluviosos tropicales protegidos en el Nuevo Mundo.



"...For over eight decades, Barro Colorado Island has been a leading center of research in tropical biology. Numerous long term studies have been possible because of the stability and logistical support provided by the Institute... The role of the game warden force has also been key to ascertain that important research sites and experiments are guarded against illegal hunting, deforestation or slash and burn, among other activities.

"...Por más de ocho décadas, la Isla de Barro Colorado ha sido un centro líder de investigaciones en biología tropical. Numerosos estudios a largo plazo han sido posibles gracias a la estabilidad y apoyo logístico que ofrece el Instituto... El papel del cuerpo de guardabosques ha sido clave para asegurar que importantes lugares de investigación y experimentos no sean afectados por la cacería ilegal, la deforestación o la roza y quema, entre otras actividades.

The 50-hectare mother plot for long term census of forest has been a model and pioneer research project, which we have proudly helped establish successfully in more than 17 countries around the world. This and other studies place us on the threshold of answers to numerous questions about the biology of tropical forests while at the same time they lead us to another set of challenging questions.

La parcela madre de 50 hectáreas para censos de bosques a largo plazo ha sido un modelo y un proyecto pionero de investigación que estamos orgullosos de haber ayudado a establecer exitosamente en más de 17 países alrededor del mundo. Este y otros estudios nos colocan muy cerca de las respuestas a numerosas preguntas sobre la biología de los bosques tropicales, mientras que al mismo tiempo nos encamina hacia otra nueva variedad de preguntas por resolver.

The BCNM serves as a sophisticated laboratory for students of tropical biology from around the world. In addition to its

El Monumento Natural de Barro Colorado sirve como un sofisticado

importance to the international scientific community, the forests of the BCNM and adjacent Soberania National Park provide legal protection to more than one quarter of the remaining forests in the Panama Canal watershed.

More recently, with long term research such as the ICBG and others, studies at the BCNM are contributing in tangible and measurable ways to our understanding of the rich ecosystems of tropical forests. As our understanding improves, we may soon find ways to preserve our remaining forests and to use their precious resources for the mutual benefit of all life on Earth.

May we all continue to share the success for the years to come of our *Tropical Air Castle*... Gracias"

laboratorio para estudiantes de biología tropical de todo el mundo. Además de su importancia para la comunidad científica, los bosques del MNBC y el Parque Nacional Soberanía adyacente, proveen de protección legal a más de un cuarto de los bosques que quedan en la cuenca del Canal de Panamá.

Más recientemente, con estudios a largo plazo como el ICBG y otros, las investigaciones en el MNBC están contribuyendo de manera tangible a nuestro entendimiento de los ricos ecosistemas de los bosques tropicales. A medida que nuestro entendimiento se enriquece, nos acercamos a encontrar las maneras de preservar lo que queda de nuestros bosques y usar sus preciosos recursos para beneficio mutuo de todas las formas de vida de la Tierra.

Espero que continuemos compartiendo el éxito de nuestro *Castillo en el Aire Tropical* en los años venideros. Gracias"