

# STRI newsletter

September 15, 1995

SMITHSONIAN TROPICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE - Apartado 2072, Balboa, Panamá

No. 37

## TUPPER CENTER SEMINARS

Tuesday, September 19, noon seminar speaker will be Michael D. Jennions, Oxford University

*Fluctuating Asymmetry and Optimal Signal Size: Data from Fiddler Crabs, Plants, Zebra Finches and a Damselfly*

### Abstract

Part One: Fluctuating asymmetry is currently a hot topic in behavioral ecology. I review arguments suggesting that asymmetry is a cue of quality potentially important in mate choice and pollination biology. I then present data from my own studies of a damselfly, zebra finches and plants which test aspects of this claim. Part Two: A key assumption of the handicap model of signalling is that the costs of a given increase in signalling are greater for a low quality signaller. Problems with previous empirical tests of this assumption are discussed. I then present results from a test of this assumption in which I manipulated the weight of the major claw of a fiddler crab *Uca annulipes*. I suggest that trade-offs between sexual selected traits may be more important than those between sexual and natural selection.

## BAMBI SEMINAR

Thursday, September 21, Bambi seminar speakers will be the students of the University of Tübingen, Germany

*Project Reports from Bat Class*

Transportation and dinner reservations are essential.

## NAOS LAB LUNCHEON

Friday, September 22, Naos Marine Laboratories Luncheon seminar will be Juan Maté, University of Miami, at the Surfside Conference Hall

*A Molecular Approach to the Systematics of the Coral Pocillopora*



On Wednesday, September 13, a group of taxi drivers and tourism police visited STRI and were briefed about the Institute's research projects and educational programs in Panama, as part of the APEDE (Panamanian Businessmen's Association) educational program "Conozca su País" (learn about your country). In the photo, one of the visitors admires photos of the Metropolitan Park exhibit, at the Tupper Center Exhibit Hall.

(Photo: M.A. Guerra)

## PEOPLE

### Arrivals

- Kristina Ovaska, STRI Short-term visitor from Canada, Sep 19-3 Oct, to work on a comparison of advertisement and courtship calls of frogs of the genus *Elentherodactylus*, at Tupper.
- Crew from *Expedición: Programa de Aventuras Dedicado a la Conservación de Nuestro Ambiente*, Sep 19-10 Oct, to interview researchers and film on-going projects at STRI for the documentary "Historia de Dos Mares".

### Departures

- Martin Moynihan and Olga F. Linares, Sep 20-15 Oct, to France, to continue their research.

### Thank You Note ••• Nota de Agradecimiento

Director Ira Rubinoff would like to thank to all who cooperated to make the visit of last weekend of the congressional staff a success ••• Ira Rubinoff desea expresar su agradecimiento a todos aquellos que contribuyeron a que la visita de personal del Congreso de los Estados Unidos el fin de la semana pasada, fuera exitosa.

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

### Passport/Visa Services

from Anita Buffaloe, SI, Washington, D.C.

Due to the continued back-ups at the Passport Office, employees considering official foreign travel should make arrangements for passport/visa services as early as possible. If you contemplate foreign travel during the months of October, November and December and will be in need of our services, please fax at (202)786-2557 or e-mail [abb@ic.si.edu](mailto:abb@ic.si.edu) details of your trip place, dates and purpose. We will proceed in making arrangements for you immediately. For those contemplating personal travel abroad, don't leave your passport application for the last minute. Nineteen ninety six (1996) is the 10th anniversary of the 10-year passport. The State Department is expecting heavy traffic throughout the year.

### From the Library

New staff, visiting scientists, fellows and volunteers that are not familiar with the bibliographic research at the Library are invited to sign up for an orientation session and instructions. Sessions will take place on Tuesdays at 9am. There is space for a maximum of 10 participants. The contents of the briefing will include library user policies and physical layout, use of the automated library catalog, access and retrieval of on-site documents, access and use of the cd-rom databases and Current Contents on diskette, the services available user policies. For more information, please contact Vielka Chang-Yau, Chief Librarian, at 227-6014.

### From the Office of Human Resources

The STRI Office of Human Resources received an invitation from the Department of the Air Force located at Howard Air Force Base, Panama, for all Thrift Savings Plan eligibles to attend a briefing given by a representative from the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board in Washington, D.C. The briefing will be on Thursday, September 21, from 8-11am at the Zodiac Rec. Center, Building 709, 3rd Fl, Howard. All eligibles interested in attending this briefing should call Carmen Sucre or Martiza Perurena, so that a list may be ready at the Howard AFB gate upon arrival. It is recommended that those who will attend use a vehicle with the special sticker and bring your special installation passes and STRI ID's.

### At the Tupper Center

Tue, Sep 19 Noon seminar by Michael D. Jennions, Auditorium  
Wed, Sep 20 Fee Committee Meeting, SMR, 9am.

### At the Culebra Marine Reserve

Tue, Sep 19 *Instituto Bilingüe Las Cumbres*  
Wed, Sep 20 *Instituto Justo Arosemena*  
Thu, Sep 21 *Instituto Justo Arosemena*  
Fri, Sep 22 *Escuela Franco-Panameña*  
Sat, Sep 23 *Instituto Cultural*

### At Barro Colorado Island Station

Sat, Sep 16 Curundu Jr. High and Panama city.  
Sun, Sep 17 Visitors from Panama city  
Sat, Sep 23 *Colegio Pedro Pablo Sanchez* and the UP  
Sun, Sep 24 *SERGESA (Ecologistas)*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Position Available at STRI

The Office of the Assistant Director for Scientific Support Services seeks an administrative assistant to help organize the day-to-day activities of the office. The selected candidate will prepare and coordinate appointment schedules, information gathering, report writing, "screening" telephone calls and visitors as well as play an active role in communication between the scientists and the ADSSS support staff. Candidates must have five years of experience in similar positions with proven excellent organizational abilities, fluent in English and Spanish and proven ability to translate documents from both languages, knowledge of computer software for word processing, spreadsheets (MS Word and Excel) and communications. Educational background in science and/or business administration is desirable. Salary depending on qualifications and experience. Mail curriculum vitae with 3 references to: Office of Human Resources, STRI, Box 3353, Balboa, Panama. Applications will be received until September 29, 1995.

### Décimo Cuarto Congreso Científico Nacional

El Décimo Cuarto Congreso Científico Nacional auspiciado por la Vicerrectoría de Investigación y Postgrado de la Universidad de Panamá se llevará a cabo del 24 al 26 de octubre de 1995. Este año el congreso se consagrará a las ciencias naturales y exactas, biomédicas, agronómicas, de la tierra, del mar, ciencias tecnológicas, ciencias sociales, educación, administración pública, administración de empresas, derecho y humanidades. Aquellos que desean presentar ponencias en el congreso, la fecha límite para entregar resúmenes es el 30 de septiembre. Mayores detalles en la Oficina 340 de Educación.

### Car Wanted

Roland Kays and Judy Hudock are looking an used car, 4x4 or at least with good clearance, for 1996. E-mail them at [STRIO2.gamboa.gam183@ic.si.edu](mailto:STRIO2.gamboa.gam183@ic.si.edu) or call 276-6278.

**Panfleto: "Recursos Latinos en el Smithsonian" en la Oficina 340 de Educación**