

Tupper 4pm seminar

Tuesday, July 15, 4pm seminar speaker will be Anthony R.E. Sinclair, University of British Columbia

Understanding ecosystems for the conservation of biodiversity

Paleo-Talk

Wednesday, July 16, Paleo-talk speaker will be Monica Ramirez, STRI intern, 4pm CTPA conference room

Fossil Malvaceae from the Late Paleocene of northern Colombia

Bambi seminar

Thursday, July 17, Bambi seminar speaker on BCI will be Anthony R.E. Sinclair University of British Columbia

Long-term dynamics in the Serengeti ecosystem: lesson for conservation and society

Bocas' open house

STRI's Bocas del Toro Research Station will hold weekly "Open House and Tour" every Thursday and Friday, 3pm.

BDG

STRI's next Behavior Discussion Group meeting will be held on July 15, at 2pm, with Krista McCoy, Boston University

Can we integrate neuroendocrinology and conservation?

Arrivals

Chava Weitzman, University of Redlands, to study the behavior, mimicry and chemical ecology as joint forces driving speciation in *Heliconius* butterflies, at Galeta.



Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panamá

www.stri.org

July 11, 2008

"Bright bugs discover new drugs." Capson to AAAS

"Scientists are already seeking inspiration for the next generation of drugs from traditional medicines used by witch doctors and by shaman, even treatments used by apes for parasites and other ailments. Now they can add insects to their list of prospectors for new medicines" writes Roger Highfield, science editor from UK's *Telegraph* in a review of an article to appear in *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* in 2009 by STRI researchers J.E. Helson, T.L. Capson, T. Johns, A. Aiello and D. Windsor.

Insects with vivid colors to warn off predators could be telling drug companies that their bodies have chemical compounds active against cancer cell lines and tropical parasitic diseases. The plants used for the study were chosen based on previous screening by Panama's ICBG for activity against cancer cell lines and tropical parasites responsible for malaria, leishmaniasis and Chagas' disease. A search for beetles and caterpillars on plants with and without activity revealed that insects with bright warning coloration were significantly more common on plants that contained compounds with activity against these diseases. "Although the idea that

brightly-colored insects could facilitate the search for medicinally active plants has been discussed for decades, the concept had never been rigorously tested... It's very gratifying to see that it works in the field" said Todd Capson, who directed the Panama-based project. The team worked with Panama's Institute of Advanced Scientific Research and High Technology Services, Panama's National Authority of the Environment (ANAM) and the University of Panama.

Capson, who hopes "other investigators will follow our lead and test our theory that insects can lead us to plants with disease fighting properties" is leaving ICBG to accept a AAAS fellowship with the State Department, Bureau of Oceans, Environment & Science, in Washington DC.

In a congratulation letter from STRI's Eldredge Bermingham for his new appointment, he reiterated STRI's gratitude to Capson for his many accomplishments at STRI since 1998. "You can be extremely proud of the science that has been accomplished and the number of host country professionals that have been trained, which in the eyes of many will stand as one of the most important legacies of the ICBG project... your efforts in



Capson

spearheading the inclusion of Coiba National Park on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites, working in partnership with your colleagues at ANAM, IUCN, and CI, constitute a hugely tangible contribution to the conservation and celebration of Panama's biodiversity" concluded Bermingham. We wish Todd all success!

"Los científicos ya buscan su inspiración para la próxima generación de medicamentos a partir de remedios tradicionales utilizados por brujos y 'shaman', incluso en tratamientos usados por monos para parásitos y otros males. Hoy pueden añadir insectos a la lista de exploradores de nuevos medicamentos" escribe Roger Highfield, editor científico de *Telegraph* del Reino Unido, en una reseña de un artículo que aparecerá en 2009 por investigadores de STRI, J.E. Helson, T.L. Capson, T. Johns, A. Aiello y D.M. Windsor.

More arrivals

Robert Hegna, Florida International University, to conduct a study of aposematism in the strawberry poison dart frog (*Oophaga pumilio*): The effect of frog color on predation, at Bocas.

Jan Jansa, ETH Zurich, to study the functional significance of tree diversity for nutrient dynamics in a tropical plantation, at the Sardinilla Experiment.

Jessica Avalos, University of California, Santa Cruz, to study tropical disease drug discovery from marine and plant sources in Panama with the ICBG.

Susan Rebellon, Stanford University, to study the effects of mammals on plant functional diversity, at Bocas.

Sandra Reinales, National University of Colombia, to study Neotropical biostratigraphy, at the CTPA.

Danielle Brown, University of California, Davis, to study the individual behavioral variation in northern Tamandua anteaters, on BCI.

Mary Jane Epps and Benjamin Brandt, University of Arizona to study the elevation effects on the life history characteristics of tropical trees, in Fortuna.

Krista McCoy, Boston University, to study the implications of environmental hormones on amphibian sexual dimorphisms and mating behavior, on BCI.

Hamilton Farris, Louisiana State University, to study female choice in Túngara frogs, in Gamboa.

Steven Vollmer, Northeastern University to study coral reef health, at Bocas.

Insectos que alertan a sus depredadores con sus colores vívidos pueden estar enviando información a las compañías farmacéuticas que sus cuerpos portan compuestos químicos activos contra líneas de células cancerosas y enfermedades tropicales causadas por parásitos. Las plantas usadas para estos estudios se eligieron de acuerdo al escrutinio realizado por el ICBG de Panamá que busca actividad contra células cancerosas y parásitos tropicales responsables por la malaria, leishmaniosis y la enfermedad de Chagas. Una búsqueda de escarabajos y orugas en plantas que habían y no mostrado actividad reveló que los insectos con colores brillantes de advertencia eran significativamente más abundantes en plantas con compuestos activos contra estas enfermedades.

"A pesar de que la idea de que insectos con colores brillantes podría facilitar la búsqueda de

plantas medicinalmente activas se ha discutido por décadas, el concepto no se había puesto a prueba rigorosamente... "Es muy gratificante ver que esto se verificó en el campo" comentó Todd Capson, quien dirigió el proyecto. El equipo trabajó con INDICASAT, ANAM y la Universidad de Panamá.



Capson, quien espera que "otros investigadores sigan nuestro ejemplo y pongan a prueba nuestra teoría de que los insectos nos pueden llevar hacia plantas con propiedades para combatir enfermedades" deja al ICBG para aceptar una

posición en AAAS con el Departamento de Estado de EU, Unidad de los Océanos, Ambiente y Ciencias, en Washington DC.

En una carta Eldredge Bermingham de STRI donde felicita a Capson por su nueva posición, reitera el agradecimiento de STRI a Capson, por todos sus logros en desde 1998. "Puede sentirse muy orgulloso por los resultados científicos que se han logrado y por el número de profesionales de nuestro país anfitrión que se capacitaron, lo que en ojos de muchos será el legado más importante del proyecto del ICBG... sus esfuerzos para poner en marcha la inclusión del Parque Nacional Coiba en la lista de sitios de Patrimonio para la Humanidad junto con sus colegas en ANAM, IUCN y CI constituyeron una contribución enormemente tangible para la conservación y la celebración de la biodiversidad de Panamá" concluyó Bermingham. ¡Le deseamos muchos éxitos!

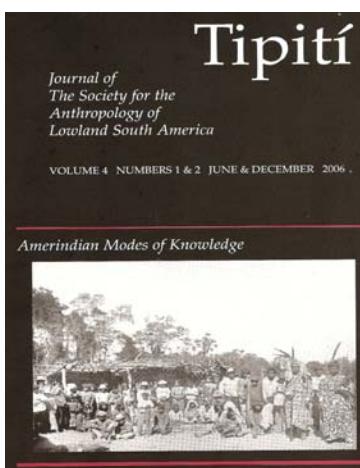
New STRI book: *In the world and about the world: Amerindian modes of knowledge*

A recent issue of *Tipití-Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* came

out as a 328-page book edited by STRI's Fernando Santos-Granero and colleague George Mentore, from the University of Virginia. The book *In the world and about the world: Amerindian modes of knowledge* is volume 4, issues 1&2 dated 2006, printed in 2008. It was edited to honor professor Joanna Overing recently retired from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland and appointed professor emeritus.

The volume compiles 13 chapters written by former Ph.D. candidates whose dissertations Overing advised. The book visits the differences in the modes of knowledge of

Amerindian peoples and those of the western world.



Un número reciente de la revista *Tipití-Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* se publicó en forma de libro de 328 páginas editado por Fernando Santos-Granero de STRI, y George Mentore, de la

Universidad de Virginia. El libro *In the world and about the world: Amerindian modes of knowledge* [En el mundo y sobre el mundo: modalidades del conocimiento de los Amerindios] es el volumen 4, números 1&2 con fecha de 2006, impreso en 2008. Está dedicado a la profesora Joanna Overing, recientemente jubilada de la Universidad de St. Andrews en Escocia, quien fue nombrada profesora emérita.

El volumen compila 13 capítulos escritos por ex-candidatos a doctorado quienes escribieron sus tesis bajo la supervisión de Overing. La compilación trata sobre las diferencias entre las modalidades de conocimiento de los pueblos indígenas amazónicos y aquellas del mundo occidental.

New publications

Heckadon Moreno, Stanley. 2008. "Los naturalistas W. Perrygo y A. Alexander Wetmore en Azuero, 1948." *"Épocas" Tercera Era* (Supplement to *El Panamá América*) 23(6): 10-11.

Libsch, Michael M., Batista, Chelina, Buehler, Deborah M., Ochoa, Isis, Brawn, Jeffrey D., & Ricklefs, Robert E. 2008. "Nest predation in a Neotropical forest occurs during daytime." *The Condor* 110(1): 166–170.

Santos-Granero, Fernando, & Mentore, George (Eds.). 2006 (2008). *In the world and about the world: Amerindian modes of knowledge*. Special issue in honor of professor Joanna Overing. *Tipití. Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* 4(1-2).

Santos-Granero, Fernando. 2006 (2008). "Sensual vitalities: non-corporeal modes of sensing and knowing in native Amazonia." In Santos- Granero, Fernando, & Mentore, George (Eds.) *In the world and about the world: Amerindian modes of knowledge*. Special issue in honor of professor Joanna Overing. *Tipití. Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* 4(1-2): 57-80.

Srygley, Robert B., & Dudley, Robert. 2008. "Optimal strategies for insects migrating in the flight boundary layer: mechanisms and consequences." *Integrative and Comparative Biology* 48(1): 119-133.

Wright, S. Joseph. 2008. "International perspective: Ecological processes and ecosystem services in the wet tropics." In Stork, Nigel E., & Turton, Stephen M. (Eds.) *Living in a dynamic tropical forest landscape*: 2061-2262. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Harvard Arnold Arboretum renews STRI partnership to support CTFS/SIGEO

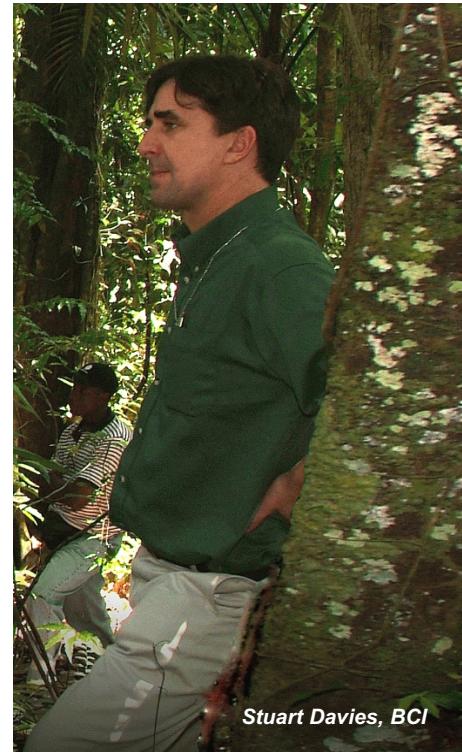
Through a new five-year agreement, the Harvard University Arnold Arboretum has renewed its partnership with STRI in support of the Center for Tropical Forest Science (CTFS) and the Smithsonian Global Earth Observatories (SIGEO). The new agreement calls for expansion of the Arboretum support for the CTFS-Asia chapter and relocation of the Asia program headquarters to Harvard University Herbaria. Stuart Davies, CTFS current director will assume responsibility for all CTFS work in Asia, from Harvard.

Established nearly a quarter-century ago based on the first 50-ha plot on BCI created at STRI by Steve Hubbell and Robin Foster, the CTFS conducts long-term research on the composition and behavior of tropical forests. The core work of CTFS is to monitor populations of all tree species in twenty permanent plots across fifteen countries, including twelve sites in southeast Asia. Every tree in each 50-ha plot is tagged, measured and mapped. The surveys are repeated every five years, with over 1.4 million trees of roughly 3,000 species. This long-term research provides an exceptional depth of information on forest ecosystems and a baseline from which to investigate the extraordinary species diversity of tropical forests. In addition, the program provides educational opportunities to Asian students and scientists in the theory, methodology, and implementation of tropical forest research.

Recently the Center served as platform to initiate a grant-funded system of global observatories (SIGEO)

with funds from the HSBC Climate Partnership. SIGEO will examine forest response to climate change. It will incorporate data from new plots in temperate regions of the world with data from the CTFS plots. The CTFS also maintains programs in field training, research grant support, and applied research on sustainable management, restoration, and conservation of tropical forest.

With information from Arnold Arboretum News



Stuart Davies, BCI

se marca, mide y localiza en un mapa. Los censos se repiten cada cinco años, con cerca de 1.4 millones de árboles de 3,000 especies aproximadamente. Esta investigación a gran escala proporciona una gran cantidad de información profunda sobre ecosistemas forestales y una base para estudiar la gran diversidad de especies de los bosques tropicales. El programa también proporciona oportunidades de educación para estudiantes asiáticos y científicos sobre la teoría, metodología e implementación de investigaciones forestales en los trópicos.

Recientemente, el Centro sirvió de plataforma para iniciar un sistema de observatorios globales (SIGEO) con fondos del HSBC Climate Partnership.

SIGEO examinará la respuesta forestal al cambio climático. Este programa incorporará información de nuevas parcelas en regiones templadas del mundo con información de las parcelas del CTFS. El CTFS también mantiene programas de capacitación en el campo, financiamiento para apoyar investigaciones, y estudios aplicados sobre manejo sostenible, recuperación y conservación de bosques tropicales.

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Tupper residents: abundant, conspicuous and nameless!

Story:

Annette Aiello

Edited by:

M Alvarado

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Photos:

Annette Aiello

& M Guerra

This colorful grasshopper —so abundant now on the Tupper grounds—is under study by Jeremy Niven, Marc Seid and John Douglass

of the Neurobiology Labs led by Bill Wcislo.

Niven became interested by its olfactory system. Locusts, with the best olfactory system ever described, have an incredible varied diet. But this insect is less generalist, explains Niven.

According to STRI's Annette Aiello, this insect is the most commonly brought to her for identification. They belong to the genus *Taeniopoda* (class Insecta, order Orthoptera, family Romaleidae) and were first collected here in October 2004. "That specimen is on loan to a specialist in Switzerland, who has not yet given us a species name for it" she explains.

Nymphs and adults are found together and look quite different from one another. The little nymphs (background photo, lower individual) are attractive black and red with wing buds that grow longer with each

molt. The adult is very pretty, especially when it opens its wings (see inset).

Though *Taeniopoda* is known to eat a wide variety of plants elsewhere, here at Tupper you will see it mainly on a plant called *Hymenocallis americana*, in the parking lot across from the double glass doors and to the right of the Auditorium 200-level door.

There is a third plant in the Arboretum. This year it expanded its diet to include some of Neal Smith's orchids near the fountain.

We will hear more about these Tupper residents in the near future. For one, their name, and the many questions Niven is addressing himself about them.

Este colorido saltamonte que actualmente abunda en los terrenos del Centro Tupper de STRI, se encuentra bajo estudio por Jeremy Niven, Marc Seid y John Douglass del grupo del Laboratorio de Neurobiología liderado por Bill Wcislo. Niven se interesó en este saltamonte debido a su olfato. Las langostas, que tienen el mejor sistema de olfato que se haya descrito, tienen una dieta muy variada. Pero estos saltamontes son mucho menos generalistas, explica Niven.

De acuerdo a Annette Aiello, este es el insecto que le han llevado con más frecuencia para su identificación. Es del género *Taeniopoda* (clase Insecta, orden Orthoptera, familia Romaleidae) y se colectó aquí, en octubre de 2004. El espécimen se le prestó a un especialista en Suiza, pero aún no nos ha dado un nombre de especie para él, explica Annette.

Las pequeñas ninñas (individuo inferior en la foto de fondo) son atractivos insectos negros y rojos con cogollitos de alas que se alargan con cada muda. Las ninñas y los adultos son muy diferentes unos de otros. Los adultos son muy hermosos, especialmente cuando abren sus alas (ver recuadro).

Oiremos más sobre estos residentes del Tupper en un futuro cercano. Por un lado, su nombre, y además todas las preguntas que Niven se hace a sí mismo sobre ellos.

