



Whitney R. Harris World Ecology Center

News

The [Saint Louis Zoo](#) has won the International Conservation Award from the [Association of Zoos and Aquariums](#) for its conservation of Grevy's zebra in Kenya. The zoo has facilitated grassland restoration programs and is working with local people to resolve conflicts between livestock rearing and wildlife conservation. The Zoo also received the Edward H. Bean Award for its captive breeding of the Missouri hellbenders. Populations of Missouri hellbenders, a salamander, have been impacted by water pollution and the captive breeding program aims to restore wild populations.

From August 20 to September 10, [Vincenzo Ellis](#) (Ricklefs' laboratory) worked with Post-doctoral Fellow [Stéphane Cornet](#) on an experimental infection of canaries with avian malaria at the [Institut de Recherche pour le Développement](#) in Montpellier, France. This work was sponsored by the Malaria Research Coordination Network (NSF), and was intended to elucidate the role the avian immune system plays in combating infection by avian malaria. The results of this study will be used to inform field studies of avian populations and their diseases. Preliminary results regarding hematocrit—the proportion of red blood cells in a given volume of blood—indicate that infected (Experimental) birds did indeed suffer greater physiological stress than uninfected (Control) birds from approximately 5 to 18 days post-infection.

Conferences

The Center was well represented at the 5th North American Ornithological Conference that was held at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, from August 14-18. Faculty and graduate students presented the following:

[Robert Ricklefs](#): *What fundamental things can a tree of birds (not) tell us?*

[Eloisa Sari](#) and [Patricia Parker](#): *Molecular and morphological variation in the Galápagos flycatcher* (*Myiarchus magnirostris*).

[Vincenzo Ellis](#), Melanie Kunkel and [Robert Ricklefs](#): *Health and its relation to patterns of abundance in the Ozarks of Southern Missouri*. Melanie Kunkel's participation in this study was supported by the 2012 Thomas F. George Undergraduate Scholarship.

The following Harris Center alumni also gave presentations at the meeting: [Thomas Brandt Ryder](#) (Research Scientist, [Migratory Bird Center](#) at the [National Zoological Park](#)), [Teresa Patricia Feria](#) (Faculty at University of Texas), [Caroline Duffie](#) (Ph.D. student at [Louisiana State](#)

[University, Museum of Natural Sciences](#)), and [Kate Huyvert](#) (Faculty at [Colorado State University](#)).

The St. Louis Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation (SLEEC) Retreat was held on September 29 at [Principia College](#), Elsah, Illinois. SLEEC is a consortium of biologists from [Harris Stowe State University](#), [Maryville University](#), [Missouri Botanical Garden](#), [Principia College](#), [Saint Louis University](#), [Saint Louis Zoo](#), [Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville](#), [University of Missouri-St. Louis](#) and [Washington University](#).

Presentations by faculty and graduate students at the University of Missouri-St. Louis included:

[Elizabeth Kellogg](#), Matt Estep, Dilys Vela Diaz, and Jinshun Zhong: *Phylogeny, polyploidy and genome evolution in the Andropogoneae*.

[Maria Pil](#) and [Robert Ricklefs](#): *Using genetic variation to infer the demographic history of Coereba flaveola in the West Indies*.

[Iris Levin](#) and [Patricia Parker](#): *The secret lives of hippoboscids flies*.

[Aimee Dunlap](#): *Components of change in animal information use*.

Poster presentations by graduate students at the University of Missouri-St. Louis included:

[Christina Baer](#): *Leaf-tying caterpillars increase abundance of Asiatic oak weevil on deciduous trees through ecosystem engineering*.

[Eliot Miller](#): *The Meliphagidae: Honeyeater foraging ecology in a phylogenetic context*.

[Patrick Raines](#): *Why we want too much of a good thing: Experimental evolution of supernormal stimuli*.

Heritiana Ranarivelo: *Morphometric relationships, phylogenetic correlation, and character evolution in the Afro-Malagasy genus Psorospermum (Hypericaceae)*.

[Pagi Toko](#): *Species richness and community composition of moths (Geometridae) along a complete rain forest gradient in Papua New Guinea*.

[Toshi Tsunekage](#): *A comparative study of oxidative stress in avian embryos*.

The conference dinner was held at the [Audubon Center, Riverlands](#).

Upcoming Events

The 2012 Whitney and Anna Harris Conservation Forum will be held on Thursday, November 8 at the Living World, [Saint Louis Zoo](#). The theme this year is: *Environmental Issues of St. Louis: Past, Present, and Future*. Presenters include Mayor Shelley Welsch (University City), [Dr. Andrew Hurley](#), Department of History, University of Missouri-St. Louis and [Dr. Charles Nilon](#), Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences, University of Missouri-Columbia.

Recent Publications

Greeney, H.F., Kirwan, G.M. and [Miller, E.T.](#) (2012). [Nesting biology of the long-wattled umbrellabird *Cephalopterus penduliger*](#). Part II: Nestling provisioning. *Cotinga* 34: 23-27.

Watsa, M., [Erkenswick, G.A.](#), Rehg, J.A. and Pitman, R.L. (2012). [Distribution and new sightings of Goeldi's Monkey \(*Callimico goeldii*\) in Amazonian Perú](#). *International Journal of Primatology*. doi: 10.1007/s10764-012-9632-1.