



News fEEB

Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Monthly Newsletter

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Monthly Discussion

As an EEB community, how can we find a balance between online and in-person science activities in the age of social distancing? Do you think COVID-19 is impacting public perception of science?

Want to join the discussion?

Respond to the corresponding email OR tweet out your response while including #TAMUEEB

Student Spotlight

MC Hannon is a third-year Ph.D. candidate in Marine Biology at Texas A&M University at Galveston. She graduated from Humboldt State University with a double major in Marine Biology and Zoology, and is currently a member of the Schulze lab. Her dissertation research focuses on the reproductive habits of a local species of polychaetes, the common clam worm. She is taking a four pronged approach to get a comprehensive picture of what is occurring by using ecological, genetic, histological, and biomechanic tools. In her spare time, MC is very active and enjoys playing Ultimate Frisbee and going to a Crossfit gym (when conditions are safe). Fun fact: MC is an ordained minister in the state of Texas and officiated her first wedding earlier this year!



**ECOLOGY and
EVOLUTIONARY
BIOLOGY**

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Laboratory Highlight

Coastal and Wetlands Ecology Lab

Dr. Anna Armitage

The Armitage lab examines changes in community structure and trophic interactions following habitat restoration, nutrient enrichment, or other anthropogenic alterations. Their work spans many coastal habitats, including salt marshes, mangroves, tidal mudflats, seagrass beds, and tidal freshwater wetlands. They utilize field experiments and a wide array of analytical procedures to investigate coastal ecosystem functions such as nutrient cycling and the provision of fishery habitat and food web support.

Dr. Anna Armitage is the Coastal and Wetlands Ecology Lab PI. Her deep personal connection to nature is reflected in her professional and personal life. Her weekends are often spent volunteering at local wetland restoration projects, tending her vegetable garden, or hiking and birdwatching in local parks.



Rachael Glazner is a 5th year Ph.D. candidate in the EEB Program. Her research has focused on the effects of mangrove expansion on predator-prey interactions in Texas. She recently passed her dissertation defense in April and looks forward to graduating this August!

Janelle Goeke is a 4th year PhD candidate in the EEB Program. She is originally from Rochester, NY, and graduated with a B.S. in Biology from SUNY Geneseo in 2016. Her research in the Armitage lab focuses on the effects that mangrove encroachment will have on food webs along the Gulf Coast of Texas. She is especially interested in trophic interactions in coastal environments with foundational plant species.



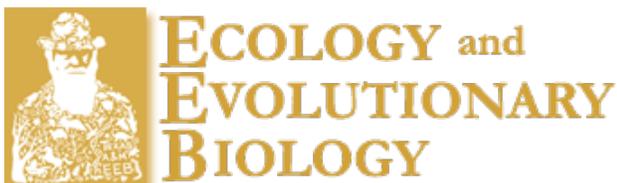
Jamie Thompson is a 3rd year Ph.D. student in the Marine Biology IDP Program. Originally from Dallas, TX, her research in Galveston now focuses on the effects of disturbances in mangroves at their northern range, in particular winter freeze effects and insect herbivory. She also enjoys spending a lot of time outdoors birding. Due to the limitations of social distancing she is currently working on an elaborate bird feeder set up in her front yard.

Ahsley McDonald is a 2nd year Ph.D. student in the Marine Biology IDP program. Ashley graduated with a B.S. in Marine Sciences from Eckerd College. She is interested in how ecological disturbances impact coastal wetlands, particularly the plant communities. Ashley is currently studying how the closure of Rollover Pass on Bolivar peninsula is impacting surrounding wetlands and is developing a mesocosm experiment to study how salinity impacts plant growth and competition.



If you want to know more about the Coastal and Wetlands Ecology Lab, please feel free to visit their website:

tamug.edu/armitage/



For more information visit:
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Announcements

Hamer Lab News

Congratulations to **Spencer DeBrock** for being awarded the Werner and Hildegard Hesse Research Award by the American Ornithological Association! This award supports graduate student research (Masters or Doctorate), with preference given to those studying birds in the wild.



2nd year EEB student **Rachel Busselman** was selected as the recipient of the national Kappa Kappa Gamma Foundation Graduate Scholarship for the 2020–21 academic year! The Foundation is celebrating its 25th year and honors the history of women through its museums; Enables the women of today through scholarships; Invests in women by partnering with the Fraternity to fund leadership programs; and in hard times, meets the needs of its members through financial aid.



Jurgens Lab News

Dr. Laura Jurgens joined the EEB community in 2019 as the PI for the Marine Community & Ecosystem Resilience Lab at TAMUG. Her lab members include M.S. student Anika Agrawal, M.S. student Emily Hubbard, and Senior Research Associate Melissa Ciesielski. Anika's research focuses on the effects of asynchronous stressors on oysters, and Emily's work focuses on oyster reef restoration. A new EEB student will be joining their team in the Fall of 2020, Arani Cuevas-Sanchez. Welcome to the EEB Program, Arani!

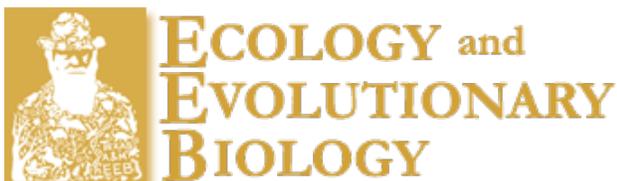
A paper from **Greg Sword's** lab was recently selected as the Editor's Pick article in *Phytobiome Journal* and has been getting some media attention. The study shows that a surprising number of fungi naturally associated with cultivated cotton can help reduce infestations of the plant by parasitic nematodes. Read more about it here: <https://phys.org/news/2020-04-fungi-cotton-decrease-root-nematode.html>

Mackenzie Tietjen recently received her PhD in the Raul F. Medina lab in the Entomology Department. Her dissertation is titled "Tick Population Ecology and its' Potential Role in Explaining Tick-borne Disease Prevalence." She will be moving to a postdoctoral position at the USDA-ARS in Kerrville, TX working on the population genetics of the primary screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*). She will be sampling Ties in Panama and the Caribbean and using SNPs in attempts to identify the origin of the 2016 screwworm outbreak in Florida.

Charles Criscione has recently published an article about the parasitic lancet fluke! You can find it here:

Criscione, C. D., B. J. van Paridon, J. S. Gilleard, and C. P. Goater. 2020. Clonemate cotransmission supports a role for kin selection in a puppeteer parasite. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117 (11): 5970-5976. (<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1922272117>)

*****Remember to practice social distancing when working on campus*****



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