

Ecological Integration Symposium 2022

The EIS (Ecological Integration Symposium) will be **April 7th - 8th**! Check out the [symposium schedule](#) to plan your time at the symposium. The schedule of student talks will be released closer to the date of the symposium.

There is still plenty of space for more student talks and posters so please sign up if interested and share information on the symposium widely!

Click [here](#) to register for EIS, including registering to present a talk or poster. Those who register or show interest to present will then be sent a form to confirm they are presenting and to submit their abstract.

The deadline for abstract submission will be March 24th.

EIS promotional items (shirts, hats, and mugs) with our excellent new logo (seen in this ad) will be available for pre-ordering and will be sold at the symposium!

Stay tuned on more promotional items! **Learn more about our EIS Plenary Speakers** [here](#) and more about the symposium on our [website](#)!



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Upcoming Presentations

Proposal Defenses

Michael McCloy - Thursday, March 3rd @ 10am
Zach Steffensmeier - TBD

EEB Seminar

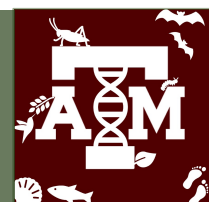
March 7: EEB Postdocs
March 14: Spring break, no seminar
March 21: Alex Keene (Texas A&M University)
March 28: John Werren (University of Rochester)



Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2022 EEB Recruitment activities! This year we received around 50 applications and were happy to host 11 students for the in-person event and an additional 10 students for virtual recruiting.

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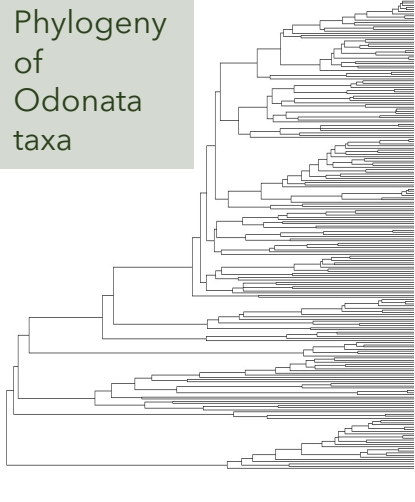


Ecology &
Evolutionary
Biology

Darwin Day: A Virtual Experience

Although our SP2022 calendars continue to fill up, many EEB'ers wish they were adding Darwin Day to their schedules. There are no formal Darwin Day festivities this year; however, the spirit of our great EEB tradition lives on through scientists eager to engage with their communities. To celebrate their first EEB Darwin Day, first-year students **Matthew Marano** and **Ali Lira Olguin** reflect on their own research and how it relates to Darwin's legacy.

Phylogeny of Odonata taxa



Matthew Marano is a first-year PhD student in Dr. Heath Blackmon's lab, where his current research focus is on the evolution of chromosome number and sex chromosome system in Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies). Prior to joining the EEB program at Texas A&M, he attended the State University of New York at Stony Brook, where he earned a master's degree in 2019 for his research on the population genetics of three-spined stickleback fish (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*) during rapid evolutionary transitions from marine to freshwater environments. Though his research career is still at its inception, Matthew's interest in biology began much earlier in his life. Frequent trips to the Bronx Zoo and the American Museum of Natural History quickly transformed a toddler's special interest in dinosaurs into an appreciation for the vast diversity of all organisms, both extant and extinct.

Now, his appreciation for biodiversity continues through his research as he investigates the processes of evolution within multiple taxa and across entire clades of the tree of life. It was a similar appreciation for biodiversity and "endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful" that first inspired Charles Darwin to formalize his theories of evolution and speciation by natural selection. Matthew hopes to continue Darwin's legacy of evolutionary discovery, using inferences of the same types of phylogenetic trees that Darwin first proposed through the only illustration in *On the Origin of Species*.



Ali Lira Olguin is interested in parasites, bats, systematics, evolution and host-parasite coevolution. She began her academic journey studying bat flies' taxonomy at Facultad de Ciencias (Mexico); she performed a study about the bat flies associated with New World leaf-nosed bats of caves in Mexico. She received her MS degree from Posgrado en Ciencias Biologicas, UNAM (Mexico) where she focused on bat fly taxonomy and systematics, mainly on species delimitation of the genus *Megistopoda*, parasite of New World leaf-nosed bats of the genus *Artibeus* and *Sturnira*.

Ali joined to Dr. Light's Lab under the EEB program, where she will focus on the study of the cospeciation between bat flies of the genus *Megistopoda* and their hosts, and its relationship with the diversification of these parasites in the Neotropics. She is a very enthusiastic learner of parasites and host-parasite relationships, and she is interested in collaborating in several parasite projects.

