

EEB Monthly

A Department Newsletter

April 30, 2021



About This Newsletter

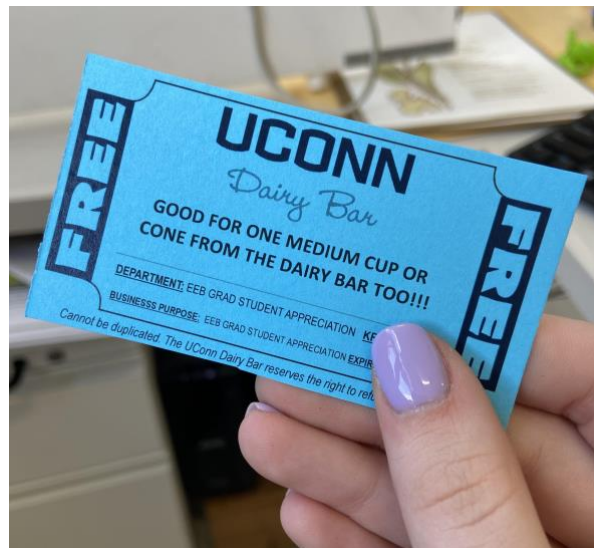
EEB Monthly is a new department newsletter that will be sent at the end of each month. It will be used to share departmental information, remind team members of upcoming events, acknowledge various accomplishments, and keep us all connected while we are apart. This newsletter is for your enjoyment, so if you have any suggestions for upcoming editions, please email leah.rossettie@uconn.edu or eeb.assistant@uconn.edu

Enjoy!

Graduate Student Appreciation Week

April 5 – 9 was Graduate Student Appreciation week. All of the EEB team members would like to thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to this department. You are a massive part of our team and a huge reason why we have been able to continue with our normal functions over the past year. We hope you all enjoyed your ice cream as a token of our appreciation!

Also, congratulations to all graduate students who will be graduating in May. We wish you the best of luck in all that you do!



Team Member Shout-Outs

Nicholas Boston is the Educational Program Assistant 2 at EEB, and has been in this role since November 2017.

“Nick has been the best supervisor I could have asked for coming in as an undergraduate employee. The work he puts into this department is incredible and should not go unappreciated. He values the student workers a lot, and makes sure we are getting a valuable experience for our futures. He has been a wonderful mentor and a pleasure to work with the past two years. Thank you for everything, Nick!”

-Submitted by Meghan Partesano (EEB Student Assistant)



If you would like to shout-out a fellow EEB team member for any reason (their hard work, kindness, accomplishments, etc.), please email eeb.assistant@uconn.edu with whom you would like to recognize and a few sentences explaining why.

EEB Greenhouse News

The **EEB Greenhouse** is taking part in a new Amazon/Roku show called *The College Tour*. They recently filmed a segment for the show at the greenhouse where they focused on sustainability as a part of the college experience. Stay tuned for more news on this exciting project!

Check out more pictures on the EEB Greenhouse Instagram: @eeb.greenhouse



Awards

Michael Finiguerra's proposal *UConn FIRST in Biology: Fostering Ideal Regional Student Transitions in Biology* recently received research funding from the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Michael and his team will be identifying barriers to success for regional students in their transition to Storrs, and looking for ways to build academic support and equity for these individuals. His proposal was selected from a large pool of submissions, and his future research will contribute to the success of many students.

Congratulations, Michael!



NatureRx Launch

There is a growing body of peer-reviewed literature demonstrating that people benefit from spending time in nature – after just 10 minutes outside focused on nature, people report increased feelings of well-being, including happiness, stress-reduction, and ability to concentrate.

[NatureRx at UConn](#) is happy to announce its website with the goal being to make spending time in nature near campus and within the town of Mansfield accessible. The ultimate objective is to expand NatureRx into a movement that educates students on the health benefits of spending time in nature, inspires research and education initiatives, and fosters connections among members of the UConn community.

We invite anyone who is interested to get involved by emailing Cynthia.s.jones@uconn.edu, especially with lists of flora and fauna and/or short descriptions of ecological communities for the non-campus sites.



Congratulations on your Defense!

Black-backed woodpecker resource selection and demographic responses to variation in fire characteristics

Andrew N. Stillman
April 13th, 2021, 11 am ET



andrew.stillman@uconn.edu
@ANStillman

Physiological mechanisms and biotic interactions structuring hummingbird range limits along an elevational gradient

Austin R. Spence
April 12th, 2021



Dept. of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
University of Connecticut

A collage of various butterfly species, including monarchs, painted ladies, and others, in different colors and patterns.

Biosystematics of Noctuidae (Lepidoptera):
A new phylogeny incorporating molecular, adult and larval morphology, and hostplant association data
Kevin Liam Keegan
April 8th, 2021

A landscape photograph showing a rainbow arching over a range of mountains under a blue sky with light clouds.

Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
University of Connecticut

Improving marine recreational fisheries management: shaping population and regulatory dynamics

Jacob Matthew Cheatham Kasper
April 9, 2021



Faculty Spotlight

Every month, we would like to feature an EEB faculty member to get to know colleagues better. We are pleased to present March's edition of the Faculty Spotlight, featuring **Paul Lewis!**

1. What is your specific area of study?

My field is statistical phylogenetics, which involves making inferences about “family trees” of species (phylogenies) based on morphological traits or DNA or protein sequences. My graduate education was entirely botanical, however, completing a master's degree in floristics and a Ph.D. on the population genetics and biogeography of an interesting group of plants now in the genus *Polygonum*.

2. What energizes you at work?

Probably the same thing that fuels every professor at UConn - the thrill you get when you figure something out that maybe no one else has yet figured out. I have left a long trail of failed ideas in my wake, but it is the few that work out nicely that keep you going. I also enjoy finding better ways of explaining complicated things.

3. What is the best trip you've ever taken?

I've been fortunate in being able to travel to many interesting places: Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, China and Hong Kong, Scotland, and many cities in Europe, including some really wonderful trips with my wife Louise to the highlands of Scotland, Paris, Florence, and Prague. One of the best trips I ever took was a two-week field trip to northwestern Mexico with a professor I worked with closely as a master's student. We drove his VW microbus to the very end (literally) of the road in western Chihuahua, and got to see many fantastic places, such as the spectacular Cascada de Basaseachic. Several species of flowering plants new to science were described as a result of that trip, at least 3 of which we found growing at the falls

4. What is your favorite book/movie/song?

One of my favorite movies is "Amélie", but I'm also a fan of Coen brothers' movies, and "Blood Simple" is still my favorite, epitomizing one of the Coen brothers' main themes that it is always possible to make a bad situation much worse. I can't commit to any particular book or song, but I like most well-written detective novels and have a weakness for Bach (e.g. Toccata and Fuge in D Minor) and Vivaldi (e.g. especially Winter in The Four Seasons).

5. What is the best advice you were ever given? Who was it from?

My parents were both teachers and both gave me great advice over the years. My mother taught nursing at the University of Kentucky, and, when I was a teenager, took me to the UK medical center and showed me jars of preserved lungs from both smokers and non-smokers. I never had any desire to smoke from that day forward. Every teenager should see that.

6. What advice would you give to your teenage self?

I regret not having more math and statistics courses. I double majored in math and biology as an undergraduate, but, given that most of my research now is statistical in nature, I feel I should have had more formal training in statistics. I have had a long and successful collaboration with several faculty in the UConn Statistics department, which allows me to keep learning throughout my career.

7. What is your favorite way to unwind after a busy day?

I try to walk at least 3-4 miles every day, and, if you're trained as a biologist, a walk never fails to be interesting. During most of the year, there's always a flower out today that wasn't out yesterday, and, during the summer, I bring home grasses that I've not seen before and try to identify them. I also enjoy reading mysteries. I'm fully aware that a capable author will make it impossible to figure out who did it before the big reveal at the end, but I never tire of trying.

8. What is the top destination on your must-visit list?

I would like to get to Prague and Český Krumlov in the spring or summer sometime. I've been to Bohemia several times but always in the dead of winter! While there I would definitely take a bus over to Brno on the Moravian side of the country to visit the birthplace of Mendelian genetics.

9. Do you have any pets?

I've always been a cat person, but we are between cats at present. We got our last feline companion, Tazzie, as a kitten when we first arrived in Connecticut and she died recently after living to a ripe old age of 20 years, and, being a cat, she slept probably 19 of those 20 years.



Earth Day 2021

Earth Day 2021 was on Thursday, April 22.

Every year, Earth Day is celebrated to demonstrate support for environmental protection. It was first acknowledged in 1970, and now [EarthDay.com](https://www.earthday.com) coordinates a range of events that include one billion people in 193 countries.

The theme for Earth Day this year is “Restore our Earth,” and it include five primary programs. The week of Earth Day involved three climate action summits on climate literacy, environmental justice, and youth-led climate-focused issues. This year was the second annual livestreamed event featuring global activists, international leaders, and influencers.

There are many ways that you can celebrate Earth Day every day of the year. Here are some initiatives to take in your daily life:

- Support the Great Global Clean Up by picking up garbage while enjoying outdoor activities such as a morning walk
- Try a [foodprint](#) calculator to determine exactly how your meals have an impact on the environment
- Advocate for climate literacy to be a core aspect of curriculum in primary education
- Help prevent deforestation by supporting companies that actively take a role against it
- [Calculate your personal plastic consumption](#) and find ways to eliminate single-use plastics from your daily life
- Begin composting! Learn more tips about how to get started on [EarthDay.com](https://www.earthday.com)
- Switch to online billing and subscriptions to reduce paper consumption.

Read more on [EarthDay.com](https://www.earthday.com) for tips on how to take action.



EEB Resources

- [EEB Website](#)
- [EEB Twitter](#)
- [EEB Covid-19 Safety Plan](#)
- [WFH Resources](#)

