

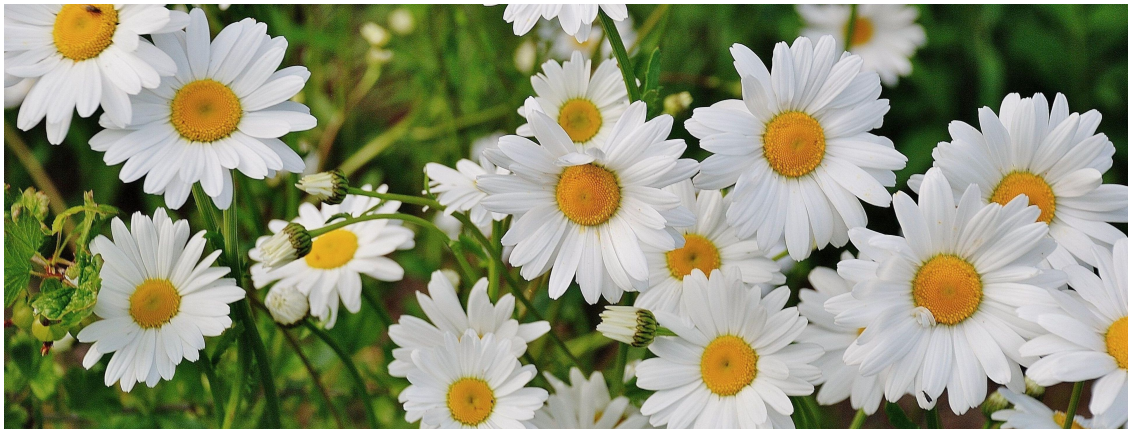
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Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

## EEB Monthly: March 2023

EEB Monthly is a department newsletter to be distributed 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 between our different goals and responsibilities.

This newsletter is for your enjoyment, and to provide it, we rely heavily on submissions from our community for its content! If you have anything you'd like to share in upcoming editions, we encourage you to send any submissions to Pam Diggle, Harrison Goodale, and/or the assistant email ([eeb.assistant@uconn.edu](mailto:eeb.assistant@uconn.edu)).



## Upcoming in April

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- **Graduate Student Appreciation Week** from April 3 to April 7
- **More than Scenery**, a book talk and signing event, on April 5
- **A Glimpse of the Deaf Community**, a DEI presentation, on April 6
- and **multiple graduate defenses!**

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## In the News

Our own **David Wagner** received a narrative profile on his life and work as an entomologist in *The New Yorker*: [The Little Known World of Caterpillars: An entomologist races to find them before they disappear.](#)

**Michael Willig** and **Steven Presley** were quoted in a *UConn Today* article: [When Constructing Conservation Networks, It's Best to Have a Plan](#)

In a report by Research.com, EEB's **Gene Likens** was ranked #26 the world rankings and #13 in the US for Best Ecology and Evolution Scientists. [See UConn's ranked faculty here.](#)

**Sarah Knutie** was featured in an article from *New Scientist*: [City life may help Darwin's finches survive bloodsucking flies](#)

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The Greenhouse's first *Vanilla pompona* of the season bloomed this past month!

This plant is particularly special, as it is one of the **original** greenhouse specimens that was accessioned on 12/31/1985. The flowers are only open for one day and require hand pollination to produce the delicious vanilla bean that we use to flavor ice cream, baked goods, etc.

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## Awards

**Frank Muzio** has received the 2022 TA Excellence Award, which distinguishes "graduate students who have contributed exemplary teaching in EEB classes." Congratulations!

Congratulations to EEB undergraduate student **Reilly Stiefel**, who was awarded a 2023 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) to work with EEB members **Louise Lewis** and **Zach Muscavitch**. Reilly's project will use an amplicon sequencing approach to study the geographic distribution of a particular group of green algae, which are lichen photobionts of fog desert lichens (Zach's specialty). Reilly will be writing a senior thesis in fall 2023 using the information about the algae collected this summer.

**Joan Tremblay**, who graduated with a dual major in EEB and English last year—and conducted her honors thesis on the impacts of the Covid-19 shutdowns on mammal activity—has just been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship! Joan will be pursuing her Master's degree in Scotland, where she will be studying the influence of folklore on conservation in the United Kingdom. Congratulations!

**Analisa Milkey** has been awarded a 2023 NSF Graduate Research Fellowship. She will use this to pursue her dissertation research involving a Sequential Monte Carlo approach to the multispecies coalescent model, which is important in Bayesian phylogenetics for estimating the species tree in the face of conflicts among gene trees due to deep coalescence.

**Brandon Chan** has also been awarded an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship. He'll be exploring how mutualistic interactions between marine phytoplankton and bacteria influence their stress tolerance and responses to changing climate.

Several years ago, Greg and Mona Anderson generously donated funds to be used for an award for the best EEB Ph.D. dissertation in each calendar year. The 2022 Award goes to **Valeri Milici** for her dissertation examining variation in plant-pathogen interactions along a plant diversity-precipitation gradient in



## Publications

**Gregory J. Anderson, Mona Anderson & Thomas Mione** (2023): The staminal column in *Solanum* pollination: important in attraction, essential as a landing platform, *Plant Biosystems - An International Journal Dealing with all Aspects of Plant Biology*, DOI: 10.1080/11263504.2023.2176942

Tedesco, A. M., S. López-Cubillos, **R. Chazdon**, J. R. Rhodes, C. L. Archibald, K.-V. Pérez-Hämmerle, P. H. S. Brancalion, K. A. Wilson, M. Oliveira, D. F. Correa, L. Ota, T. H. Morrison, H. P. Possingham, M. Mills, F. C. Santos, and A. J. Dean. 2023. Beyond ecology: Ecosystem restoration as a process for social-ecological transformation. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2023.02.007>

Han S., Song H-I., J-S. Park, Y-J. Kim, S. Umanzor, **C. Yarish** and J.K. Kim. 2023. *Sargassum horneri* and *Ascophyllum nodosum* extracts enhance thermal tolerance and antioxidant activity of *Neopyropia yezoensis*. *J. Appl. Phycol.* 35: 201-207. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10811-022-02870-4>

Bao M., Q. Xing, J-S. Park, P. He, J.H Zhang, **C. Yarish** and J.K. Kim. 2023. Temperature and high nutrients enhance hypo-salinity tolerance of the bloom forming green alga, *Ulva prolifera*. *Harmful Algae*. 123:102402

Huang, M, K.R Robbins, Y. Li., S. Umanzor, M. Marty-Rivera, D. Bailey, M. Aydtlett, J. Schmutz, J. Grimwood, **C. Yarish**, S. Lindell, J.L. & Jannink. 2023. Genomic selection in organisms with biphasic lifecycles: a *Saccharina latissima* (sugar kelp) case study. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, section Marine Fisheries, Aquaculture and Living Resources, 10:1040979 DOI: [10.3389/fmars.2023.1040979](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2023.1040979).

Xing, Q., S. Han, J-S. Park, **C. Yarish**, & J.K. Kim. 2023. Comparative transcriptome analysis reveals the molecular mechanism of heat-tolerance in *Neopyropia yezoensis* induced by *Sargassum horneri* extract. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 10:1142483. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2023.1142483>.

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Jakovac, **N. Norden**, L. Poorter, M. van der Sande, C. Wirth, D. Delgado, D. D. H., S. J. DeWalt, **J. M. Dupuy**, B. Finegan, J. S. Hall, J. L. Hernández-Stefanoni, and O. R. Lopez. 2023. Successional shifts in tree demographic strategies in wet and dry Neotropical forests. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* <https://doi.org/10.1111/geb.13669>.

**Trumbo, S.T.** 2023. Moving the corpse to hide the evidence: horizontal as well as vertical movement is important when burying beetles cache a carcass. *Journal of Insect Behavior* 36: 11-19

**Knutie**, S.A., **C.N. Webster**, **G.J. Vaziri**, L. Albert, J.A. Harvey, M. LaRue, T.B. Verrett, **A. Soldo**, J.A.H. Koop, J.A. Chaves, **J.L. Wegrzyn**. In review. Urban living can rescue Darwin's finches from the lethal effects of vampire flies. [bioRxiv doi: 10.1101/2023.03.06.531275](https://doi.org/10.1101/2023.03.06.531275)

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# Graduate Student Appreciation Week!

Plant Giveaway- from the EEB Greenhouse  
Pick up in TLS 312 throughout the week

## Monday, April 3rd

5-7pm Doug Bernstein Game Room in the  
Student Union.

A whole range of games and activities to  
kick off the week!

## Tuesday, April 4th

12-1pm TLS 315  
Crafting during lunch hour  
hosted by Collections!

## Wednesday, April 5th

12pm-1pm Bamford  
Graduate Lunch with your new  
GU Area Steward!

## Thursday, April 6th

4:30-6pm- The Benton Museum  
Therapy Dog Session at the Benton!  
Meet in the Bio Atrium and we'll walk  
over as a group

## Friday, April 7th

12pm-1pm Bamford  
EEB Graduate Lunch. End the  
week with the superlative  
nominations and an opportunity  
to win some EEB Merch!

Graduate Student Appreciation Week (April 3rd-7th) is right around the corner!  
Here's a first look at the planned events.

## Accomplishments


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Yettive's poster title was "*Exploring the Impacts of Preservation on Paleontological Data: A Literature-Based Survey of Body Size and Biodiversity in Late Mesozoic-Paleogene Gastropods.*" Andrew's was titled "*Funnel-shaped trace fossils from the Upper Devonian of north-central Pennsylvania: preservation and behavior.*"

Please congratulate **Franco Gigliotti** on giving an "accomplished defense of his dissertation prospectus."

Congratulations to **Henry Frye** for a successful PhD defense!

## Opportunities



**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP IN ECOLOGY & EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY**

- \$5000 each to support (at least) two undergraduate summer research projects in EEB including salary, travel, and research expenses
- Priority consideration for students from underrepresented groups, or who have overcome obstacles and disadvantages, or have experience with diverse environments
- Develop a research plan with the support of a faculty member from EEB. Please contact faculty early to discuss and develop project ideas. [Scan the QR code to see some available projects and application instructions.](#) (Applications are welcome for other projects too!)
- Students need not be EEB majors but must demonstrate interest
- Applications due by **Friday April 7**. Questions: **Dr. Cory Merow** ([cory.merow@uconn.edu](mailto:cory.merow@uconn.edu))
- Applications consist of only a faculty recommendation letter and the research proposal.

[HTTPS://EEB.UCONN.EDU/SUMMER-UNDERGRAD-FELLOWSHIP/](https://eeb.uconn.edu/summer-undergrad-fellowship/)



We are happy to announce the third annual **Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship in EEB**. This program is designed to support students from underrepresented groups, or who have overcome obstacles and disadvantages, or have experience with diverse environments.

We will offer two fellowships (\$5000 each) to support student research in EEB.

The application includes a short research proposal and faculty recommendation. Students should work directly with a faculty mentor to



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## Graduate Student Research Blog

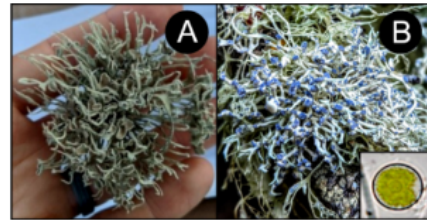
**Zach Muscavitch**

Zach in the field

I'm a 4<sup>th</sup> year PhD student at the University of Connecticut advised by Drs. [Bernard Goffinet](#) and [Louise Lewis](#). I am an evolutionary biologist who studies lichens. Lichens are a symbiosis between a fungus and one or more algae. In this mutualistic symbiosis, algae photosynthesize and produce sugars for the lichen, while the fungi provide a complex structure to house the algae. The fungi also produce secondary compounds which may act to prevent herbivory and as a natural sunscreen. Lichens are very diverse with more than 20,000 described species of lichenized fungi (more than twice the number of birds).

I'm particularly interested in the symbiosis between green algae and lichenized fungi. I use fog lichens (*Niebla* & *Vermilacinia*) and their algal symbiont *Trebouxia* as my study

system. Many groups of lichens occur all around the world and are difficult to sample in a comprehensive manner, but this group is unique in that it is only found in a narrow range along the Pacific coast of the Americas. I have previously done fieldwork in the US and Mexico and have extensive sampling of these species; however little is known about the species which occur in South America.

Photo of my study organisms. A: *Niebla*, B: *Vermilacinia*, Inset: *Trebouxia*

Prior to 1996, only about 15 species of fog lichens were known from North America, but detailed study of the group

**Announcing:** a new Graduate Student Research Blog on the [EEB Website!](#)

Written by EEB graduate students, readers will be treated to first hand accounts of their adventures, trials and discoveries from the field. Many thanks to **Zach Muscavitch** for the great idea, and for providing the content from his recent work in the Atacama Desert.

If you'd like to have your work featured as a part of the blog, please reach out to [harrison.goodale@uconn.edu](mailto:harrison.goodale@uconn.edu).

## Events

### Upcoming EEB Graduate Defenses:

**Sarita Munoz-Gomez:** Monday, April 3 at 10:00AM in BPB 130.

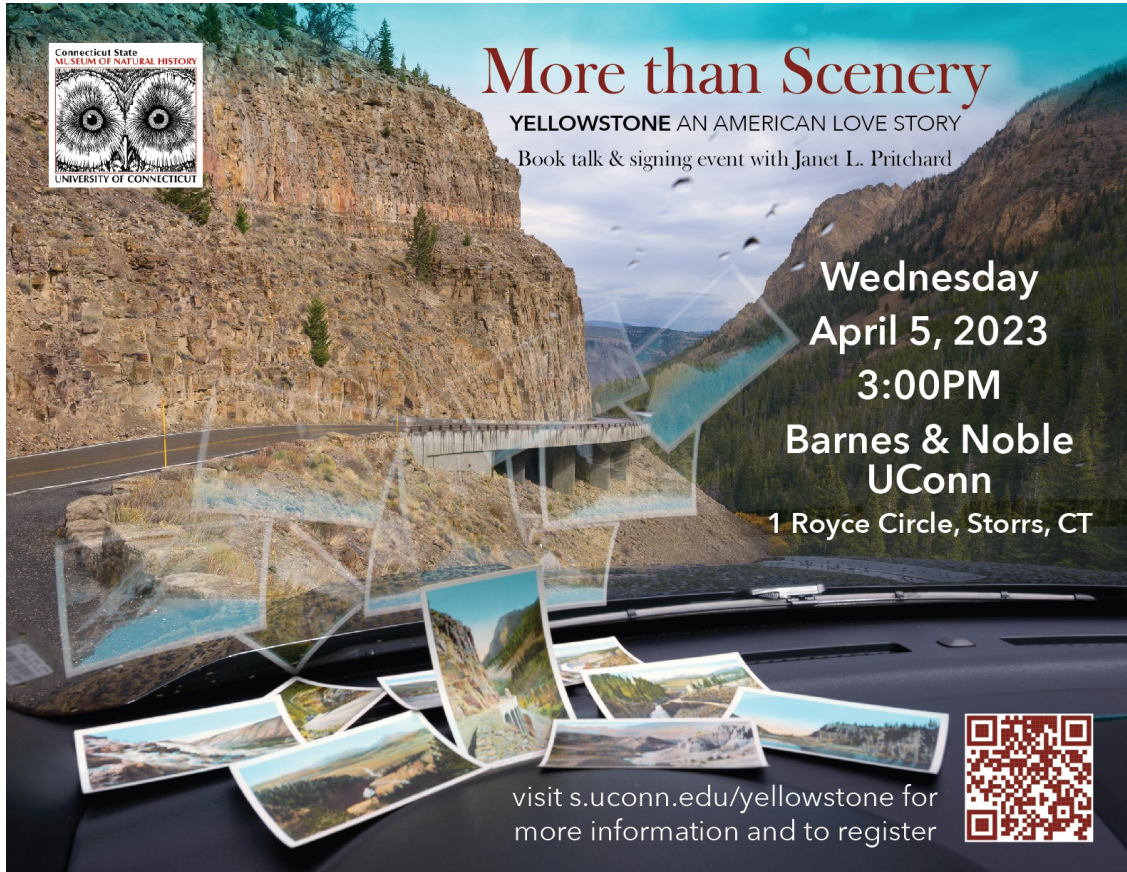
**Brendan Enochs:** Friday, April 7 at 1:45PM in BPB 130.

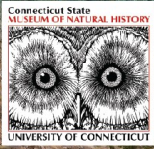
**Kristin Anderson:** Tuesday, April 11 at 9am in TLS 111

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 **More than Scenery**  
YELLOWSTONE AN AMERICAN LOVE STORY  
Book talk & signing event with Janet L. Pritchard

**Wednesday**  
**April 5, 2023**  
**3:00PM**  
**Barnes & Noble**  
**UConn**  
**1 Royce Circle, Storrs, CT**

visit [s.uconn.edu/yellowstone](https://s.uconn.edu/yellowstone) for  
more information and to register




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# The Tree of Life

## Interconnecting Religions, Artistic Traditions, and Scientific Knowledge

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<b>THURSDAY, APRIL 27 12:00 PM - 6:30PM</b>	<b>FRIDAY, APRIL 28 9:30 AM - 5:30PM</b>
<b>WELCOME LUNCH</b>	<b>BREAKFAST</b>
<b>THE MAJESTY AND INDISPENSABILITY OF TREES: WHERE SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY CONVERGE</b> Yehezkel Landau, Hartford Seminary	<b>THE TREE AS AN "ANIMAL-ESQUE PLANT" (NABAT HAYAWANI): ARBOREAL THOUGHTSCAPES IN MUSLIM MAJORITY LANDS OVER THE CENTURIES</b> Christiane Gruber, University of Michigan
<b>RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND THE MAGIC OF THE KABBALISTIC TREE</b> J.H. (Yossi) Chajes, University of Haifa	<b>WAYANG KAYONAN PUPPET: SYNTHESIS OF ARTISTIC TRADITIONS, RELIGIONS, PHILOSOPHY, AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE</b> Nyoman Sedana, Indonesian Institute of Arts Denpasar
<b>FRANCISCAN DIET, SPIRITUAL TREES: JACOPONE DA TODI AND DANTE ON HUNGER AND THIRST</b> Andrea Celli, University of Connecticut	<b>THE CURE OF OLD AGE, AND THE PRESERVATION OF YOUTH</b> Elizabeth Athens, University of Connecticut
<b>THE VEGETABLE SAINT</b> Greg Bryda, Barnard College	<b>FORGING INTIMATE CONNECTIONS: TREES, PEOPLE, PLACE, AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING</b> Sohyun Park, University of Connecticut
<b>RECEPTION</b> SCAN THE QR CODE ABOVE OR VISIT <a href="https://s.uconn.edu/tree-of-life">S.UCONN.EDU/TREE-OF-LIFE</a> TO VIEW FULL CONFERENCE DETAILS, TO REGISTER TO ATTEND IN-PERSON OR VIRTUALLY, AND TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ABRAHAMIC STORY OF THE TREE PROJECT	<b>ARBOR ESSENCE</b> William Friedman, Harvard University
	<b>UNEARTHING THE EVOLUTIONARY PAST: PROGRESS AND STORIES FROM RECONSTRUCTING THE TREE OF LIFE</b> Stephen Smith, University of Michigan



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# A Glimpse of the Deaf Community:

DEI presentation by UConn Prof. Mike Schlang



On strategies for teaching and working with Deaf and hard of hearing people, interesting tidbits about Deaf culture and ASL, and the diversity of the Deaf community.

Time and Location:  
April 6, 2023  
3:30 PM - 4:30 PM  
BPB 131

Scan the QR code above for a link to the Kaltura livestream!

[Alternate link to the Kaltura livestream for Professor Schlang's presentation.](#)

COVID-19 Resources



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