Biology Newsletter

Newsletter 404 26 June 2017
This is the last time you will see the School newsletter in this format (linked to website). From Monday 10th July you will be receiving your news via email with an attached Portable Document Format (PDF).

Recent publications in the school

**Nixie’s first paper, at first author. This is from her Honours dissertation. Congratulations Nixie!**


In the spotlight

**Honey, I shrunk the lab**

Saving kauri trees, detecting bacteria in milk, addressing disease and infection and slowing the progress of cancer or multiple sclerosis may all be possible in the future - thanks to a new miniaturised technology.

Engineer Volker Nock, from the University of Canterbury and the MacDiarmid Institute, has developed a lab-on-a-chip that allows biologists to precisely measure the forces exerted by living organisms - on a nano scale.

Fungi expert **Ashley Garrill** heard about previous research measuring the forces which nematodes, or small round worms, used to bend the pillars, and he wondered if the chip could also be used with fungi.

Nock was happy to shrink the previous lab-on-a-chip to accommodate smaller study organisms, and **PhD student Ayelen Tayagui** has been tasked with learning how to grow these organisms on the chip and measure the forces they produce.

Read the full article at [Radio New Zealand](https://www.radio.nz) and listen to the [podcast](https://www.radio.nz).

**Field research looking into how pāua affected by quake**

Researchers studying how pāua have been impacted by the Kaikoura earthquake say it’s not yet clear how long it will take the species to recover. Last year the government announced a two million dollar research package to look into how marine life is coping after the disaster. Listen to the [podcast](https://www.radio.nz) featuring **Shawn Gerrity, David Schiel and John Pirker**.

**Researchers confident of pāua comeback after quake**

University of Canterbury researchers have been looking at how juvenile pāua stocks on the coastline have been recovering after the earthquake left their old habitats high and dry. Read the full article at [Radio New Zealand](https://www.radio.nz).

**Life and death in a Westland rainforest: Drought-hit mudfish give insight into surviving climate change**

Researchers at the UC’s School of Biological Sciences have been studying brown mudfish that, remarkably, live in tree ‘tip-up’ pools in South Westland rainforest. The mudfish colonise the water-filled depressions formed when rimu trees topple over. Read the full story at [UC Communications](https://www.uccommunications.unican.ac.nz).
Representation of different exact numbers of prey by a spider-eating predator

This publication was published online on the 21st April. Altmetric has tracked 7,896,124 research outputs across all sources so far (as at 14 June). Compared to these this one has done particularly well and is in the 99th percentile: it's in the top 5% of all research outputs ever tracked by Altmetric. Big ups to both Dr Fiona Cross and Professor Robert Jackson on their outstanding publication and research efforts.

Name that song?

I'm waking up to ash and dust. I wipe my brow and I sweat my rust.

403: The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls.

Answer: The Sounds of Silence
Guessed by: Lyn, Bill, Dave K, Jim. It would appear it was far too easy.

and now for something completely different...

A Year In The Life Of A Cat - Simon's Cat

Bridge Over Troubled Water - Artists for Grenfell - Vevo

Thought for the week

When you're weary, feeling small
When tears are in your eyes, I'll dry them all (all)
I'm on your side, oh, when times get rough
And friends just can't be found
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down