Recent publications in the school


This is Jenna's first publication and at first author. She is doing her PhD in Biochemistry with Ren Dobson. Congratulations Jenna!


This is Michael's first publication and at first author. Michael completed his B.Sc. Hons last year and has just started a PhD in Biochemistry with Ren Dobson. Congratulations Michael!


In the spotlight

Webs under water: The really bizarre lives of intertidal spiders

Spiders are one of the most ubiquitous creatures on Earth, found on every continent except Antarctica. Whether in underground caves in the Amazon or the icy climes of Mount Everest, there is a species of spider that has moved into practically every land habitat. But some arachnids are determined to not even let the oceans stand in their way — and scientists have just discovered a new one.

David Schiel has a small mention in this article which you can read at Mongabay.
Welcome to the School

Nyiil Khwaja did his PhD at the University of Sheffield in the U.K., during which he visited Canterbury to study Kaikoura's riflemen. Since finishing up in early 2017 he’s been a university teaching associate at Sheffield, and moved to UC this month to start a postdoc with Jim Briskie, looking at how to manage small, inbred populations of birds.

Scholarships

Postgraduate Science Scholarship

Deadline for Stage 1 applications is 5pm, 12 March 2018

MPI's Postgraduate Science Scholarship is open to Masters and PhD candidates who are, or will be, doing primary industry research at a New Zealand tertiary education institution.

The scholarship aims to build capability in the primary industries, particularly where there are current skills and science gaps. To achieve this, proposed research must be relevant and meet a need for the primary industries.

Full details
Mareike Babuder
PhD in Marine Ecology Research Group (MERG) level 2

I started my scientific career at the University of Bremen in Germany with a Bachelor in biology followed by a Master in Marine Biodiversity and Conservation. The master program allowed me to visit several Universities around Europe and I spend most of the time at the University of Oviedo in Spain and the University of the Algarve in Faro, Portugal. I think my passion for the marine environment was always there, even though my home town is far away from any ocean. Family trips to the North Sea (part of the Atlantic Ocean) were always my favourites and I loved digging in the muddy soils of the Wadden Sea and search for mussels, crabs and snails. But not until I attended my first marine biology classes at University I realized that being a marine scientist is a REAL thing and something that was worth to pursue. I was fascinated by the diversity of organisms and functionalities of ecosystems and decided to specialise in seaweeds. Seaweeds? Usually when I tell people that I’m studying seaweeds they are often disappointed or discussed (especially people who don’t have a scientific background or live far away from the ocean= my hometown). They associate seaweeds with something green and slimy and unpleasant. But as soon as I show them underwater footage of beautiful floating kelp forests and discuss with them the many important services seaweed communities provide for other animals and the human society they become interested and agree that these systems need to be kept healthy and well-functioning and are actually quite nice to look at.

Here at UC I’m part of the Marine Ecology Research Group (MERG) under supervision of David Schiel. We are working on the effects of climate change and anthropogenic influences such as habitat destruction and pollution on seaweed communities around New Zealand. We are especially interested in the effects of increasing amounts of land-derived suspended sediments in the water column caused by strong rain events which flush sediments from strongly modified coastlines into the ocean. Seaweeds need, such as any terrestrial plant, sunlight for primary production. Particles in the water alter the amount and quality of the light reaching the seaweeds and thereby affect their productivity. Changes in environmental conditions can not only lead to changes in species functionality but also in local occurrence and abundance and hence alter ecosystem functionality. Seaweeds are, like trees, on the very base of the food web therefore changes in seaweed abundance/occurrence/functionality affect every organisms in the chain...

Follow my research on Twitter @Paradize_Blue or Vimeo @Mareike Babuder

Postgraduate news

PhD Position in Agroecology
Managing pollination and biological pest control in Peruvian cacao agroforestry systems
Applications close: 28 February

Cacao agroforestry systems may support high levels of biodiversity and profit from ecosystem services such as pest control and pollination. There is growing evidence that cocoa agroforestry systems based on native fine flavour genotypes and with appropriate management practices to optimise the provision of multiple
ecosystem services can be as productive as monocultures with commercial non-native cacao clones and high external fertiliser and pesticide inputs.

Full details

PhD scholarship available for a population-genomic and taxonomic study of Eucalyptus at University of Canterbury, New Zealand

The New Zealand Dryland Forests Initiative (NZDFI) aims to create plantations of high-value Eucalyptus species in dry environments of the east coast of the South Island. For this purpose, Australian seed collections of five Eucalyptus species were planted in New Zealand to determine if these species produce desirable growth and wood qualities (e.g. low growth stress, high natural durability) in the New Zealand environment. The proposed project aims to use genomic tools to understand how genomic and environmental variation interact to influence commercially important traits of selected Eucalyptus species in the NZDFI common garden experiments to:

1) Inform future genomic selection in breeding programs,
2) Resolve the taxonomic delimitation of two morphologically similar species (E. argophloia and E. bosistoana), and to
3) Inform the conservation management of E. argophloia (Vulnerable) and E. bosistoana (Near Threatened) in Australia.

We are looking for a highly motivated PhD student with field and lab research experience in population genetics/genomics or systematics, preferably in plants, and an interest in building strong multidisciplinary relationships. Good written and spoken communication skills are essential. Candidates must have a valid driver’s licence and be willing to undertake field work.

The successful applicant of will be supervised by a multidisciplinary team of researchers in the Schools of Forestry (Drs. Apiolaza and Altaner) and Biological Sciences (Drs. Pelser and Steeves) of University of Canterbury (Christchurch, New Zealand). The research team is committed to Kindness in Science (kindnessinscience.wordpress.com); we aim to capture diverse perspectives and foster a science environment where early career researchers flourish and better science outcomes are achieved.

The scholarship contributes to living expenses (NZ$ 22,000 p.a.) and all university fees (NZ$ ~8,200) for a maximum of 3.5 years.

The position remains open until filled. Starting date is open for discussion, but an early start is preferred.

Inquiries and applications (cover letter, CV) are to be addressed to Pieter.pelser@canterbury.ac.nz

Vacancies

PhD and Postdoc opportunities

Plant & Food Research have a PhD and Postdoc position available to work on our new Marsden project, led by Kevin Davies and Brian Jordan.

PhD Studentship - Flavonoid Pigments in Liverworts (Three Years) - Plant & Food Research
This is an exciting opportunity to undertake a PhD as part of a project investigating the biosynthetic origin and function of the riccionidin flavonoid pigments of liverworts.

Postdoctoral Scientist, Premium Crops & Technology - Plant & Food Research
Postdoctoral fellowship opportunity in Sydney, Australia
Addressing drug target identification blind spot with new phage display method
Application deadline: 5 March

We are seeking an innovative and highly motivated postdoc with exceptional skills in molecular biology to work with our multidisciplinary team on a cutting-edge project at the intersection of synthetic biology and chemistry; engineering a completely new phage display technology for the rapid identification of drug targets.

Snapshot
• To be eligible to apply the candidate must hold a PhD conferred between 1st July 2010 and 1st July 2018 (allowances will be made for career interruption)

Fellowship Information
• The project will be hosted at Macquarie University with Dr. Paul Jaschke and Prof. Peter Karuso as supervisors along with a supervisor from CSIRO.
• Salary Range (based on experience): $88,420 - $94,760 + 17% superannuation (retirement benefit)
• Research support is also provided with this fellowship
• Fellowships must commence by 1st November 2018
• Research project to run for 3-years

What movie is that quote from?
Never rat on your friends and always keep your mouth shut.

What song is that?
418: Like Harrison Ford I’m getting frantic

Answer: One week (Bare Naked Ladies, 1998)
Guessed by: Nobody

Casual work wanted in ecology
I am a forest ecologist, having received my PhD with a strong focus on restoration/forest ecology at the School of Forestry last year. I do hold a full working visa and am skilled in data analysis, data entry, writing scientific publications – basically, everything that you need to successfully complete your PhD. Contact Conny Keyz.

Editor/proofreader available
Experienced editor/proofreader available online for essays, dissertations, theses and for postgraduates’ papers and publications. Specialist help for students whose first language in not English (ESL).
University of Auckland approved proofreader.

Virginia Gray, BSc. (Canterbury), Dip.Edit.
Pennell.edit@gmail.com
027 419 1046
Local honey for sale
1 kg $10, 500 g $5. 2017 season, multi-floral Ilam garden honey in plastic pottles. Soft granulated. I will deliver to the School of Biological Sciences or arrange pickup/delivery elsewhere. Harry Taylor, email: harry.taylor@canterbury.ac.nz; ph/txt: 021 292 5319

Proofreading and Editing Services
Let me help you produce writing that is clear, error-free and consistent. 
Joan Gladwyn, BSc, MSc, CPhys, DipEdit
joan@properwords.co.nz (+64) 21 213 6511

...and now for something completely different

Nano girl: The kitchen science cookbook

Head Over Heels (A Valentines Special) - Simon’s Cat 
(a bit late, but enjoy anyways)

The Cod has been expelled from the aquarium tank for bullying and using a sea perch for a sea perch...very naughty

Thought for the week

We got so worried about being pretty.

Let’s be pretty kind, pretty smart and pretty strong.

Contact details
If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in this newsletter, contact the admin office before noon on Friday at BIOLAdminSharedMailbox or phone ext 95200.