The Aggie Brickyard

assembling the blocks of ecology at UC Davis

FALL 2017 VOL. VI

FALL

Chrysopelea paradisi - texture study - Sarah Stinson

✦ COVER: *A short-tailed weasel forages for small mammals in a rock pile. -* ***Jaclyn Aliperti***

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

"Though we aren't supposed to take it personally, why does it feel like failure when it is an accepted part of being a researcher?"

Another quarter has snuck by and we are excited to provide our Fall (but nearly Winter) issue of the Aggie Brickyard. In this issue, we asked a bit about rejection…something that is an accepted part of publishing research yet it is rarely discussed formally. For graduate students trying to make headway on research, coursework, and life, getting a rejected manuscript can be rough. Though we aren't supposed to take it personally, why does it feel like failure when it is an accepted part of being a researcher? Rejection on any level is not a pleasant experience, but hopefully there is some advice and wisdom within that will reassure you, you are not alone! Everyone has been rejected or will be at some point. Ultimately the question is, what do you do next?

While there is much debate about assessments based on publication records, the reality is as scientists and researchers, our currency is communicating our findings (ideally) in a peer-reviewed journal. Take heart in the fact that this is not easy, and for those lucky enough to think that it is easy, we ask you to please go drink some tea and leave us alone for bit. :)

For all our graduate student colleagues, stick with it, remember that we all get rejected, and consider some of the strategies and advice within the next time you find yourself asking whether reviewer 3 actually read the manuscript before commenting so freely on its merits.

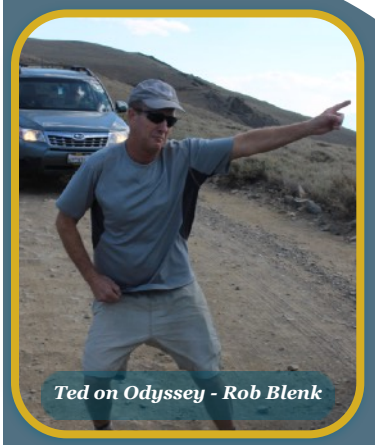
We hope you enjoy this issue of the Aggie Brickyard, and we thank everyone who helped contribute content.

Sincerely,

Your Aggie Brickyard Editors

CHAIR-ISHED REFLECTIONS

A Ted-itorial (*Ted Grosholz*)



Ted on Odyssey - Rob Blenk

"The rejection is about the manuscript and not you as a scientist" - T. Grosholz, GGE Chair

Chair-ished Reflections

Greetings GGE Brickyard readers,

I hope your quarter is proceeding better than our federal government at the moment.

In this Teditorial, I have been requested to address a topic that every professional academic knows very well: rejection. My focus, of course, is professional rejection in the context of papers, grants, jobs, etc. I discuss the process of rejection as well as the responses to rejection. My essay reflects my own feelings of failure and disappointment associated with rejection, as well as the experiences of many other academics and proto-academics I have known over the years. As always, the views provided are mine only and are not based on Graduate Group in Ecology (GGE) policy or in any way representative of the GGE. My hope is that this essay will inspire further discussion of this important topic. Because I wasn't given specific questions to respond to, I will instead deal with this issue in a way that I hope will be useful to all of you. Above all, I encourage you to develop a thick skin in dealing with rejection, as it is an inevitable part of professional life. If you want to avoid rejection at all costs, get a Golden Retriever (I have one). Of equal importance, you will need to learn how to use rejection positively as motivation to do better next time. As pointed out by a famous mosh pit observer:

"I have always learned more from rejection and failure than from acceptance and success."
(Henry Rollins, lead singer for hard-core punk band Black Flag)

Rejection of a manuscript

The first and most important thing to keep in mind about all rejection is that it is not personal. The rejection is about the manuscript and not you as a scientist. In most cases, the reviewer doesn't know you and he or she is only providing a review of this one manuscript. It is important to make sure you are clear on what the language of the subject editor really implies. Some journals use very off-putting language in their letters, making them sound like rejections when in fact, they are allowing a revision. If you are asked for a revision, you should feel very hopeful that your manuscript will be accepted if you can respond to the comments of the editor and reviewers. Although the acceptance rate for revisions is quite high in most cases, don't rejoice yet. A revision means that your manuscript is of appropriate importance and fit with the journal (clear bases for rejection) and that you may need to address a list of detailed concerns (in most cases).

If your manuscript really has been rejected, don't send a message to anyone related to the rejection for at least 24 hours. The last thing you ever want to do, for the sake of your long-term professional development, is send a hastily written, emotional response to a reviewer's comments or to anyone else. After you've had a full day to reflect, and hopefully regain your composure, read over the reviews again looking for the positive comments, and consider the negative ones from the perspective that there may be some truth in what they say. In some cases, the reviewer may be wrong about your analyses or conclusions or not understand the importance or relevance of the work. This could be because you didn't communicate this clearly enough or because the explanation was too dense or badly constructed. In any case, just because the reviewer gets some of the details wrong

CHAIR-ISHED REFLECTIONS

doesn't mean the entire review should be dismissed. Their review can still offer you helpful guidance about ways you might clarify your own presentation so that future reviewers will not misunderstand.

With all this said, there are certainly bad reviews. I have had manuscripts rejected where it was clear that the reviewer was entirely wrong, either because they didn't read the manuscript carefully, they didn't understand it, or they had a personal axe to grind. Remember that you can request that certain people *not* review the manuscript if there is some history of unfair past reviews based on personal bias. Hopefully the subject editor, the person who selects the reviewers and who makes the final decision based on these reviews and their own opinion, can overlook one bad review especially if the other review(s) are good. Unfortunately, in most cases it's hard to get this final decision by the subject editor reversed. If you really feel a negative review is wrong, then certainly reply to the editor stating why you disagree with the review. But be sure that in doing so the tone of your request is not emotional and is based on a clearly written explanation of your concerns, pointing out the specific areas where you believe the reviewer may have reached the wrong conclusion. Also, it doesn't hurt to ask the subject editor for additional explanation of their decision, especially if you had at least one favorable review. You can also ask the subject editor for an additional review, especially if the reviewers were split. If you decide to go over the head of the subject editor and contact the editor-in-chief, this is unlikely to result in a decision reversal. The editor-in-chief works closely with the subject editors and usually respects their decisions. Perhaps the most important consideration is that the time spent on additional review might be better spent submitting the manuscript to another journal.

Rejection of a grant or fellowship application

All competitive grant panels are looking to support the best work, but they are also looking for reasons to disqualify proposals, which reduces the pool and makes the final decisions easier. So as with the above, don't take negative reviews personally, particularly if they refer to lack of following directions. For proposals to agencies or funds that have a more specific 'mission' than say the NSF, your grant application may be rejected not because of its lack of scientific merit, but due to the 'fit' of your proposal with the specifics of the grant description and the mission of the agency and the grant panel. This type of rejection is a frequent occurrence with early career folks learning the focus of different agencies.

As discussed above, if your grant is rejected, the most important thing to do is to not provide an immediate response. Make sure to decompress for 24 hours before you start creating rebuttals. I know of at least one career that was effectively lost when an angry young scientist, following rejection by NSF, sent imperious and insulting messages to the panel director as well as higher-ups at NSF. Although this may have provided some sense of short-term redemption, their actions effectively eliminated NSF as a source of future funding. Of course, this tradeoff is up to you. Just as with manuscript reviews, carefully reread the reviews the next day and you may be surprised to find that, with some reflection, the reviewer's points have some real validity and that there is even some constructive advice for the future.

Unlike manuscripts where you don't resubmit the same manuscript to the same journal, reviewers know that this same grant proposal, once revised, will be resubmitted to the same panel and they themselves may even review it again. In fact, you may be required to specifically reply to previous grant reviews when you do resubmit your proposal to that panel. Alternatively, you can 'refocus' a grant that was submitted to one agency and send it to another agency or foundation.

Job Rejections

Losing out on a job may be the hardest type of rejection for many people, and I know it was for me. Before getting my first academic job, I was runner-up after three or four job interviews (UCLA and Texas are the ones I remember clearly). It is very hard not to dwell on these and look back on what you said and did; honestly, I still think about some of my missteps at these interviews 25 years later. Unlike papers and grants where I hope you have more success than failure, you are likely to have more rejections than successes in the

Chair-ished Reflections

job market, or at least the academic job market. I still have a file with all my FY (work it out) letters from different job searches where I was rejected. The key issue is that it is not always about who is the best scientist or best match for the advertised position. The search committee and the faculty in that department are looking for the best candidate but are also selfishly looking for one that they can collaborate with. If you are interviewed for a job and you don't ultimately get that job, it may be simply due to the perceived fit with the department. A final thing to remember is that there is no obligation for the search committee to contact candidates after the search, even those they bring to campus to interview. A past colleague of mine interviewed for a job in our own UC Davis Evolution and Ecology as one of four selected for a campus interview during the 1990s. Following the interview, they never even received so much as a note regarding the results of the search. Expect the possibility of no respect.

Rejecting others

Being on the other side of the rejection fence for the first time can be a bit daunting for some, and a power trip for others. Try to avoid being overwhelmed with either guilt or power, but remember this isn't an exercise in objectivity. You are trying to provide your best personal and professional assessment of whatever it is you are reviewing. One thing to remember is that in all cases, you want to make sure that you provide a review of the document and not the author. It is not productive to make statements about the abilities or intentions of the author. If the paper or grant sucks, just discuss the strong and weak points of the manuscript or proposal without savaging the author. If it is badly written, poorly organized or sloppily prepared, just calmly state this without admonishing the authors for not putting in the time or effort.

With manuscripts in particular, try to be constructive even with really bad submissions – slam dunks for rejection. As pointed out years ago by one of my senior mentors, the manuscript that you reject is very likely to be submitted somewhere else, as the author will move down the journal hierarchy until it is accepted. Your constructive criticism will be useful for the author when they resubmit. This consideration is equally important for grants, as the proposal is likely to be revised and resubmitted. When that person resubmits, they will need to respond to your comments in their resubmission, so be thoughtful and thorough.

Here are a few additional points to remember. One is to avoid being in awe of a paper authored by a well-known scientist simply because of that person's reputation. He or she can write bad papers like anyone else, especially multi-authored papers where the scientist may not have had much to do with the writing. Another is to be aware that the general expectation is that younger reviewers are tougher and less likely to accept manuscripts, and this is sometimes even a strategy used by creative subject editors. Finally, be honest about your ability to review the work, particularly if there is a technical portion that is outside your area of expertise. Just review what you know, because you are likely one of several (for a grant) and at least two or three (for a journal); other reviewers with different expertise are likely involved.

In closing, keep in mind that rejection—whether you are on the receiving or giving end—should be a process that provides useful information to the recipient and that promotes professional development, both for individual scientists and for our profession as a whole. The process of peer review, while certainly imperfect, is an important tool for maintaining the quality of our science.

FACULTY Q & A

Editors' note: We asked a number of GGE students to send us their questions about the review process as a starting point for conversations with faculty about coping with reviews, reviewers, rejection, and the whole messy process. We organized the questions into themes and present the responses of faculty. In addition to the answers presented here, the UC Davis Office of Research hosts a series of lectures on research ethics, including one on peer review. Additional information can be found at: http://research.ucdavis.edu/policiescompliance/research-ethics-rcr-program/

Gail Patricelli


G. Patricelli - UC Davis

Managing revisions: *How long do you give yourself between reading the review and revising the manuscript? What is your system for organizing comments and responding to them (either in the manuscript, the response to reviewers, or both)? How do you deal with vague or unclear comments? What role do your co-authors play in addressing revisions and how do you engage them?*

There is no single answer for this question, because every paper and every collaboration is a little different. But I admit that I tend to read through comments, then put them aside for a little bit before I respond. A little time helps me get past the defensiveness I often feel in response to comments.

As for vague/unclear comments, I am now serving as an editor and I can tell you that it's not uncommon to get questions from authors about how to interpret reviewer requests. I usually try to give a little guidance about what I would consider satisfactory as the editor. If it goes back to the original reviewer for a second round of review, they may protest if they feel that they were misunderstood, but it's ultimately the editor's decision whether to accept the paper.

As lead author on a paper, I usually draft all the responses to reviewer comments and edit the manuscript, then send them to the co-authors for approval. If there's a major issue raised, then I will engage the co-authors sooner to discuss it. As a grad student or postdoc, I recommend getting your advisor's input on this process if you can. There are norms and expectations that you need to learn, and they can help guide you through the process.

Problem reviewers: *Have you ever thought a reviewer was rejecting your paper for ideological reasons (rather than methodological or conceptual ones) or because of the potential political impact of your results? How did you respond and was it effective? More generally, how do you handle disagreements with reviewers? Are there ways to effectively engage the editor in managing these disagreements?*

I have not received comments on one of my papers that I consider to be politically motivated. Perhaps I'm lucky on that front. As an editor, I've only dealt with a few cases where the comments seemed personal or unfair. In those cases, it was usually clear and I did my best to set those comments aside when judging the paper, often by sending it to an additional reviewer for another opinion. In future submissions, if you know the offending reviewer, then list them on your submission as a reviewer to exclude. Be sure to give a reason why you don't think they can be fair or unbiased. If they simply disagree with you, then listing them might just encourage the editor to send it to them!

Faculty Q & A

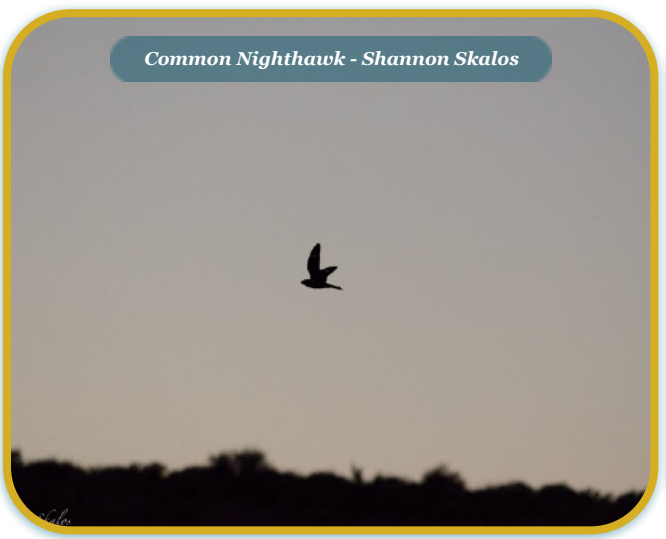
(Gail Patricelli, cont. from 6)

I recommend that if you find yourself in the situation of getting unfair reviews, you raise it with the editor tactfully. But only do so when the comments are personal or political. If you simply disagree, even vehemently, then do your best to address the comment respectfully and include the rebuttal in your manuscript. That will also head off other readers who may have the same concerns—better there than as a published rebuttal to your paper!

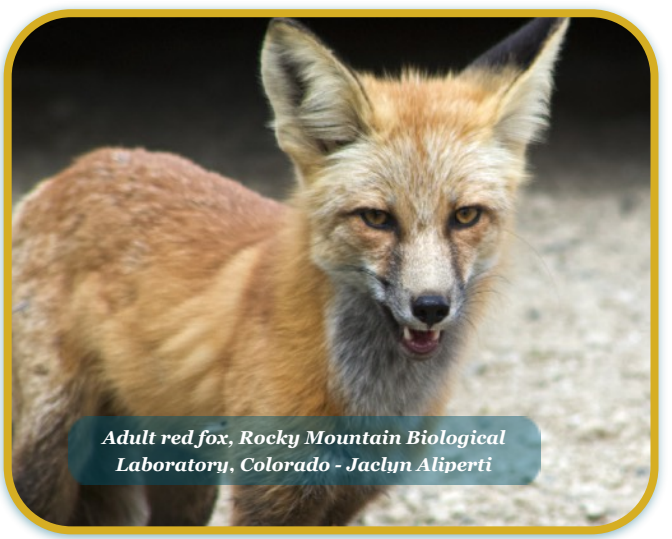
As an editor, I get very frustrated when authors respond defensively or dismissively, or fail to actually address the issue by changing the manuscript. As frustrating as it is for authors to get pages and pages of comments back from a reviewer, it means that the reviewer spent a lot of time and effort reading and commenting on the paper. Editors will want to see that you've made an honest effort to address all the comments, even if they seem weird, or if the reviewer just missed something. I recommend that you make as many of the requested changes as possible. Only push back against the requests that you feel very strongly about. And even in those cases, there are often smaller things you can do to acknowledge the concerns in the manuscript, like adding a discussion of the issue or clarifying your explanation of why you did what you did. Remember that the faster the editor can process the paper, the faster it gets accepted. Take the time to make their job easier by addressing every comment—and by including the line numbers for your changes. If you handle the comments thoroughly and thoughtfully, it is less likely that the paper will go out for a second round of reviews.

Improving the process: *If you could change one thing about peer-review and the peer-review process, what would it be? If you could give one piece of advice to early-career researchers about their role as reviewers, what would it be?*

Reviewing is an important contribution to your field and we're all expected to do it whenever possible, even if you're busy. Everyone is always busy. Of course, everyone will have times when they need to decline reviews, but do so quickly (do not let the invitation sit in your inbox) and always provide the editor with suggestions for alternative reviewers. You are more of an expert in that field than the editor, and finding reviewers is tough, so your advice on who else to ask is invaluable. Editors remember (and most publishers keep data about) the percentage of reviews you decline, whether you reply with suggestions for alternatives, and whether you're late in turning in reviews. Later, you may be asking the same editors to find reviewers for your paper; it looks bad if you haven't been willing to serve when asked, so do your part! The review process is also a good way to establish a reputation in the field, as editors are often senior researchers in your area of interest.



Common Nighthawk - Shannon Skalos



Adult red fox, Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory, Colorado - Jaclyn Aliperti

Faculty Q & A


A. Schreier - UC Davis

Andrea Schreier

Managing revisions

I do not read my reviews thoroughly until I am about to start revising a manuscript. I respond to comments directly in the review document. I use italics or a different font color so that my responses are easy to distinguish from reviewer comments. If comments are vague and don't seem relevant, I simply say so in my response. However, if a comment is vague and seems useful, I will follow up with the editor for more information. I ask co-authors to make revisions on sections they have written, but I do the bulk of revision if I am first author.

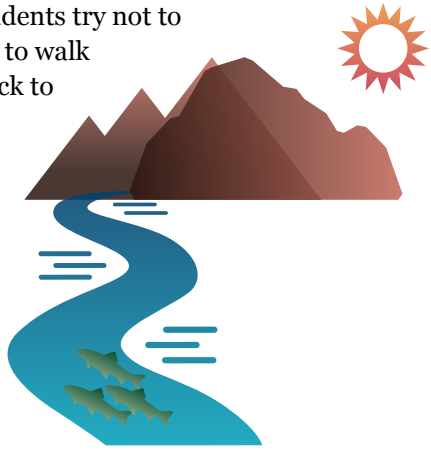
Problem reviewers

As a third-year grad student, I received a very unprofessional review on one of my dissertation chapters and it was pretty upsetting. The person questioned my motivation for doing the work, implying I just wanted to publish papers and did not care about the quality. The nature of this person's comments indicated that they didn't spend much time with my paper and did not understand some of the concepts involved. I study a polyploid fish and this person's comments suggested they were not familiar with the terminology and concepts used in discussing duplicated genes or genomes. What I should have done is go back to the editor and request another reviewer, but I was inexperienced. I ended up just submitting to another journal, which published it.

On another occasion I received a review that was incoherent and looked like the reviewer had read a different paper. I could not even respond to any of the comments because they were irrelevant to my manuscript. I got in touch with the editor, who contacted the person who submitted that review and that person claimed that they submitted the correct review. Because the comments were about analyses that seemed completely irrelevant to my paper and the comments were so ambiguous, I told the editor I could not respond to them and he agreed. I cannot remember if they sent it out for another review or not, but they did publish my paper.

Improving the process

I would require journals to turn around reviews more quickly. I have had journals sit on a manuscript for six months before even sending it out for review—a huge pain. In terms of advice, I'd tell a grad student to take advantage of opportunities to review papers as soon as possible in their careers because it is a great exercise in critical thinking. When dealing with reviews on one's own work, I recommend that grad students try not to take comments or criticisms personally. Sometimes it helps to walk away or take a break after reading a tough review and go back to it in an hour to start revising.



An adult male golden-mantled ground squirrel feasts on buried treasure at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory, Colorado - Jaclyn Aliperti

The 2017 Odyssey at Barcroft Station - Alisha Saley

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Antarctic Dragonfish

Erin Flynn

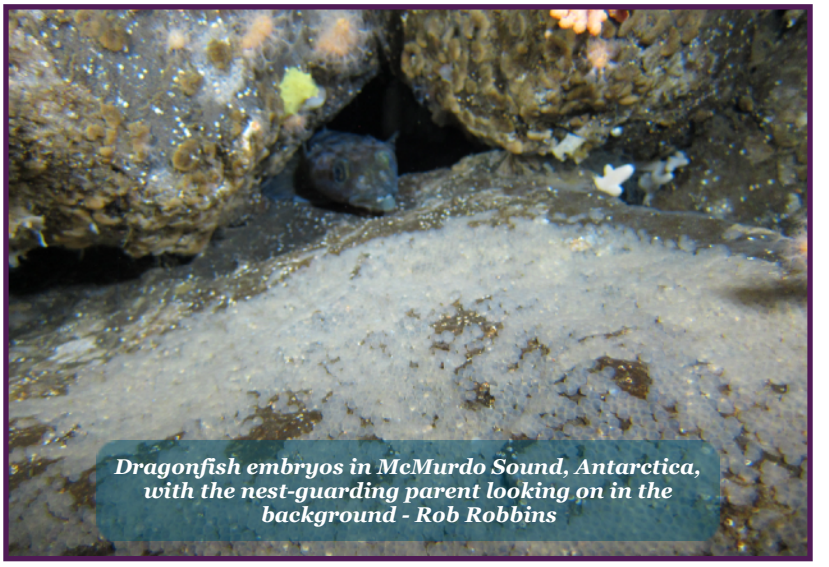
The Antarctic dragonfish, *Gymnodraco acuticeps,* has an incredibly long embryonic period (~10 months) at subzero temperatures, but we know very little else about this life stage. I built upon some previous research to test early embryonic metabolic response to acute and chronic warmer temperatures, as well as characterize the amount of temporal and trait variation in embryos from different egg clutches. We found that the energetic costs of warming change with development more than with chronic temperature exposure, and that variation in seasonal timing and maternal provisioning among and between clutches may provide a buffering effect during peak summer warming. (*See Publications section)*

Experimental holding tank of dragonfish embryos for the experiment, with juvenile emerald rockcod fish swimming below, in the A.P. Crary lab at McMurdo Station, Antarctica - Erin Flynn

Phenomap in R

Christian John

Although landscape phenology is increasingly becoming a focal point of investigations into migration timing, hitherto no R packages existed that were able to reconstruct satellite-derived phenological metrics in space. This was my motivation to develop a package *en passant* in John, 2016 (M.S. thesis in ecology), to enable a broader group of researchers to project landscape phenology measures in space. The package **phenomap** is capable of analyzing satellite-derived NDVI and snowmelt time series on a regional or global scale, solving for a user-defined phenological marker date that is projected in space. (*See Publications section)*



Dragonfish embryos in McMurdo Sound, Antarctica, with the nest-guarding parent looking on in the background - Rob Robbins

Battle of the Pines

Brian Smithers

Treeline in the Great Basin is advancing in response to climate change, but slower than we would expect based on temperature increases alone. It is also advancing with unexpected tree species, based on adult tree demographics at treeline. Limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*) seems to be the current winner in the above-treeline land grab over typically treeline Great Basin bristlecone pine (*Pinus longaeva*), even on soils where bristlecone pine adults are dominant. Climate change is likely to create winners and losers while changing the rules of interspecific competition, and ecological boundaries like treeline are a great place to see these changes play out in short time scales, even in extremely long-lived species like bristlecone pine. (*See Publications section)*

photos by Brian Smithers


photo by Aviva Rossi


photo by Jaclyn Aliperti


photo by Shannon Skalos

(SOME) RECENT STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

GGE (current/former students) in **bold*

Flynn, E.E., and A.E. Todgham. 2017. Thermal windows and metabolic performance curves in a developing Antarctic fish. *Journal of Comparative Physiology B*:1-12.

Hulvey, K.B., E.A. Leger, L.M. Porensky, L.M. Roche, K.E. Veblen, A. Fund, **J. Shaw**, and E.S. Gornish. 2017. Restoration islands: a tool for efficiently restoring dryland ecosystems? *Restoration Ecology*. DOI: 10.1111/rec.12614

John, C. 2017. phenomap: Projecting Satellite-Derived Phenology in Space. R package version 1.0.1. https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=phenomap.

Ke, A., and M.S. Luskin. 2017. Integrating disparate occurrence reports to map data-poor species ranges and occupancy: a case study of the Vulnerable bearded pig *Sus barbatus*. *Oryx*: 1-11.

Luskin, M.S., and **A. Ke**. 2017. The bearded pig. In Melletti, M. and E. Meijaard, editors. Ecology, Conservation and Management of Wild Pigs and Peccaries. Cambridge University Press.

Mola, J. M. and N. M. Williams. In press. Fire-induced change in flowering abundance, density, and phenology benefits bumble bee foragers. *Ecosphere*.

Pepi, A. A., O.P.L Vindstad, M. Ek & J. J. Jepsen. 2017. Elevationally biased avian predation as a contributor to altitudinal distribution of eruptive geometrids in sub-arctic mountain birch forest. Ecological Entomology, 42(4): 430-448. DOI: 10.1111/een.12400

Reynolds, C., … **A. Ke**, … and R. A. McCleery. 2017. Inconsistent effects of landscape heterogeneity and land-use on animal diversity in an agricultural mosaic: a multi-scale and multi-taxon investigation. *Landscape Ecology*: 1–15.

Smithers, B.V. 2017. Soil preferences in germination and survival of limber pine in the Great Basin White Mountains. *Forests* 8(11): 423. DOI: 10.3390/f8110423

Smithers, B.V., Millar, C.I., Latimer, A.M., North, M.P. In press. Rapid demographic shifts at treeline in Great Basin bristlecone and limber pine

(SOME) RECENT STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Smithers, B.V., Millar, C.I., Latimer, A.M., North, M.P. In press. Rapid demographic shifts at treeline in Great Basin bristlecone and limber pine forests. *Global Change Biology*. DOI: 10.1111/gcb.13881

Steel, A. E., **R. A. Peek**, R. A. Lusardi, and S. M. Yarnell. 2017. Associating metrics of hydrologic variability with benthic macroinvertebrate communities in regulated and unregulated snowmelt-dominated rivers. *Freshwater Biology*. DOI: 10.1111/fwb.12994

Trombley, S., and **K. R. Smith**. 2017. Potential evidence of communal nesting, mate guarding, or biparental care in the salt marsh harvest mouse (*Reithrodontomys raviventris halicoetes*). *California Fish and Game* 103(1): 15-20.

Williams, S. L., R. Ambo-Rappe, **C. Sur**, J.M. Abbott, and S.R. Limbong. 2017. Species richness accelerates marine ecosystem restoration in the Coral Triangle. *PNAS*. 114: 11986-11991.

Greater Snow Goose Flock - Shannon Skalos

COMMUNITY

Diversity Committee fall update

GGE Diversity Committee

Diversity Committee Mission:

The Diversity Committee will work to foster appreciation for the value of diversity in the GGE, to create and sustain a supportive and inclusive environment for all members, and to diversify our membership.

The Diversity Committee (DC) has been working on a variety of new and ongoing efforts for the 2017-2018 school year. We also welcomed our newly elected vice-chair, Linda-Estelí Méndez, and our new faculty mentor, Dr. Daniel Karp, WFCB. Here is a quick summary of what our subcommittees have been up to this fall:

Outreach

- Organizing support materials for students interested in nominating speakers for the 2018-2019 E&E seminar series.

Trainings & Workshops

- Planning a workshop for the new campus-wide GDOPx (Graduate Diversity Orientation Program Extension) on January 24th, 2018 - *Rethinking Identity: Empowering graduate scholars for inclusion and activism*. GDOPx brings together graduate student groups from across campus to offer speakers, workshops, and trainings on issues of diversity and inclusion relevant to graduate students. All graduate students are encouraged to attend!
- Developing new resources to demystify the grad school application process for prospective students from a variety of backgrounds.
- Putting together a mentorship workshop, in collaboration with Steve Lee (UC Davis STEM Diversity Officer), geared towards professors in the GGE who advise graduate students. GGE graduate students will be welcome to attend. Stay tuned!

Admissions & Awards

- Helping the Executive Committee to revise the GGE admissions page for transparency around new, holistic review criteria (http://ecology.ucdavis.edu/admissions/theapplication.html).
- Working with the GGE admissions committee and campus diversity officers to develop and offer training on implicit bias—the collection of attitudes and stereotypes that unconsciously affect our thoughts and actions—for admissions reviewers for the 2018 application review cycle.
- Collecting data for an upcoming report on the diversity of GGE applicants, admitted students, enrollees, and program graduates.

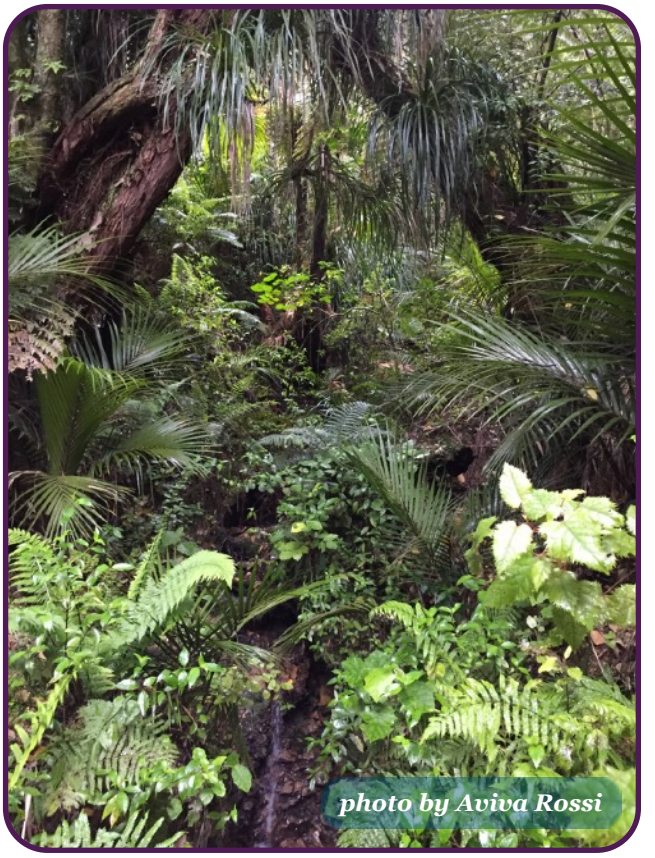


photo by Aviva Rossi

Phelsuma grandis texture study - Sarah Stinson

EGSA Update

EGSA is under new management! Helen Killeen, Vanessa Lo, and David Hernandez are busy at the helm as this year's Co-Chairs. Their vision is to expand the responsibilities and activities that EGSA engages in while bolstering participation from GGE students. Earlier this fall, EGSA members unanimously voted to adopt official by-laws. These by-laws provide formal structure to the organization and expand the purview of the EGSA sub-committees. The Co-Chairs hope this will allow the committees more autonomy to expand their visions and pursue new endeavors.

Looking towards the future, EGSA will be hosting its annual Mardi Gras Charity Ball in February. We hope that you will join us for a night of food, dancing, and silent auction bidding. The proceeds for this event will go to Undocufund, a nonprofit working to ensure that undocumented families in Sonoma County impacted by the fires will have the support and resources they need to recover and rebuild.

GGE Executive Committee

Aviva Rossi and Jess Rudnick

The Graduate Group in Ecology (GGE) is truly a special graduate community to be part of. In addition to our cutting-edge, exciting and interdisciplinary research, our student commitment and involvement make this community thrive. Student involvement is crucial to activities ranging from social events (Mardi Gras Charity Event, Odyssey orientation trip, Sophia's happy hours), to academic development (weekly guest and student seminars), to outreach, to institutional decision-making. The GGE values student involvement in institutional decision-making processes, which is achieved through Ecology Graduation Student Association (EGSA) representation on the Executive Committee (EC).

The EC acts as the decision-making board for the graduate group. Student representatives participate in discussions with EC faculty members and vote on important issues such as new faculty applications for GGE membership, faculty membership renewals, changes to the GGE curriculum, changes to the structure of Areas of Emphasis within the GGE, and any other issues brought to the attention of the EC. An exciting topic currently being discussed in the EC is the creation of a mentorship committee within the GGE. This group would be composed of both faculty and students, and would serve to provide resources and guidance on quality mentorship to both students and faculty in the GGE.

There are two student members on the EC who serve as representatives of the EGSA and GGE student body. We (Aviva Rossi and Jess Rudnick) are the current EGSA representatives on the GGE EC. The student members start in alternate years so as to foster continuity in the committee. In the spring quarter of each year, student representatives are nominated by themselves or others, and are chosen by an election that is open to all GGE students. Serving as an EC student representative is a minimal time commitment (approximately 2 hours/quarter) and is a fabulous opportunity to see how the graduate group operates, participate in discussions with faculty from many departments, and advocate for the student perspective.

If you would like to know more about the Executive Committee, you can see Article V of the GGE Bylaws, available at http://ecology.ucdavis.edu/resources/bylaws2016.pdf. If you think you might be interested in being a student representative next year, be sure to nominate yourself when the call goes out in the spring, and feel free to contact either Jess (jrudnick@ucdavis.edu) or Aviva (avirossi@ucdavis.edu) with questions.

Society for Conservation Biology – Fall Update

Amy Collins, Ken Zillig, Eric Tymstra, Ann Holmes

SCB-D's annual fundraiser was a *beerilliant sud-cess*! The Society for Conservation Biology–Davis Chapter (SCB-D) is a student-led organization formed in 2009. SCB-D aims to engage the local community with conservation issues and assist young scientists in developing professional, interdisciplinary skills applicable to the field of conservation biology.

This year, we hosted the annual SCB-D fundraiser at Sudwerk's Dock Store, Davis. Sudwerk's brew offered some tasty beers on tap, while generously donating a quarter of the night's proceeds to SCB-D. A big thanks to the amazing dad-rock cover band, Dr Rock and The Stuff, and the tasty food truck that made the night even more of a hit.

We had some fabulous pieces of art donated to our art auction, from woolly hats to wooden bowls, and everything in between. Altogether we received 30 art donations (thank you to those awesome artists!). Bids were pouring in until the last second; a big congratulations to the folks who won.

Finally, thanks to everyone who came out to support your local SCB. Altogether, we raised $955 dollars! This money will go towards supporting our Bay Area Conservation Biology Symposium that will take place April 21st, 2018, here at UC Davis. Stay tuned for more details and instructions to submit an abstract or poster.

Read more about SCB-D and sign up to our listserv at http://davisscb.wixsite.com/scbdavis.

The SCB Fundraiser Team

(*Amy Collins, Ken Zillig, Eric Tymstra, Ann Holmes*)

Ken Zillig (President) and Amy Collins (Vice President) of SCB with the art collection (and apparently a lumberjack themed dress code)

Folks enjoying the beer and art at Sudwerk's

Dr Rock and the Stuff rockin' out!

(Photos courtesy of Amy Collins)

The GGE Odyssey: To the edge of possibility

Sean Luis

The GGE Odyssey trip was special for many reasons—it was an opportunity for me to visit many places in California I had not been before, and the scenic destinations provided lots of inspiration for my short- and long-term research goals. I am a fisheries biologist by training; however, my experiences thus far have been largely focused on marine and estuarine systems. My passion as a researcher is to identify physical, abiotic drivers of ecological processes, and I will be venturing into new territory at UCD, studying fluvial geomorphology and river hydraulics as they relate to migratory and spawning habitat for anadromous fish.

As I looked out at the epic landforms that we encountered on our trip, I couldn't stop thinking about how my interactions with geological surface processes would soon be evolving from that of a curious spectator to that of an engaged scientific investigator. The trip also gave me a chance to really get to know many of my fellow grad school classmates. In doing so, I learned a lot about the amazing breadth of skills, talent, and experience that make our program so strong. I look forward to working alongside this amazing group of young scientists. The sky is the limit!

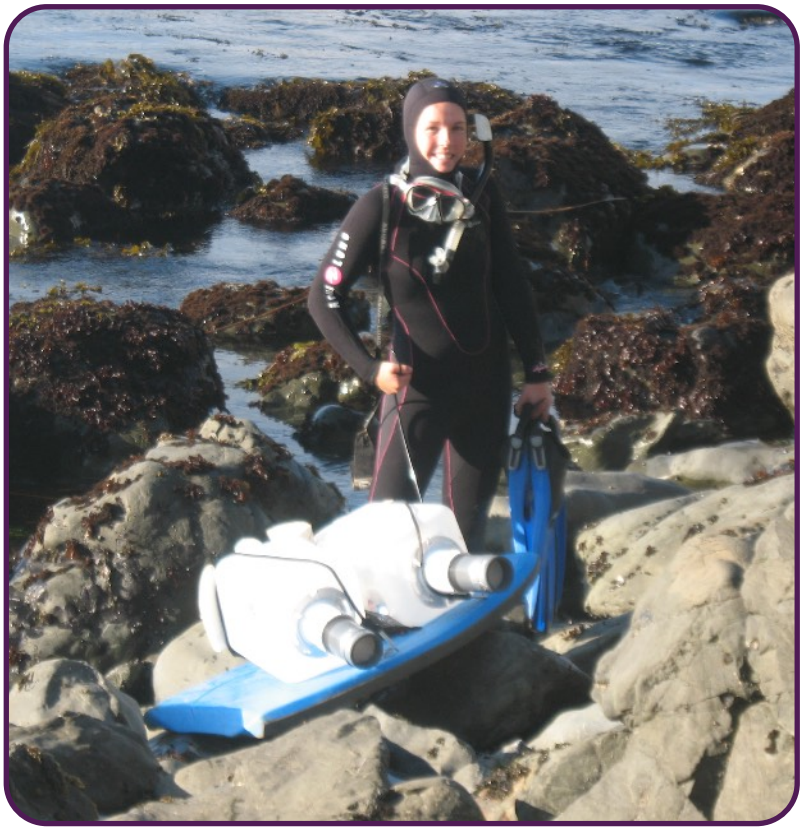
Odyssey - photo by Sean Luis

FIELD VEHICLES

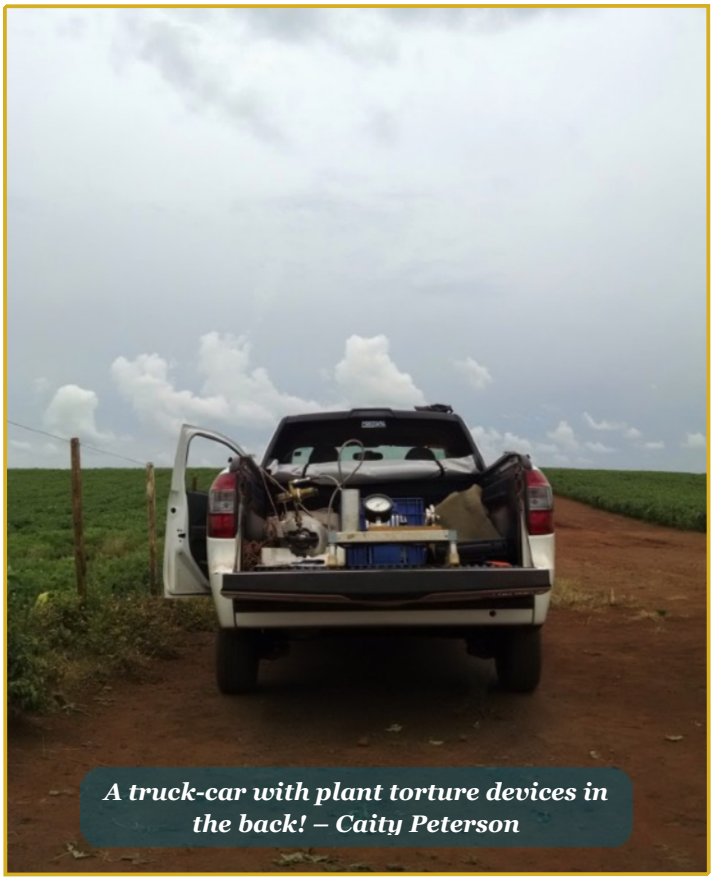
Editors' Note: It is apparent that while GGE members study organisms worldwide, we don't just end up there by chance. We've asked the community to contribute photos of their trusty field vehicles. Here they are in all of their glory (or shame)!

Field-ready boat loaded up with experimental cages out at CABA. – Nicole Aha

Ted Grosholz shows off his cherry red ATV as he rips across the mudflats.



Erin Satterthwaite proudly displays her light trap transportation device.



A truck-car with plant torture devices in the back! – Caity Peterson

FIELD VEHICLES

In memory of the sweet little rig that started it all -- marking butterflies in Reese River Valley, Lander Co., Nevada, summer 1993 – Erica Fleishman

My rickshaw. Worst vehicle I've ever had - frame broke one day, valvetrain just came completely apart another, drive wheel would lift on any left turn, etc. - Eric LoPresti

On Duty – Eric Sanford's long-term (since grad school!) field vehicle: a '68 Bug. Shown here in Baja California, Mexico.

A mirror selfie in my favorite ecological field work transportation method: a Hughes 500 helicopter skims the tops of ʻōhiʻa lehua trees (Metrosideros polymorpha) en route to our remote fence building site in Hanawi rainforest on Maui, Hawaiʻi – Mike Koontz

Brant Allen trying to get his research vehicle out on Lake Tahoe during the great winter of 2017. – Geoffrey Schladow

Kate Tiedeman having a wheel good time during field work in Tanzania.

Lauren Hennelley has been in so many crazy field vehicles around the world, we decided to show you the time she used a donkey to carry wolf-surveying gear

The Aggie Brickyard

Pika - Shannon Skalos

Want to get involved? Comments, Corrections, or Concerns?

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