Award Announcements

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AWARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

2010 LOYE AND ALDEN MILLER RESEARCH AWARD OF THE COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Miller Award Committee is pleased to honor Keith A. Hobson as the recipient of the Loye and Alden Miller Research Award for 2010. This award is presented for an extensive record of original research and significant advancements and major breakthroughs in our understanding of the biology of birds that have stood the test of time. Keith Hobson is a Senior Research Scientist with Environment Canada in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The Miller Award Committee selected Dr. Hobson because of his contributions to ornithology in the field of stable-isotope research. We were impressed by the scope of the questions and taxa with which his work with stable isotopes has been used. One of the first "bird papers" that brought stable isotopes to the fore was his 1998 *Science* paper with Peter Marra and Dick Holmes (Science 282:1884–1886. Since that publication, the number of publications and meeting presentations based on stable isotopes has skyrocketed. Not only have other researchers been able to apply the technique to a wide array of systems, Keith's own contributions are diverse, addressing a number of different animal and even nonanimal systems. Stable isotopes have been used to investigate everything about avian biology, including trophic ecology, life history, development, migration, and more. Keith Hobson frequently works collaboratively with other researchers, is generous with his time, and is approachable to students as well. He has published more than 300 papers, at least 27 of them in the *Condor*, often as first author. Not only has Dr. Hobson demonstrated the utility of stable isotopes in avian studies, he continues to explore new ways in which they can reveal even more about avian biology. In honor of his achievements and contributions to our profession, the Cooper Ornithological Society is honored to present the 2010 Miller Research Award to Dr. Keith A. Hobson.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD

The Cooper Ornithological Society is pleased to recognize the recipient of the 2010 Young Professional Award, Zachary Cheviron, and finalists Andrea Townsend and Daniel Barton. Established in 2008, the Young Professional Award recognizes early-career ornithological researchers for their outstanding contributions to ornithology. Three finalists are selected from applicants to deliver talks at the Young Professional Plenary session held at each annual meeting and are given 25 minutes each (20 minutes for presentation, 5 minutes for questions) to present their research to the entire conference body. The three finalists are guaranteed travel awards and are invited to a breakfast attended by the COS president, officers, and members of the student-presentation committee on the day prior to the plenary session. The recipient of the award receives a cash prize. Candidates (primarily Ph.D. students near completion and postdoctoral fellows) must be COS members and must be in their final year of graduate studies or have graduated within one year of the previous annual meeting. More information is available at www.cooper.org/awards_and_grants/awards_and_grants.htm#students.

Zac Cheviron's research interests lie in understanding the processes and mechanisms that contribute to local adaptation in natural populations of birds. Perhaps because of a prolonged lack of topographic relief during his childhood in central Illinois, he developed an early fascination with montane environments, and as a Ph.D. student working under the guidance of Dr. Robb Brumfield at Louisiana State University, Zac focused his research on exploring the process of local adaptation along altitudinal gradients. His dissertation combined studies of population genetics with genomic analyses of gene-expression profiles to examine the genetic processes that underlie physiological adaptation to different elevational zones by the Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*). This work was among the first to examine the importance of gene-expression differences in evolutionary adaptation to high altitude in birds, and it demonstrated substantial plasticity in the expression of genes that contribute to compensation for cold and hypoxic stress. Zac's work in high-altitude adaptation is being continued at the University of Nebraska, where he is currently a postdoctoral research fellow working with Dr. Jay Storz. His most recent work combines genomic analyses of gene expression with functional biochemical assays and protein modeling to test for adaptive divergence in genes involved in oxygen transport and aerobic metabolism

in *Z. capensis* as well as in several other birds and mammals that occur in different altitudinal and thermal environments. Zac also holds a master's degree from Illinois State University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Evansville. He wishes to thank the Cooper Ornithological Society for the opportunity to present his work and to encourage the society to continue to support this award as a venue for highlighting the work of early-career ornithologists.

Andrea Townsend is interested in the factors that drive individual variation in animal behavior. She enjoys exploring behavioral strategies on multiple levels, from the level of their social contexts to their genetic and physiological underpinnings and their ultimate consequences for fitness. She is particularly interested in the behavioral responses of birds to rapid human-induced environmental changes, including emerging infectious diseases, urbanization, and climate change. As part of her dissertation research at Cornell University, where she was advised by Dr. Irby Lovette, Andrea studied the causes and consequences of inbreeding in the cooperatively breeding American Crow. She discovered that close inbreeding was surprising regular in a suburban population of crows and that it had high costs, including a suppressed innate immune response, a higher probability of disease mortality, and lower overall probability of survival among inbred crows. In her recent work, she has been modeling the contexts in which benefits of inbreeding, arising from kin selection, outweigh the costs of inbreeding depression and exploring evidence for variation in the occurrence and costs of inbreeding across urban-to-rural gradients and during years with and without epidemics. As a side project, she has also been carrying out a multi-species study of the comparative phylogeography and conservation genetics of the endemic and endangered birds of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

In her current postdoctoral work, also at Cornell University, Andrea is exploring the genetics of mating strategies (and the occurrence of inbreeding) of populations of the cooperatively breeding threatened Florida Scrub-Jay studied over the long term. In July 2010, Andrea will begin an NSF Bioinformatics Fellowship, with co-sponsors at the Smithsonian Institution and Cornell University, during which she will use the long-term database on the Black-throated Blue Warbler from Hubbard Brook to seek evidence for behavioral drivers of population dynamics under different climate scenarios. Andrea would like to thank the Cooper Ornithological Society for the opportunity to share the results of her research at the Young Professionals Award plenary. She encourages other young scientists to pursue this exciting opportunity present their work in a plenary setting, to meet the board of the COS, and to interact with the other "Young Professionals," past and present.

Dan Barton is a native of inner-city Chicago and fortunately discovered his love of birds and field biology while studying for his B.S. at the Evergreen State College. Dan interned with Point Reyes Bird Observatory while an undergraduate and continued on as a staff biologist there following his graduation in 2001. While at PRBO, he worked principally on the breeding biology of shrubsteppe songbirds in eastern Oregon and northeastern California, but also spent time developing 21st-century technologies for managing PRBO's information resources. He also studied songbirds and seabirds in coastal California, the Aleutian Islands, the Leeward Hawaiian Islands, and Isla Guadalupe, Mexico. Since 2005, his main task has been a Ph.D. in organismal biology and ecology at the University of Montana under the guidance of Dr. Tom Martin, which he will be defending in 2010. His dissertation research focused on testing alternative ecological explanations for variation among birds' life histories, including resource-limitation and extrinsic-mortality hypotheses. Dan used the response of parental provisioning rate to natural variation in brood size and brood-size manipulations across a diversity of bird species on three continents to discriminate among these alternatives. He found that adults' mortality rates play an overarching role in explaining variation among species in the way provisioning rate responds to brood-size variation. Dan is grateful to the many collaborators and field assistants involved in his dissertation research. As a teaching assistant for Dr. Steve Herman over six years, he enjoyed teaching advanced ornithology to dozens of Evergreen State College students, and he recently taught population biology and evolution at the graduate level at Montana. Dan is also currently the chair of the Cooper Student Board and hopes that new opportunities like the Young Professional Award help encourage young scientists to get involved in securing the future of our ornithological societies.