NEWS

AAS panel into Murray-Darling fish kills.
Craig Moritz (E&E) chaired a multidisciplinary panel of experts, convened by the Australian Academy of Science, who investigated fish kills in the Murray-Darling River system in NSW. The report recommended that urgent steps should be taken within six months to improve the quality of water throughout the Darling River. A press release from the AAS highlights the main points, with an ABCNews article here. Click here to read the report. (see main image).

Four Highly Cited researchers at RSB.
Congratulations to Graham Farquhar (PS), Patrick Meir (PS), Craig Moritz (E&E) and Barry Pogson (PS) who have been recognised as Highly Cited Researchers in the Clarivate Highly Cited Researcher List issued in December 2018.

Congratulations.
Michael Jennions (E&E) has been appointed to the council of the European Society for Evolutionary Biology (ESEB).

Christiana McDonald-Spicer (Moritz group, E&E) won the prize for best oral presentation by an early career researcher at the International Biogeography Society conference in Malaga, Spain, in January 2019.

The Director’s prize in Honours for 2018 has been awarded to Suyan Yee (Pogson group, PS), Caitlin Cherryh (Lanfear group, E&E), and Ali Catling (Nicotra group, E&E).

Congratulations to Fernanda Alves, Langmore group (E&E) PhD student, who won a Holsworth Wildlife Research Endowment worth $5125 from the Ecological Society of Australia.

Python programming course.
The 2nd Advanced Scientific Programming In Python - Asia Pacific course was held at RSB on the 20th to 27th of January. The course trained more than 30 scientists from ANU, CSIRO, the government, and afar in advanced scientific programming.

The Research School of Biology invited Charles Hocart and Hilary Stuart-Williams (Farquhar group, PS) to collaborate on a conference, they jumped at the chance. They gathered a group of more than 150 academics from China, Australia, the U.S.A., Switzerland, France, Germany and others to create a world-class meeting from 20th-24th January 2019. Accommodation was provided in a new 4-star hotel while the meetings took place in the great hall of the SUST library. Candidates feasted on a large variety of Chinese food when not locked in discussion or attending lectures. As a final pleasure the conference rounded up with visits to the spellbinding ancient walls of Xi’an and the Terracotta Warriors.

2019 Stable Isotopes in the Biosphere conference.
China is home to more than 1,000 stable isotope mass spectrometers, so when Youping Zhou, former RSB PhD student now running his own lab at Shaanxi University of Science and Technology (SUST) in Xi’an

A one-day short-course on stable isotopes made a good conclusion to the proceedings. Overall the conference was a huge success and the candidates left feeling that they had achieved a lot. SUST was incredibly generous with its funding and the new collaborations formed showed that the money had been very well spent! The entire conference reflected well on ANU and SUST. We all look forward to a
The Research School of Biology

return visit. - Hilary Stuart-Williams (PS).

Remaining Growth Capsules delivered.

The remaining GRDC-funded modular growth cabinets were delivered to the RSB compound this month, completing the GRDC Grain Phenomics Climate Facility.

Checking out Kambri teaching spaces.

Members of RSB explored the new teaching spaces on Kambri opening day. Seen here in the student common area of the new Marie Raw Teaching Building, are back row, from left: Tammy Gomersall, Yiming Li, Andreas Kaszewski (all BTLC) and Naresh Verma (BB). Front: Melanie Xinnic, Fiona Roxburgh (BTLC) and Aude Fahrer (BB). Image Mel Norris.

IN THE MEDIA

Ben Long (Price Group, PS) was interviewed by Fran Kelly on ABC RN Breakfast discussing the group’s recent publication in Nature which describes the liquid droplet formation of Rubisco complexes prior to their inclusion into nascent carboxysomes during their biogenesis. Their results, which form part of Nghiem Nguyen’s PhD project (Price group, PS, CoETP), have implications for the construction of carboxysomes in crop plant chloroplasts as part of a CO₂-concentrating mechanism to improve photosynthesis. Ben also appeared on other ABC programs and WIN television, and was interviewed for an episode of the FutureTech Health podcast.

Stefan Bröer (BSB) was interviewed for an article in the Canberra Times and Sydney Morning Herald about the process of starvation.

RSB PhD student Damien Esquerré’s discovery that some South American lizards seemed to have broken Dollo’s law of irreversibility was covered in the Canberra Times and the ABC. Damien found that egg-laying lizards appear to have gone from eggs to birthing live young and back again. He also found that the South American Andes mountains are ‘sky islands’, and hotbeds for diversity, You can watch the ABC news report here.

Welcome to the inaugural Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurial Agri-Technology (CEAT) - Mary Kelly - who commenced her position on Feb 11th. Prior to CEAT, Mary was Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Development and Industry) at Charles Sturt University (since 2015). Before CSU her roles included Branch Manager, Strategy and Programs during her 4+ years at the Australian Research Council, Director Research Services at University of Canberra, and Senior Scientific Program Officer during her 3+ years at Science Foundation Ireland. Mary brings to the new CEAT role an in-depth understanding of the complexities of collaborative research, innovation and R&D; and the need to bring together research, government, industry and commercial stakeholders towards a shared outcome to realise the true value of a sector or industry. Mary completed her PhD in Microbiology as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Georgia and her BSc (Hons) in Biochemistry at University College Dublin. - Owen Atkin (PS).

Louise Pemble has joined CEAT as the marketing and communication officer. Louise has a background in communication and journalism, a Master of Strategic Communication and a love of innovation, especially in agriculture and climate adaptation. She previously worked at the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources as External Communications Manager working across drought support, carp control and land care projects.

Danielle Way will be visiting RSB for a 6 month sabbatical from January 2019,
The Jennions group (E&E) welcomes new PhD student Meng-Han Chung. Meng-Han is from Taiwan, and would like to work on how physiological responses change fish behaviour and affect their reproductive success under environmental stress. He hopes to immerse himself wholly in the evolution world, and the happy J research group.

Welcome to new PhD student, Farhad Hossain, who completed a BSc in Agriculture and an MSc in Plant Pathology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University in Gazipur, Bangladesh. Farhad will be working in the Jones group (PS) on the isolation and functional characterisation of a flux rust gene able to inhibit resistance responses in axial to specific flux rust effectors.

Jenni Hayward has started her PhD in the van Dooren group (BSB), examining the function and structure of novel electron transport chain proteins from Toxoplasma. Jenni did her undergraduate studies at Monash University. For her Honours, she examined chemokine-inhibitory evasin proteins from ticks with Martin Stone in the Biochemistry department. For the past two years, Jenni has worked as a research assistant with Si Ming Man at the John Curtin School. Welcome Jenni!

Erin Hill has started her PhD in the Solomon group (PS). She will be investigating the role of extracellular vesicles secreted by plant pathogens during disease.

Angus Rae is joining the Mathesius group (PS) as a PhD student. Angus was here as a summer student a year ago and then completed his Honours degree at the University of Newcastle with David Collings. We are very happy to see him return to the ANU to take up his PhD project on the regulation of root hair infection by rhizobia.

The Mikheyev group (E&E) welcomes PhD student Oliver Stuart, who will be working on the conservation genetics of the Lord Howe Island stick insect. He is planning to develop population genetic research that informs its captive management, as well as a better picture of its population and evolutionary history.

“It’s a unique research opportunity and I’m really looking forward to getting stuck in,” he said.

Welcome to Stephanie Henkel. Stephie is a second year PhD student enrolled in the Berlin-Canberra International Research Training Program (IRTG 2290). She will spend the next 12 months studying ferredoxin in the the malaria parasite in Kevin Saliba’s Lab (BSB).

Inke Falkner has been appointed as Program Coordinator at Kioloa Coastal Campus. Before starting at Kioloa, Inke was the Community Outreach Coordinator at the Sydney Institute of Marine Science. At Kioloa, she will coordinate and continue to develop the research, teaching and outreach activities at the Campus. Please get in touch with Inke to discuss your next visit to the Campus.

Welcome to our new cohort of Honours and Masters students. The Masters students are: Nonthakorn Apirajkamol (Moritz group, E&E), Carolina Dolan (Kruuk group, E&E), Caitlin Flux (Callaghan group, BSB), Rosalie Harris (Fulton group, E&E), Hongie Li (Brock group, BSB), Xianglan Li (Rodrigo group, CBBU), Luan Liu (Leyton group, BSB), Ivan Vinogradov (Jennions group, E&E), Tianshu Yang (Rodrigo group, CBBU), Haochuan Zhu (Rathjen group, PS), Yiran Zou (Rodrigo group, CBBU). The honours students are: Kwan Lung Elroy Au (Mikeyev group, E&E), Isaac Bell (Cardillo group, E&E), Jayden Black (Maier group, BSB), Ming Hong Martin Huang (Maier group, BSB), Jonathan King (Saliba group BSB), Ruoxi Lin (Mathesius group, PS), Julia Lindblom (Lehane group, BSB), Xiangning Liu (Saliba group, BSB), Carl McCombe (Williams group, PS), Kiera O’Halloran (Mikheyev group, E&E), Kwong Sum Shea (Maier group, BSB), Hanjun Sun (Whitney group, PS), Pinhui Wang (Mathesius group, PS), Oliver Webeck (Cardillo group, E&E), Daniel Yu (Williams group, PS), Ayiri Zelinsky (Solomon group, PS), Spencer Whitney (PS) is convener for this group.

FAREWELL

Esther Rajendran (post-doc in the van Dooren and Kirk labs, BSB) has accepted a position to work as a patent examiner for IP Australia. During her time at RSB, Esther made major contributions to understanding how apicomplexan parasites acquire amino acids, and characterising novel proteins in the electron transport chain of these parasites. She also made valuable contributions to undergraduate and post-graduate teaching, and student supervision. Esther leaves us with a very strong publication record, and we wish her all the best for the future. She will be sorely missed! - Giel van Dooren (BSB).

Clarissa Alves Negrini, Atkin group Lab Manager (PS) will be leaving for an ongoing position at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Bethany Stone, International Wheat Yield Partnership Technician and Pogson group (PS) honours student in 2018 left RSB in January to work in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Keach Murakami has been in Fred Chow’s group (PS) for the past nine months. Having written up his work on the reversibility of photosynthetic capacity of mature pea leaves in response to re-exposure to high light after temporary shading, he returns to Japan to take up a position at the National Agricultural & Food Research Organisation, Hokkaido.

PHDS SUBMITTED

Phillipa Beale (Foley group E&E) ‘Ambient temperature as a determinant of plant secondary metabolite tolerance and nutrient intake in marsupial folivores’.

Florence Danila (Von Caemmerer group, PS) ‘The role of leaf plasmodesmata in C4 photosynthesis’.

Kevin Murray (Borevitz group, PS) ‘New computational methods and plant models for evolutionary genomics’.

Kathryn Parker (van Dooren and Kirk groups, BSB) ‘Defining the Apicomplexan Amino Acid Transporter (ApiAT) Family’.

PHD AWARDED

Amit Singh (Nicotra group, E&E) ‘On growth and form of leaves in 3 dimensions: Applications of machine vision and advanced optics’.
The Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre is looking for biology tutors for indigenous students. Please email tjabal centre@anu.edu.au if you are interested.

The First Aid/Parents Room/Privacy Rooms are available to be used for infant feeding and related issues whenever required.