

## EVOLUTION, ECOLOGY, & GENETICS RESEARCH SCHOOL OF BIOLOGY

Thursday 10 March, 1pm



## The rise and fall of yellow crazy ants on Christmas Island

Dr . Chris Boland  
DPIPWE Tasmania

*Yellow Crazy Ants (*Anoplolepis gracilipes*) (one of the world's 100 worst invasive species) were introduced to Christmas Island around 1935 where they existed in very low densities for several decades. However, in the late 1990s the ants started to form a mutualistic association with introduced, sap-sucking scale insects. This association enabled the ants to form high density infestations ('supercolonies') of up to 80 million ants per hectare (the highest density of foraging ants ever recorded). These infestations began to emerge across the island, spreading at 1 m per day around their perimeter, and wreaking havoc on the island's unique rainforest ecosystem by eliminating the island's famous red crabs, birds and reptiles, dramatically altering the forest structure, and facilitating the spread of secondary invaders - leading to 'invasional meltdown'. In September 2009, an aerial baiting campaign to control the crazy ants was conducted with remarkable success, eliminating more than 99.5% of ants. In this talk, I describe the impacts and control of yellow crazy ants on Christmas Island in the light of the biodiversity crisis affecting this remarkable external Australian territory in the middle of Indian Ocean.*

For further info please contact:  
Prof William Foley, 02 6125 2866, [bill.foley@anu.edu.au](mailto:bill.foley@anu.edu.au)

**Seminars are held in the Gould Wing Seminar Room, Building 116 Daley Rd, ANU  
ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND**