February 2014
Catch up with all that's going on at CBRE

TV ONE's Rural Delivery - Research collaboration with GoodNature

Grace Paske and Stephen Hartley recently featured on an episode of TV One's Rural Delivery discussing our collaboration with Goodnature Ltd and the development of pheromone lures for rats and possums. You can check it out [here](#).

Let's hear it for the kaka

Victoria University student Kerry Charles was recently interviewed by Alison Ballance on RadioNZ about her Masters research into the population of kaka in Wellington city. Her research measured the behaviour and tree preferences of sap-feeding kaka and their relationship with people. Her work makes predictions about what other native species are likely to come into conflict with people in cities. You can listen to the interview [here](#) or read about it on our weblog [here](#).

NZCT grant to curb feline predation of native species

Wayne, with colleagues at Otago and Massey universities, UniTec and Te Papa have been awarded a grant of $10,000 from the New Zealand Companion Animal Trust to investigate solutions to the problem of domestic cat depredation of wildlife that also translate into improvements in cat welfare. This win-win
approach to the problem integrates the ecological and socio-psychological sciences in new ways. The study will roll out through veterinary clinics nationwide this year.

Two Marsden Successes for Members of CBRE

- Phil Lester, Monica Gruber and colleagues were successful in obtaining a Marsden grant to examine the pathogen and mutualist microbiota of the invasive common wasp (Vespula vulgaris) in their native and invasive range. The project will examine how interaction networks correlate with wasp population fitness and productivity band whether there is any evidence for Enemy Release in the invaded populations, which help them achieve high densities. The group will examine how pathogens may have multiplicative effects rather than additive effects on wasps’ reproductive rates, survival and immune systems.

- Monica was also successful in obtaining a Marsden Fast Start grant to examine how humans may have selected for novelty seeking behaviour in Argentine ants. These ants have been transferred around the world by humans, but perhaps the genotypes that are most “exploratory” are moved more often, relative to any “shy” populations. Monica and team will examine ant gene expression for novelty seeking behaviour and the actual displayed behaviour in Argentine, US, Australia and New Zealand populations of these ants.

Taking the Sting Out of Wasps

A Wasp Tactical Group was established at a recent workshop hosted by Prof Phil Lester. The workshop brought together researchers from Victoria University and Landcare Research to discuss the impact wasps have on our native forests. For most, the devastation wasn’t fully realised but with better funding and research, hopefully control measures can be put into place to reduce the problem. You can read more about the workshop here.
New Zealand Ecological Societies' conference - Invasive Species Symposium

Monica Gruber, Stephen Hartley and Phil Lester presented talks at the invasive species symposium at the 5th joint conference of New Zealand Ecological Society and the Ecological Society of Australia in Auckland in November. Monica also co-hosted a half day workshop looking at the relationship between invasive species and climate change. To find out more about the conference click here.

National Science Challenge

Nicky Nelson, Phil Lester and Charles Daugherty have attended several workshops on developing a research plan for the National Science Challenge theme of "New Zealand’s biological heritage – protecting and managing our biodiversity, improving our biosecurity, and enhancing our resilience to harmful organisms".

New Member: Dr Monica Gruber

My research interests focus on the integration of the study of ecology and evolution. I am particularly interested in the influence of adaptive genetic variation on behaviour, the mechanisms underlying these relationships, and the effects of these interactions on biological communities. Biological invasions are of special interest as they provide a diverse array of biological systems for research, and the potential for practical benefits to conservation, ecosystem services and agriculture. From a more practical perspective, I am involved in biosecurity projects on invasive ants in the Pacific, and am currently working in Kiribati and Tokelau. Monica’s recently funded Marsden project is described above.

CBRE Student Awards

In November, over $11,000 was distributed to 6 postgraduate students for work on a range of biodiversity conservation and restoration ecology projects. The awards also included a $5000 donation from VUW alumni.
Congratulations to Charlie Clark, Patricia Ramirez, Megan English, Stephanie Price, Shanna Rose, Cheng Shi and Tapuwa Marapara.

In Short...

- Five CBRE members have been involved in a submission for a new Centre of Research Excellence entitled "The Centre for Natural Capital - Taonga Nuku, Taonga Rangi"
- Nicky Nelson has been appointed to the Board of Guardians for Zealandia
- Stephen Hartley attended "Restoration in Waikato" a day of seminars organized by the Waikato Environment Institute

Directors' Corner

Dr Wayne Linklater has returned from an eleven-month sabbatical in the Geography Department at UC-Berkeley, where he continued projects on the relationships between people and biodiversity in cities, taught a seminar course in animal geography, and explored his new interest in the human dimensions of environmental management. He also continued writing on Polit-Ecol Science and Perissodactyla.

If you would like to create a scholarship or award, or discuss our research capabilities, please contact Wayne or the VUW foundation.

Our [website](#) is undergoing a facelift! Please take a look and let us know what you think.