



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**

Honours & Masters of Biological Sciences

Research Projects 2022

School of Biological Sciences



WELCOME

As biologists, we are passionate about how living organisms – plants and animals – live, work, sense the world around them, communicate, reproduce, and can be managed, conserved and restored in threatened environments, as well as how they provide clues to advance medical science and treatment. We are also committed to the communication of science to the public and external stakeholders.

Our researchers tackle grand challenges in the laboratory and at field sites across the globe, studying plants and animals in natural as well as managed environments, including below and on the ground and in the air as well as in fresh and marine waters. We use a wide range of techniques spanning scales from molecular and genetic to individuals as well as to populations and higher order ecosystems.

Ecology & Conservation

We research how animals and plants interact with other species and with their physical environment. This fundamental ecological understanding is required to conserve endangered species and protect their habitats with effective, evidence-based methods. Our research takes us to habitats from suburban backyards to deserts and the depths of the sea.

Evolutionary Biology

Our research explores evolutionary responses to selection at the phenotypic and genomic level, with the broad aim of discovering how organisms adapt to their changing environment. CEB takes a multidisciplinary approach to explore selective processes acting on the morphological and life-history traits of whole organisms and their gametes. We have particular expertise in acoustic signalling, predator-prey interactions, visual ecology, sperm competition, chemical ecology, and the genetic mapping of complex traits.

Science Communication

Science communicators bridge the gap between those researching and working in Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) and the public. Science communicators work with researchers, scientists, technologists, engineers, mathematicians, medical professionals, business and industry, policy-makers and members of the public to engage different communities in discussion about important scientific issues, to enhance understanding and help us all make better decisions about our future priorities

Neuroscience and Neuroecology

Comparative neurobiology and neuroecology aims to decipher how different species perceive and process sensory input from the natural world, under different environmental conditions. Our high quality research attracts the next generation of young scientists interested in animal behaviour, sensory processing and the conservation of biodiversity.

Computational Biology

We address fundamental and applied questions in biology using methods and tools from mathematics, statistics and computer science. Using methods such as computational simulation modelling, bioinformatics and big data algorithms we investigate a range of issues including the evolution of resistance to biocides in weeds, coral and seagrass growth patterns and the maintenance of diversity in ecological communities.

Many projects are available across more than one Honours/Masters Stream/Specialisation.

The Marine Science Projects

Science Communication

Students are encouraged to contact prospective supervisors directly to discuss the project and find out about additional projects not currently listed in this booklet.



WELCOME

Welcome to the School of Biological Sciences. With this booklet, we would like to extend a warm welcome to you and introduce our School.

This booklet is designed to provide you with the information about the school & staff, facilities, procedures and resources. Please read through the booklet thoroughly to familiarise yourself with the school. Please also see enclosed Coordinator profiles.

Meet our Team

TITLE	NAME	EXT	EMAIL	BUILDING
Head of School	Patrick Finnegan	8546	patrick.finnegan@uwa.edu.au	Zoology L1
Deputy Head of School	Pauline Grierson	7926	Pauline.grierson@uwa.edu.au	Botany L1
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Honours & Masters Support	Christine Riordan	3535	projects-sbs@uwa.edu.au	Zoology L1
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Senior Scientific Officer	Greg Cawthray	1789	greg.cawthray@uwa.edu.au	Agri. Cntr L2
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WHO TO CONTACT

See below a list of who to contact in regards to any particular matter, within the School of Biological Sciences. If there is any confusion about who to contact; please contact Lindie Watkins at admin-sbs@uwa.edu.au for more information.

FOR	NAME	EXT	EMAIL
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Finance <i>Expense Claim Progress, Purchasing</i>	Science-Finance	-	purchasing-fsci@uwa.edu.au
HR <i>Contracts, Timesheets, Leave, Payroll, Misconduct</i>	SDC HR Science	3569	Hr-science@uwa.edu.au
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Teaching and Learning Chairs: Patrick Finnegan and Nicola Mitchell

MAJORS COORDINATORS

SPECIALISATION	COORDINATORS:	EMAIL:	EXT:
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Science Communication	Heather Bray	Heather.bray@uwa.edu.au	2508
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Marine Science	Renae Hovey	Renae.hovey@uwa.edu.au	2214
	Jane Prince	Jane.prince@uwa.edu.au	1469
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HONOURS COORDINATORS

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MASTERS OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

(Coursework and Coursework & Dissertation) - Specialisation Coordinators

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Research project coordinators	Jan Hemmi	Jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au	3117
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SUPERVISORS	TOPIC	LEVEL
<p>Prof Jacqui Batley jacqueline.batley@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Evolution of disease resistance genes Genome sequencing is changing our understanding of biology and evolution, with implications for agriculture. However, a reference genome does not represent a species' diversity. Through sequence analysis of many individuals of a species (pan genomics) we can identify genes that are conserved or different within and between species. Brassicas constitute the world's main vegetable and oil crops; however pathogens lead to substantial yield loss, and the cultivated species contain little diversity for identification of novel resistance sources. This project will focus on characterising resistance genes across wild Brassica species and study their evolution and selection. An understanding of the diversity of the genes and how they affect disease resistance will help in the design of novel plant protection strategies and significantly increase crop yields.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Prof Jacqui Batley jacqueline.batley@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Jing Li jing.li@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>A novel biotechnological approach to protect crops from insect pests New approaches are required to control insect pests which cause enormous global crop losses. Phytophagous insects are incapable of synthesizing cholesterol. Cholesterol is a precursor of the molting hormone. Insects rely on converting host phytosterols to cholesterol. There are stringent structural demands on phytosterols used as substrates, therefore some phytosterols cannot be utilized by insects. This important pest-host interaction provides a unique platform from which to explore the opportunity for a new insect pest control strategy. The project aims to develop a novel technology which is achieved by modifying plants to produce non-utilizable sterols. The plants with modified sterols will be unable to support insect growth & reproduction but will nevertheless function normally in plants. The specific aims are to modify canola plant sterols by overexpression/knock-out (using Crispr technology) of novel sterol biosynthetic genes, or by exploiting natural variation in sterols already present in canola and introgressing non-utilizable sterols from other Brassicaceae species.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Prof Jacqui Batley jacqueline.batley@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Genomics of Plant pathogen interactions Research on the interactions between plants and pathogens has become one of the most rapidly moving fields in the plant sciences, findings of which have contributed to the development of new strategies and technologies for crop protection. A good example of plant and pathogen evolution is the gene-for-gene interaction between the fungal pathogen <i>Leptosphaeria maculans</i>, causal agent of Blackleg disease, and Brassica crops (canola, mustard, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts). The newly available genome sequences for Brassica spp. and <i>L. maculans</i> provide the resources to study the co-evolution of this plant and pathogen. The aim of this project is to use next generation sequencing technologies to characterise the diversity and evolution of these genes in different wild and cultivated Brassica species. This will involve phenotypic analysis of the disease in a variety of cultivars and species and association genetics to link to the phenotype</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Prof Jacqui Batley jacqueline.batley@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Emma Dalziell emma.dalziell@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>RNA integrity in seeds of wild species stored in conservation seed banks The storage of seeds in seed banks is an important conservation strategy for many wild plant species. However, for most wild species, we have a very limited understanding about their actual lifespan under storage conditions i.e. whether we can expect seeds to survive for 10 years or thousands of years. Currently, we rely on germination testing to ascertain viability loss in a seed collection, however this can be difficult (due to complex dormancy and germination requirements), time consuming (sometimes months), wasteful of precious seed resources (using 100s of seeds), and results only in a binary answer of "yes" or "no" to whether the seed is alive. It has recently been shown that RNA integrity in crop seeds co-correlates with a loss in seed viability, may provide much more detailed information about the effect of aging on a seed lot, and can be done with as little as 5-10 individual seeds. Utilising the historical seed collection at Kings Park and working in the Batley lab at UWA, this project focuses on protocol development for RNA extraction and assessment of integrity in seeds of wild WA species and then seeks to apply this methodology to aged seeds (both in real-time, and under accelerated aging conditions).</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Dr Philipp Bayer philipp.bayer@uwa.edu.au Prof. Dave Edwards dave.edwards@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Machine learning in biology Machine learning, including deep learning, has revolutionised the analysis of large datasets in biology, allowing biologists to understand complex phenomena. The Applied Bioinformatics group at UWA is a 100% computational group that uses machine learning approaches in genomics and plant breeding. The majority of data the group works on comes from plant genomics and plant breeding. Projects include analysis of genomics data using Natural Language Processing machine learning approaches, crop phenotype prediction using deep learning, or drone and satellite image analysis using convolutional neural networks. Candidates are expected to have a good understanding of biology and rudimentary Linux skills, ideally with some experience in data science-style analyses. Candidates will receive training in the use of high-performance computing. Please contact Philipp Bayer or Dave Edwards to discuss specific opportunities.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Heather Bray heather.bray@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Media framing of scientific issues The media has an important role in shaping people's understanding of scientific issues. Framing is when certain aspects of a story are made more or less prominent, or when particular types of metaphors are used to help audiences understand a story, but it can also influence how a story is understood. In this project, you are free to pursue an issue of your choice (eg coronavirus, the recent bushfires) and you will learn both qualitative and quantitative research techniques grounded in the social sciences to find out how the scientific issue is being 'made public' in Australia.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Heather Bray heather.bray@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Public understanding of scientific issues To improve conversations between experts and non-experts about scientific issues, it is important to understand how attitudes, perceptions, and understandings about scientific issues are shaped by social and cultural factors. What do people really think about scientific issues and why do they think that way? Are these understandings barriers to behaviour change? In this project you are free to choose a topic that you are interested in. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods can be used to explore public understandings of scientific issues.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Bruno Buzatto, bruno.buzatto@uwa.edu.au A/Prof Joseph Tomkins joseph.tomkins@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Male dimorphism and sexual conflict Male dimorphism usually reflects alternative reproductive tactics among males: the large male morphs typically guard females or reproductive territories and have more elaborate weaponry; the small male morphs sneak copulations and have reduced weaponry. In the bulb mite <i>Rhizoglyphus echinopus</i>, fighters have a thick and sharp pair of legs and kill rival males, whereas scramblers search for unguarded females. We have colonies of bulb mites in the lab that have been under artificial selection on the thickness of fighter legs for several generations. The aim of this honours project will be to assess whether selection for thicker legs in fighters generated any response in females. If so, then a sexual conflict should arise and constrain the evolution of sexual dimorphism and male dimorphism, which would be a very significant finding in evolutionary biology. The work will involve manipulating mites under the microscope and measuring their legs with image software.</p>	<p>Honours</p>
<p>Dr Bruno Buzatto, bruno.buzatto@uwa.edu.au A/Prof Joseph Tomkins joseph.tomkins@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Selection for larger weapons and fight performance Male dimorphism usually reflects alternative reproductive tactics among males: the large male morphs typically guard females or reproductive territories and have more elaborate weaponry; the small male morphs sneak copulations and have reduced weaponry. In the bulb mite <i>Rhizoglyphus echinopus</i>, fighters have a thick and sharp pair of legs and kill rival males, whereas scramblers search for unguarded females. We have colonies of bulb mites in the lab that have been under artificial selection on the thickness of fighter legs for several generations. The aim of this project will be to assess whether selection for thicker legs in fighters generated coevolutionary responses in fighting performance. If so, we will have gathered the first direct evidence for the positive effect of thick legs in winning fights in mites! The work will involve setting up and observing male-male fights between mites under the microscope and measuring their legs with image software.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Dr Belinda Cannell belinda.cannell@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Renae Hovey renae.hovey@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Population characteristics of Little Penguins in King George Sound, Albany</p> <p>The largest colony of Little Penguins in Western Australia was located, until recently, on Penguin Island. However, this colony has reduced by more than 50% in the last decade, largely attributed to a reduction in local fish abundance due to a warming trends in water temperature as well as increasing interactions with watercraft. Sadly, a population viability analysis based on current survival and breeding success has identified that the colony will be extinct within 40 years. There are other colonies on offshore islands in SW WA, close to a major shipping port in King George Sound . However, there is very limited information on the population ecology of the penguins in this region. This project will investigate some key population characteristics of the Little Penguins with the aid of artificial nestboxes that will be monitored regularly throughout the breeding season.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Belinda Cannell belinda.cannell@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Harriet Paterson harriet.paterson@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Does Chasmanthe, a bulbous plant, inhibit the habitat utilised by Little Penguins on Mistaken Island?</p> <p>Little Penguins inhabit Mistaken Island, a DBCA -managed nature reserve, near Albany in SW WA, however there is limited data related to their ecology on the island. A study undertaken in 2020 identified many of the natural burrows utilised by the penguins. However it was noted that although <i>Chasmanthe</i> , a vigorous bulb from South Africa, was patchily distributed on the island, the density and height of it changed throughout the year, making it extremely difficult to walk through. Given that weeds such as Marram grass have been shown to inhibit penguins from being able to access, and dig burrows, in previously inhabited areas, it is thought that the <i>Chasmanthe</i> may have a similar impact on Mistaken Island.</p> <p>This project will investigate the density of <i>Chasmanthe</i> associated with penguin nesting habitat and document its change throughout the year. These data will support recommendations for the management of this weed.</p>	<p>Masters</p>
<p>Dr Emma Dalziell emma.dalziell@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr David Merritt david.merritt@dbca.wa.gov.au</p>	<p>Predicting seed lifespan for the improved curation of conservation seed banks</p> <p>The storage of seeds in seed banks is a primary strategy for plant conservation in the face of unprecedented biodiversity loss. However, recent evidence indicates the viability of seeds of many species, formerly presumed to be long-lived in low-temperature storage, declines much more rapidly than anticipated. We have several projects available for students interested in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Using the historical seed collections at Kings Park, identifying species or collections performing poorly in storage. -Developing alternative storage protocols to improve storage stability of at-risk species, including investigations into cryogenic storage -Developing novel data analysis techniques to either characterise seed population response to time in storage or build models to predict species likely to be short-lived or problematic in storage. <p>These projects will be primarily based out of the research facilities at Kings Park.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Cecile Dang cecile.dang@dpird.wa.gov.au</p> <p>Prof Jacqui Batley Jacqueline.batley@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Investigation of microorganisms associated with health issues in pearl oysters <i>Pinctada maxima</i> from northern Australia</p> <p>The pearl oyster industry is one of Australia's most valuable and iconic fisheries, creating significant economic and employment opportunities across Northern Australia. However, as with any major animal production industry, health issues are persistent obstacles inhibiting productivity. Since 2006, the pearl oyster (<i>Pinctada maxima</i>) farming industry in Western Australian has been hampered by health and productivity issues with no identified cause(s).</p> <p>This project aims to characterise active microorganisms (fungus, bacteria, virus) in moribund oysters in order to understand which ones are associated with health issues. Our laboratory has collected unique samples since June 2017 from moribund and healthy adult and spat pearl oysters, which will be used in this study. This molecular work will involve next-generation sequencing (extraction of nucleic acid, library preparation, etc.) and bioinformatics analysis.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Dr Cecile Dang cecile.dang@dpird.wa.gov.au</p> <p>Prof Jacqui Batley Jacqueline.batley@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Pathogenicity of Vibrio spp. in pearl oysters Pinctada maxima from northern Australia</p> <p>The pearl oyster industry is one of Australia's most valuable and iconic fisheries, creating significant economic and employment opportunities across Northern Australia. However, as with any major animal production industry, health issues are persistent obstacles inhibiting productivity. Since 2006, the pearl oyster (<i>Pinctada maxima</i>) farming industry in Western Australian has been hampered by health and productivity issues with no identified cause(s).</p> <p>Bacteria belonging to <i>Vibrio alginolyticus</i> clade have been associated with moribund oysters and can harbour plasmids, which contain virulence genes and may be responsible for the pathogenicity of the bacteria. This project proposes to characterise the virulence factors of <i>Vibrio alginolyticus</i> and assess which environmental factors enhance the pathogenicity. This work will involve bacteriology (culture techniques), molecular biology (qPCR and next-generation sequencing), and microscopy techniques.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Harriet Davies harriet.davies@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Tim Langlois tim.langlois@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Developing Sea Country management protocols through combining traditional ecological knowledge of Indigenous Australians and Western Science.</p> <p>Indigenous Australians have a profound connection to nature and a cultural obligation to take care of Country. As a result, Indigenous people have been sustainably managing their marine estates for millennia. There is an increasing interest in documenting and embedding traditional knowledge into marine management and monitoring yet little work has been done in developing methods and protocols to achieve these goals. This project will build upon participatory mapping methods to document knowledge of senior knowledge holders to help inform marine park and fisheries management in Western Australia.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Raphael Didham raphael.didham@csiro.au, raphael.didham@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Mariana Campos mariana.campos@csiro.au</p> <p>Bruce Webber bruce.webber@csiro.au bruce.webber@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>How do plant-insect interactions differ between native and introduced ranges?</p> <p>When plant species are introduced to new environments, this disrupts its ecological interactions. Ecological interactions between species are the glue that holds ecosystems together, but equally, novel interactions can threaten ecosystem resilience. Projects are available examining the insect communities associated with threatening weeds in Australia, both in their native and introduced range, including fieldwork across WA.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Prof Michael Douglas michael.douglas@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Leah Beesley leah.beesley@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Ms Jen Middleton jen.middleton@research.uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Leaf litter breakdown in a tropical northern river and/or a southern river</p> <p>Forested streams derive much of their energy from the breakdown of terrestrial leaves that fall or are washed in. Leaves are colonised by bacteria and fungi and are then eaten by macroinvertebrates (i.e., shredders). In Australia, the breakdown of native leaves (i.e. eucalypts) is typically slow because of their tough waxy coating, low nutrient content, and their propensity to leach noxious compounds (e.g. polyphenols). Leaf breakdown may be faster in northern Australia because there are many deciduous and brevi-deciduous native plants which have softer more palatable leaves. Relatively few studies have examined leaf breakdown in western Australia. This study will describe the nutrient profile and breakdown of a range of native and non-native plant species in single and mixed-leaf packs. Fluorescent in-situ hybridisation will be used to characterise bacterial and fungal communities, and stable isotopic analysis will be used to investigate the incorporation of leaf carbon into the aquatic food web. The study will be conducted in Litchfield National Park, Northern Territory and possibly also in a southern River. The project is suitable for a student who is available for field work during the northern dry season (June-Sep.).</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>

<p>Prof Michael Douglas michael.douglas@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Leah Beesley leah.beesley@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Caroline Canham caroline.canham@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Does riparian shading increase invertebrate cyst survival in floodplain wetlands? A study on the Fitzroy River, Kimberley</p> <p>Floodplain habitats are often important nursery habitats for riverine fish, because they contain few fish predators and support a high abundance of suitable food. Microcrustaceans are important food for fish larvae and they can survive dry periods on floodplains by creating dormant cysts that sit in the soil. Floodplain trees that fringe floodplain creeks and wetlands provide shade to the soil and can promote the survival of microcrustacean cysts. Trees and the organic matter they deposit (leaves, bark) may also create shade and promote water retention providing an improved microclimate that may assist cysts. This study investigates the factors that shape the invertebrate cyst seed bank of the floodplain of the lower Fitzroy River. The study is specifically interested in whether vegetation promotes seed bank diversity by creating a better microclimate (temperature, shading) or whether the seed bank is linked to low lying areas on the floodplain, especially those close to refuge pools?</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Prof Michael Douglas michael.douglas@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Leah Beesley leah.beesley@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Ms Jen Middleton jen.middleton@research.edu.au</p>	<p>How is urbanisation altering the in-stream food web?</p> <p>Urbanisation impacts streams in many ways. Scouring flows erode banks and wash away instream habitat including leaves. Increased light, elevated water temperature and nutrients promote algal growth. These changes can shift the stream food web from a leaf-litter driven system to one dominated by algae. The extent to which the system is able to process this food will be determined by the types of invertebrates present and the extent to which they are able to switch food resources. If animals are not able to consume the algae it can build up and become a nuisance. This study will work across a gradient of urbanisation and use stable isotopes as tracers to investigate the source of energy (leaf litter, algae) supporting the food web. It will also use artificial substrates to quantify benthic algal growth and the ability of the invertebrate community to graze it. This knowledge will reveal the resilience of the stream invertebrate community to urbanisation and will identify species playing critical functional roles.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Prof Samantha Setterfield samantha.setterfield@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Caroline Canham caroline.canham@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Leah Beesley leah.beesley@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Investigating the thermal benefits of riparian vegetation along Perth's urban waterways</p> <p>Riparian vegetation is the term used to describe the plants that fringe streams and rivers. This vegetation plays many important ecological roles. One important role is shading the waterway and the adjacent land. In Perth, little is known about which trees and shrubs provide the best shading. We also know little about the density of planting needed to keep soil and water cool. This study will use field data collection to investigate the link between plant attributes (leaf area index, canopy cover, canopy height etc) and the thermal conditions of riparian soils and stream water. The findings will assist local government and landcare groups to design vegetation guidelines. This project is suitable for a student with a mid-year start that is able to conduct field work over the perth summer.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Prof Dave Edwards dave.edwards@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Elizabeth Sinclair elizabeth.sinclair@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Philipp Bayer philipp.bayer@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Comparative Genomics of Seagrass</p> <p>Comparative genomics provide a powerful tool to study evolution. Marine plants, the seagrasses, are an extremely old polyphyletic group representing multiple 'return to sea' events. These independent events resulted in habitat-driven solutions to adaptation to a marine environment. A recent genome comparison among two seagrass species provided strong evidence for convergent evolution. This project will compare multiple seagrass genomes to further explore their evolution and to identify genes associated with stress responses and extreme climate events. Candidates are expected to have an understanding of Linux.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Prof Dave Edwards Dave.Edwards@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Applied bioinformatics</p> <p>Data is increasingly abundant in biology, and being able to analyse data is fundamental to asking biological questions. The applied bioinformatics group at UWA is a dedicated computational group asking biological questions using big data and high performance computing. Projects range from genome and pangenome assembly and annotation, population analysis, trait association, evolutionary studies and crop improvement, predominantly using wild plant and crop species, though also venturing into animal and even human genomics. Candidates are expected to have a good understanding of biology and use of Linux and will receive training in the use of high performance computing in biology. Please contact Dave Edwards to discuss specific opportunities.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>

<p>Prof Jon Evans, jonathan.evans@uwa.edu.au Dr Rowan Lymbery rowan.lymbery@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Testing Bateman curves on broadcast spawning marine invertebrates: Sexual selection can be viewed as the ultimate scientific paradigm; given certain expectations about patterns of reproductive investment (males typically invest less per reproductive event than females), we expect sexual selection to target males more strongly than females. The origins of the sexual selection paradigm can be found in Angus Bateman's classic studies of fruit flies, which showed that the relationship between reproductive success and the number of mates differed between the sexes, which Bateman attributed to the fact that female fertility is limited by egg production while males are rarely limited by the ability to produce sperm. However, theoretical models challenge these predictions for marine broadcast spawners, where sperm limitation is common and females likely compete for fertilisation opportunities. This project will provide a timely and critical re-evaluation of Bateman's principles using a series of innovative experimental approaches on broadcast spawning invertebrates (either sea urchins or mussels).</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Prof Jon Evans, jonathan.evans@uwa.edu.au Dr Rowan Lymbery rowan.lymbery@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Egg competition in a broadcast spawning marine invertebrate: When we think about sexual selection, and particularly competition among gametes from different individuals for fertilization opportunities, we rarely if ever think about 'egg competition'. Yet both theory and empirical data strongly support the idea that egg competition should be a pervasive evolutionary force in the sea, where gametes from both sexes are often limiting and eggs may need to compete to ensure that they are fertilized. This project is designed to fill a critical gap in our knowledge of sexual selection in marine invertebrates, many of which exhibit the ancestral mating strategy of broadcast spawning (releasing both sperm and eggs for external fertilization). The results from this study, performed on the mussel <i>Mytilus galloprovincialis</i>, will therefore also have far-reaching implications for sexual selection in more 'familiar' mating systems, where most studies of gamete ('sperm') competition have focused.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Assoc/Prof Patrick Finnegan patrick.finnegan@uwa.edu.au E/Prof Hans Lambers hans.lambers@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Nutrient acquisition in <i>Hakea prostrata</i> (Proteaceae) The Proteaceae (<i>banksia</i>, <i>grevillea</i>, etc.) are incredibly well adapted to the nutrient poor soils of Western Australia. Our model plant is <i>Hakea prostrata</i> (Proteaceae), a plant that grows on some of the poorest soils in the world. We are identifying the genes that control the up-take and transport of the essential nutrients phosphorus and nitrogen around <i>Hakea prostrata</i> and are involved in its profound nutrient use efficiency. We are particularly interested in exploring the trait of nitrate restraint, which we recently discovered in <i>H. prostrata</i>. Unlike other plants, <i>H. prostrata</i> only imports the amount of nitrate it needs to support growth. Other plants store excess nitrate in the vacuole. We are interested to learn whether convergent evolution has provided other species with nitrate restraint in our nutrient impoverished environment. Depending on the direction you decide to take, you will conduct plant ecophysiological and physiological experiments and perhaps make use of our in-house <i>Hakea prostrata</i> genome sequence and RNAseq data, supplemented with your own quantitative PCR results.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Assoc/Prof Patrick Finnegan patrick.finnegan@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Leaf functional traits in Proteaceae from southern China The Proteaceae (<i>banksia</i>, <i>grevillea</i>, etc.) are considered to be a southern hemisphere plant family. Yet, two genera, <i>Helicia</i> and <i>Heliciopsis</i>, are found in Asia. In fact, <i>Helicia</i> are found as far north as southern Japan. How did they get there? What traits allowed these plants to prosper progressively through the tropics, sub-tropics and into the temperate regions of Asia? Perhaps leaf functional traits which can give insights into traits such as plant water relations and photosynthetic capacity can give us some clues. You will work with micrographs of leaves from five species of Proteaceae from southern China to compare leaf functional traits from these species with those of other species of Proteaceae and other species from southern China.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>E/Prof Hans Lambers hans.lambers@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Assoc/Prof Patrick Finnegan patrick.finnegan@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Kosala Ranathunge kosala.ranathunge@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Why do Fabaceae, Myrtaceae and Proteaceae co-dominate on the most nutrient impoverished soils on earth? The soils of southwestern Australia are among some of the oldest and most nutrient impoverished soils on earth. They support a hyper-diverse flora that is dominated by species from three families - Fabaceae, Myrtaceae and Proteaceae. We know much about the specific adaptations that allow the Proteaceae to live on these soils, such as cluster roots that mobilise phosphate, highly proficient phosphorus remobilisation from leaves and roots, low levels of ribosomal RNA and phospholipids in leaves, delayed greening in young leaves, preferential allocation of phosphorus to photosynthetic cells, among others. By comparison, we know very little about the adaptations that allow Fabaceae and Myrtaceae to co-dominate. This project will focus on plants in Alison Baird Reserve in Perth to investigate the ecophysiological and physiological adaptations in leaves and roots that allow members of these families to live in nutrient poor environments.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Matthew Fraser matthew.fraser@uwa.edu.au, Belinda Martin belinda.martin@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Saving our seagrass meadows with cutting-edge technology in environmental genomics. Coastal ecosystems in Western Australia are facing a time of unprecedented pressures from a combination of population growth and climate change. This project will deliver impactful and innovative research in the field of environmental genomics that will increase the resolution and scale of the understanding of the processes and environmental drivers of habitat change across WA coastal systems.</p> <p>This project will involve sampling across several sites along the WA coastline, with a specific emphasis on Gathaagudu (Shark Bay), a World Heritage Site with important Traditional Owner, fisheries, and biodiversity significance that is under marked pressure from climate change.</p>	<p>Masters PhD</p>
<p>Pauline Grierson Pauline.Grierson@uwa.edu.au, Svenja Tulipani (DWER) Greg Skrzypek Grzegorz.Skrzypek@uwa.edu.au Brad Degens (DWER)</p>	<p>Managing excess nutrients in aquatic ecosystems - understanding interactions between dissolved organic matter and phosphorus-binding clays. This research project will compare DOM adsorption by Phoslock® and HT-clay and investigate how this varies across a range of environmental conditions (e.g. salinity and P concentrations). The project will include a range of lab experiments to elucidate if particular types of DOM are preferentially retained by the clays. Outcomes from the project will help optimise both the efficacy of clay applications and also inform understanding of any potential environmental impacts of clay treatment on waterways. The project is supported by DWER will also offer the opportunity to experience fieldwork for the collection of water samples in the Mandurah region.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Cyril C. Grueter cyril.grueter@uwa.edu.au Prof Leigh Simmons leigh.simmons@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Sexual selection in action: risk taking in humans Sexual selection theory predicts that males will be more prone to taking risks than females and that males use risk taking as a mate advertisement strategy. These predictions can be tested by using everyday situations such as crossing a busy road. The attractiveness of physical risk taking in potential mates has received relatively little empirical attention, but can be assessed using questionnaire data.</p>	<p>Honours</p>
<p>Dr Patrick Hayes patrick.hayes@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Plants are never at rest - switching from photosynthesis during the day to respiration at night The daily switching from photosynthesis during the day to respiration at night changes many cellular processes and consequently changes how nutrients are invested within leaves over a single day. A greater control over how resources are invested may improve whole-plant efficiency and if this can be applied to crop species then it can reduce fertiliser demand in agriculture. This project will focus on the essential plant nutrient phosphorus, as it is intrinsically involved with both photosynthesis and respiration and is a major component of fertilisers. We will investigate how the concentration of different forms phosphorus change within leaves over a 24-hour period and will compare this between slow-growing but efficient native species and faster-growing, less efficient species, both native species and crops. This project will involve both field and glasshouse work.</p>	<p>Honours</p>

<p>Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Heart rate monitoring of aquatic invertebrates Heart rate is well known as an indicator of physiological 'state', activity and stress in animals such as mammals, including humans. Heart rate varies similarly in invertebrates such as crabs and molluscs, providing a method to monitor the animals to determine their state of physiological stress (e.g. in response to pollutants), to optimise husbandry for welfare reasons, or to maximise growth rates in aquaculture. We have constructed a small electronic package comprising an infrared (IR) light emitting diode (LED) and IR detector that can be mounted on the shell of a mollusc or carapace of a crab and used to monitor heart rate with minimal impact on the animal. We will use this to measure the affect of physico-chemical environmental conditions such as dissolved oxygen tension, temperature, and pH on aquatic invertebrates including farmed animals such as abalone and marron. We will also investigate heart rate in the context of marine invertebrates with complex behavioural repertoires and/or that live in environmentally highly varying conditions (e.g. fiddler crabs).</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Comparative colour vision and spatial vision in ants Ants have some of the smallest brains in the animal kingdom, yet they show a wide range of interesting behaviours, many of them visually driven. Their small size and limited head and eye space has forced them to optimise their visual system in very distinct ways. We have recently shown that one of the Australian bull ants, a species exclusively active in the dark of the night, has trichromatic colour vision like humans. As this is the first ant that has been shown to have more than two spectral photoreceptor types, this project will compare ants from different phylogenetic branches in order to understand the evolution of colour vision and spatial vision in ants in general. This project runs in collaboration with researchers from Macquarie University and will use a range of complementary techniques (physiology, behaviour and possibly molecular biology).</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>How fiddler crabs see the world This project aims to understand how animals, in particular fiddler crabs, see their world. Using a mix of behavioural, physiological and anatomical experiments, we seek to understand how these animals see colours, patterns and polarisation, and how these visual capabilities influence how these crabs interact with their environment, their predators and conspecifics. Experiments will be conducted using our resident UWA fiddler crab colony, housed in a 4 m² fully-functional artificial mudflat. You will discover how sensory information underpins animal behaviour, learn how to probe the visual capabilities of animals and, depending on your interests and abilities, learn different combinations of behavioural and physiological and possibly genetic techniques. Come and talk to me about the many questions we would like to answer in this context.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Zahra Bagheri zahra.bagheri@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>The role of polarisation in navigation Polarisation vision is used by a variety of species in many important tasks, including navigation and orientation, communication and signalling, and as a possible substitute for colour vision. Fiddler crabs possess the anatomical structures necessary to detect polarised light, and occupy environments rich in polarisation cues. Unlike many insects, however, polarisation vision is not confined to the dorsal part of the eye, but crabs have full field polarisation vision. However, it is unknown whether they can use polarisation to find their direction back home. The aim of this project is to investigate the role of polarisation vision in path integration and homing in fiddler crabs using a modified polarisation monitor in an artificial mudflat. You will learn how animals use vision to navigate and how to "ask" animals what information they use to make important decision by performing well balanced experiments in a realistic environment.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Escape responses in fiddler crabs How do animals decide when to escape from an approaching predator? We are trying to understand the sensory information animals underlying this decision. The results will tell us how animals measure risk and how they manage to avoid being eaten while still being able to feed and find mates. Fiddler crabs are highly visual animals that live under constant threat of predation from birds. Field experiments have shown that the crabs are not able to measure a predator's distance or their direction of movement – a problem they share with many other small animals. You will bring fiddler crabs into the laboratory and their escape decisions will be tested in our artificial mudflat (at UWA) and/or on a custom made treadmill controlled conditions. Depending on your interests, you can use a combination of behavioural and physiological measurements to understand the mechanisms underlying the crab's escape behaviour.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Zahra Bagheri zahra.bagheri@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>The role of polarisation in navigation Polarisation vision is used by a variety of species in many important tasks, including navigation and orientation, communication and signalling, and as a possible substitute for colour vision. Fiddler crabs possess the anatomical structures necessary to detect polarised light, and occupy environments rich in polarisation cues. Unlike many insects, however, polarisation vision is not confined to the dorsal part of the eye, but crabs have full field polarisation vision. However, it is unknown whether they can use polarisation to find their direction back home. The aim of this project is to investigate the role of polarisation vision in path integration and homing in fiddler crabs using a modified polarisation monitor in an artificial mudflat. You will learn how animals use vision to navigate and how to "ask" animals what information they use to make important decision by performing well balanced experiments in a realistic environment.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Escape responses in fiddler crabs How do animals decide when to escape from an approaching predator? We are trying to understand the sensory information animals underlying this decision. The results will tell us how animals measure risk and how they manage to avoid being eaten while still being able to feed and find mates. Fiddler crabs are highly visual animals that live under constant threat of predation from birds. Field experiments have shown that the crabs are not able to measure a predator's distance or their direction of movement – a problem they share with many other small animals. You will bring fiddler crabs into the laboratory and their escape decisions will be tested in our artificial mudflat (at UWA) and/or on a custom made treadmill controlled conditions. Depending on your interests, you can use a combination of behavioural and physiological measurements to understand the mechanisms underlying the crab's escape behaviour.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Karen Osborn osbornk@si.edu</p> <p>Dr Zahra Bagheri zahra.bagheri@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Vision in deep sea animals amphipods, small crustaceans that live in the deep, open ocean worldwide, have some of the most fascinating eyes seen in animals. In some species the eye accounts for up to 30% of the body, others have replicated their eyes, resulting in multiple eye pairs. Using our newly developed micro-CT-based technique, you will reconstruct the detailed structure of the compound eyes of representative hyperiids. You will then use that data to predict what these animals can see and which behavioural tasks have most likely driven the evolution of their eyes. There are projects here for at least three students - any number eye forms could be studied in detail, several eye forms could be compared, or you could investigate the steps leading to one of the more extreme eye forms, such as replicated eye pairs. You will work in a multidisciplinary team that is trying to understand what life in the largest habitat on earth (the midwater) is like in order to better understand the open ocean. You will learn about vision, phylogenetics and how to relate the structure of animal eyes and brains to their behaviour.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>

<p>Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Zahra Bagheri zahra.bagheri@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Sampling the visual world Visual systems are under strong selection pressure because they are often crucial in guiding the behaviour of animals. Physical constraints mean that an eye of a given size cannot simultaneously maximise both its resolution and sensitivity while maintaining the extent of its visual field. As a consequence, most eyes show distinct regional differences in how they allocate resolution and sensitivity. A new method, based on micro-CT, we have developed, predicts that fiddler crabs, have two parallel streaks of high resolution located just above and below the visual horizon. This is in stark contrast to previous results that such streaks of high resolution, which are very common in flat-world inhabitants, are centred on the horizon. We would like to confirm this exciting result with physiological recordings. You will learn how to measure the visual resolution of fiddler crab in different parts of the eye, using electrical recordings from the surface of the eye.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Zahra Bagheri zahra.bagheri@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Selective attention in the context of escape Risk assessment and decision-making is an essential process for animal survival. In natural environments, animals are constantly exposed to several threatening stimuli at any one time. It is not clear how animals make escape decisions in these situations. Do animals identify the most dangerous threat and organize their escape accordingly? Or do they try to escape from all threatening stimuli at the same time? To answer these questions, this project aims to study fiddler crabs escape response to multiple simultaneous threats. The study will test the effect of different stimulus characteristics such as visibility and speed on the crabs' risk assessment and decision-making process. The results will not only improve our understanding of how animals escape predators, but may also contribute to technologies such as robotic rescue.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Tim Langlois tim.langlois@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Taking the pulse of crustaceans – monitoring heart rate in response to environmental changes Non-invasive measurements of physiological parameters can provide important insights into how short or long-term environmental changes impact on the health of species, populations, or individuals. The focus of this project is to test whether it is possible to use a small-scale optical heart rate monitor to understand (1) the impact of changes in environmental conditions such as temperature, water salinity and PH, or (2) stress - brought about by handling, transportation or exposure to dummy predators on the heart rate of either fiddler crabs or western rock lobsters. The outcomes of the study will help improve animal husbandry and transportation (rock lobster) or aid our understanding of how species respond behaviourally and physiologically to environmental stressors (fiddler crabs).</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Renae Hovey renae.hovey@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Harriet Paterson harriet.paterson@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Distribution of plastics in southern estuarine ecosystems, Western Australia The impact plastic is having on the marine environment is rapidly becoming the issue of the millennium. It has negative impacts on biology and degrades the visible qualities of the ocean and the coast line. The south coast of Western Australia can be considered relatively pristine yet plastic has been found in unpopulated areas. We are offering 4 projects that investigate plastic distribution and ecological impacts in estuarine ecosystems which sit at the interface between land and sea.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Prof Simon Jarman simon.jarman@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Comparing and modeling patterns of biodiversity Distributions of species composition and abundance can be modeled by a range of mathematical distributions. Different types of community are better described by some models than others. The aim of this project is to identify differences in the ability of mathematical predictions of species distribution to model observed biodiversity. The student will gather existing community biodiversity data from existing papers with a special focus on those that use DNA metabarcoding methods to describe biodiversity. They will then fit different models to the data under a range of parameters to determine the appropriate use of biodiversity models for environmental DNA metabarcoding analysis in particular and community types in general. The candidate should have good data analysis and scripting skills.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Prof Simon Jarman simon.jarman@uwa.edu.au Dr Andrew Bissett andrew.bissett@csiro.au</p>	<p>How many species of Fungi are there in Australian soils? Soil fungi are critical for crop production and maintaining the diversity of native species. Australia has a great range of soil types and vegetation types that make it one of the most biodiverse continents for most groups surveyed so far, such as plants and animals. Fungi are more difficult to study because there are fewer taxonomic experts trained in researching them and there are many cryptic species. In this project, DNA sequence data from the CSIRO's national fungal collection survey will be used to estimate species diversity in samples from across the country. Analysis of species accumulation and cross-site occurrence will be used to estimate the number of species of Fungi in Australia. The candidate should have good data analysis and programming/scripting skills in R, Python or a similar language.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Jennifer Kelley jennifer.kelley@uwa.edu.au Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Social behaviour and predation risk in freshwater fishes Detecting and avoiding predators is an essential part of life for almost all animals. Animals make the decision of when to respond to an approaching predator based on the perceived level of risk and factors such as the presence of other group members. This project uses a native freshwater fish, the western rainbowfish (<i>Melanotaenia australis</i>), to determine whether an individual's response to a simulated threat depends on the reactions of other members of the shoal. The work will contribute towards our understanding of how information about predation risk is transmitted among members of a social group. This project will be most suited to students interested in predator-prey interactions and grouping dynamics in animals.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Jennifer Kelley jennifer.kelley@uwa.edu.au Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Perception of colour patterns in freshwater fishes Animal colour patterns (e.g. spots, stripes) are often used to thwart predators, by providing misleading information about a prey's size, shape and body movements. Although these patterns increase a prey's chance of survival, it is not clear how the colouration interferes with the predator's perceptual mechanisms to prevent attack. This project will use western rainbowfish (<i>Melanotaenia australis</i>) as predators to understand whether patterning can interfere with perception of prey shape, depth and distance from the viewer. The work will contribute towards our understanding of the function of colouration in animals and will be of particular interest to students interested in animal vision and visual perception.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Jennifer Kelley jennifer.kelley@uwa.edu.au Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Detection of prey by fish predators Predation risk is one of the most important factors affecting the behaviour and survival of prey animals. However, we know surprisingly little about the factors that influence the foraging behaviour of predators. The likelihood of a prey being detected depends on the colouration of the prey relative to the background. However, backgrounds can be 'noisy', consisting of complex colours and patterns, which can present a significant challenge for predators. To avoid issues of animal ethics, this project will use live fish as predators and virtual prey to examine the effect of background complexity of visual detection. The work will increase our understanding of the role of vision and colouration in predator-prey interactions.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Jennifer Kelley jennifer.kelley@uwa.edu.au Assoc Prof Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Decision-making and predator evasion in wild damselfish shoals One of the main advantages of group living is a reduction in the risk of predation due to effects such as risk dilution and predator confusion. As a result, animals in smaller groups tend to display stronger antipredator responses than those in larger groups. However, defensive strategies also depend on other factors, such as nearest-neighbour distance and the distance to shelter. This project will investigate how shoals of wild damselfish respond to a looming visual threat (computer-simulated object approach) depending on the social organisation (e.g. distance and orientation of nearest-neighbour) and the size of the shoal.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Jennifer Kelley jennifer.kelley@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>3D camouflage in artificial moths. Predators and prey interact in a 3D world, but few studies have considered whether visual depth cues play a role in camouflage. For example, butterflies and moths often have wing patterning that produces the illusion of 3D form, but it is not clear if these patterns function for camouflage. This study will investigate the effect of 3D background textures on the success of different 3D camouflage strategies using wild birds as predators and artificial patterned 'moth' targets. The project will involve fieldwork in local woodlands and will involve photography and image editing techniques.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>

<p>Prof Gary Kendrick gary.kendrick@uwa.edu.au Dr Elizabeth Sinclair elizabeth.sinclair@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Saving seagrass from climate change. This project will address fitness in Posidonia seagrass meadows and how it may be improved through genetic connectivity. This research will target range edge seagrass meadows, with a focus on the World Heritage site Shark Bay. There are several opportunities to develop projects around genomic diversity, genetic regulation of flowering, and testing outcrossing in range edge populations.</p>	<p>Masters PhD</p>
<p>Jason Kennington jason.kennington@uwa.edu.au Joseph Tomkins joseph.tomkins@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>We have a number of project ideas relating to the evolutionary genetics of sexual selection. Primarily we are interested in separating the effects of different bouts of sexual selection and identifying their effects on fitness and the genome. The questions are directly relevant to Evolutionary genetics, sexual selection but also conservation and the management of species in captivity. We have a recently funded ARC discovery project and we are seeking students to help realise the objectives of this research. The main task is understanding the difference between the outcomes of intrasexual and intersexual selection. This will involve mating trials, quantification of sexual selection and artificial selection for 'studs' and 'duds' (e.g. Dugand et al 2018,2019). These projects are focussed on Drosophila melanogaster.</p> <p>Topics:</p> <p>1) Separating male competition and female choice. 2) Separating the effects of pre and postcopulatory sexual selection. 3) Testing the resurgence of Lamarck's hypothesis for the inheritance of environmentally induced variation. 4) Manipulating the costs of male display.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Jason Kennington jason.kennington@uwa.edu.au Rodney Duffy (DPIRD)</p>	<p>Assessing stock structure in nearshore and estuarine finfish. The catch of nearshore and estuarine finfish from commercial and recreational fisheries in Western Australia is composed of many different species from distinct populations and sub-populations. Management of these stocks, and the definition of what constitutes a stock, is based on information related to movement, biology and existing fisheries management practices. Traditionally, a number of different techniques have been used to identify stocks, from tagging studies to determine movement and mixing, to various genetic methods. Whilst effective, these methods can prove costly and time consuming, and can lack fine scale resolution. Often these investigations have focussed on species of high value or high abundance caught within a single, or small number of fisheries. Species that are caught by many fisheries, but that don't dominate the catch of any, have been forgotten, despite the overall catch of these species being significant. To address this shortfall, we are interested in understanding stock structure of three finfish species: sea mullet (Mugil cephalus), yelloweye mullet (Aldrichetta forsteri) and tailor (Pomatomus saltatrix) using modern, cost effective techniques (SNPs), that offer fine scale resolution to understand stock structure. The outcome of this work will be of direct relevance to fisheries management within Western Australia.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>

<p>Jason Kennington jason.kennington@uwa.edu.au Jason How (DPIRD) Simon de Lestang (DPIRD).</p>	<p>Assessing stock structure in deep sea crabs. Effective management of commercial fisheries requires an accurate delineation of self-sustaining subpopulations or stocks. When information on stock structure is lacking or based on arbitrary anthropogenic boundaries, stocks are susceptible to overexploitation. This can lead to a collapse of the exploited stocks, which may take considerable time to recover. The recent stock assessment of crystal crab in the SCCMF indicated an unacceptable level of stock depletion. Catches in this area have been highly cyclical unlike those on the west coast. This pattern is very similar to that of rock lobster and blue swimmer crab, whereby the main spawning stock resides on the west coast with large and consistent catches, while those on the south coast are sporadic with recruitment only flowing down in strong Leeuwin Current years. These south coast areas are considered a resource sink. Irrespective of the similarities, the south coast deep-sea crab fisheries are still managed conservatively under the assumption of self-recruiting (they are not treated as sink populations). Determination of the recruitment linkages between the west and south coast fisheries will have marked implications on the management arrangement required for both fisheries. Similarly, the WCDSCMF, which retains catch predominantly from 23-29°S, is currently managed as a single stock. However, the boundaries of the fishery extend well beyond this range, and with increasing interest in expanding the fishery, understanding any possible genetic sub-structuring within the fishery is critical to ongoing stock assessment and management. The aim of this project will be to assess stock structure in both species using genetic data generated using a genotype-by-sequencing approach.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Prof Hans Lambers hans.lambers@uwa.edu.au Asst/Prof Matthias Leopold matthias.leopold@uwa.edu.au Dr Kosala Ranathunge kosala.ranathunge@uwa.edu.au Dr Hongtao Zhong hongtao.zhong@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Phytogeography of Declared Rare Flora species at Great Brixton Street Wetland or Alison Baird Reserve? The Great Brixton Street Wetland, located in the Perth metropolitan, however harbors an extraordinary high biodiversity within the Swan Coastal Plain. The long-term interactions between alluvial/colluvial inputs from Darling Range on the east and coast sand dune development from the west have given this seasonal wetland area a unique combination of geography and hydrology. These significantly contribute to the existence of such biodiversity, and provide a fortunate ecological niche for many rare flora species. Some species only restricted to certain areas, but why? The potential Honours or Masters project are aimed to answer this. Field and glasshouse experiments will be conducted to investigate the distribution of selected rare flora species in relation to soil and water resources.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Tim Langlois tim.langlois@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Fish-habitat associations in the nearshore environment of Western Australia Strong and predictable relationships of fishes with seabed habitats, in conjunction with rapid advances in acoustic seabed mapping capabilities, result in great potential for using habitats as proxies or 'surrogates' to predict species distribution and abundance patterns at broad regional scales. An unbaited stereo-camera system will be used to assess different nearshore habitats (e.g. macroalgae beds, seagrass meadows, sand, etc) and quantify fish assemblages at 12 sites along the temperate coast of western WA. Fish and habitat associations will be evaluated, at different spatial scales and spatial prediction of key fish species and fish assemblages will be produced.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Tim Langlois, tim.langlois@uwa.edu.au Shaun Wilson shaun.wilson@dbca.wa.gov.au Thomas Holmes thomas.holmes@dbca.wa.gov.au</p>	<p>What drives change in size spectra of fish assemblages? The structure of fish assemblages is influenced by both fishing pressure and habitat. Increased fishing typically removes large predatory species and allows proliferation of smaller bodied fish, whilst changes in structural complexity alter availability of refuge space for different sized fish. Consequently, the size distribution of fish assemblages can be linked to changes in both fishing pressure and habitat. On coral reefs habitat structure and complexity is often governed by the size and composition of the coral colonies which is also indicative of reef status with respect to disturbance history. This project will use information from stereo video to assess how the size distribution of fish and coral assemblages relate to each other. Using surveys from fished and unfished reefs and across reefs with different coral communities, the project will also explore the relative importance of fishing and habitat on the size distribution of fish.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>

<p>Dr Tim Langlois, tim.langlois@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr. Matt Navarro matthew.navarro@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr. Jacquomo Monk jacquomo.monk@utas.edu.au</p>	<p>Monitoring highly targeted mesophotic fish populations: optimising stereo-video monitoring of large offshore no-take marine reserves Large offshore no-take marine reserves have recently been created around Australia and New Zealand. This project will involve field work to collect baited remote stereo-video samples within no-take areas within the Ningaloo and South-west Capes region. Existing data sets will be provided from New Zealand. This project will use novel methods of power analysis to design optimal future monitoring plans to detect differences in highly targeted mesophotic grouper populations (e.g. hāpuku <i>Polyprion oxygeneios</i>) that may occur after the cessation of fishing. The student will develop skills in field work and novel statistical analyses applicable to marine park monitoring design.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Craig Lawrence craig.lawrence@dpiird.wa.gov.au</p> <p>Dr Justin Blythe justin.blhythe@watercorporation.com.au</p> <p>Assoc Prof Julian Partridge julian.partridge@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Prof Phil Vercoe philip.vercoe@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Using fish as biosentinels to protect our drinking water supply This is a collaborative project between UWA, DPIRD and Water Corporation to trial a biological-based early warning monitoring system which uses fish as bioindicators of water quality. The system employs video surveillance together with data analyses to monitor changes in fish behaviour in response to varying water quality conditions. In this project anaesthesia will be used to mimic changes in fish behaviour due to either accidental (i.e. chemical spill) or intentional (i.e. terrorism) contamination (UWA AEC approval has already been obtained for this project). This project will result in an early warning system to protect Perth's drinking water supplies.</p>	<p>Honours</p>
<p>Dr Samuel Lymbery, samuel.lymbery@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Prof Raphael Didham raphael.didham@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>What determines the outcome of battles between native and invasive ants? Invasive ants are one of the most damaging groups of pest animals globally, and have a devastating effect on native species and ecosystems, as well as draining national economies of billions of dollars per year. We are exploring the factors that make invasive ants so ecologically dominant, and there are a number of possible projects that honours or masters students could pursue within this framework. For example, invasive ants are typically individually small but numerically abundant, and rely on outnumbering their native opponents at contests for resources. The complexity of the habitat in which these contests occur should affect the ability of invasives to capitalise on this numerical advantage. An honours or masters student could test this by manipulating the competitive arena in an experimental setting. We also welcome any input from potential students with their own ideas about projects to pursue within the general area of invasive ant ecology/behaviour.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Samuel Lymbery, samuel.lymbery@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>A/Prof Joseph Tomkins joseph.tomkins@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Fighting with my family: Kin selection and alternative reproductive tactics Male dimorphism usually reflects alternative reproductive tactics among males: the large male morphs typically guard females or reproductive territories and have more elaborate weaponry; the small male morphs sneak copulations and have reduced weaponry. In the bulb mite <i>Rhizoglyphus echinopus</i>, fighters have a thick and sharp pair of legs and kill rival males, whereas scramblers search for unguarded females. We would like to use this mite to investigate the so far unexplored question of how relatedness and kin structure influence this expression of alternative reproductive tactics. Because relatives share genes with each other, and can pass on those genes by helping each other to reproduce, behaviour and aggression often depends on the relatedness of competitors (this force is known in biology as kin selection). Alternative reproductive tactics, and the differential expression of weaponry, offer a fascinating testing ground for kin selection theory because different tactics inflict vastly different costs on competitors. As the effect of kin selection on alternative reproductive tactics has so far been ignored, any result here would represent an important advance in evolutionary biology. There are a number of experimental approaches which honours or masters students could pursue here, building on our existing work in this area.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Prof Jessica Meeuwig jessica.meeuwig@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Changes in reef fish assemblages at the Recherche Archipelago We have 3 surveys through time of the fish assemblages at the Recherche Archipelago (Esperance) and have collected new data (2021) in this region. This project will involve (1) potential field work to Recherche in Sept 2021, (2) image analysis of the April 2021 survey and (3) statistical analysis of the 2009, 2019, 2021 surveys in order to better understand spatial and temporal variability in fish assemblages. This analysis will feed directly into the current WA State government marine park planning process</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Prof Jessica Meeuwig jessica.meeuwig@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Changes in pelagic fish assemblages at the Ningaloo Marine Park We have 3 surveys through time of the fish assemblages at the Ningaloo Marine Park and have the opportunity to collect additional data in August 2021. This project will involve (1) field work at Ningaloo in August 2021, (2) image analysis of the August 2021 survey and (3) statistical analysis of the time series data in order to better understand temporal variability in pelagic fish assemblages. This analysis will feed directly into the current Australian Marine Park's needs to develop monitoring programs for its parks.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Matt Navarro, matthew.navarro@uwa.edu.au Dr Tim Langlois tim.langlois@uwa.edu.au Dr Dave Fairclough David.Fairclough@fish.wa.gov.au</p>	<p>Designing recreational fishing policies using representative fisher preferences Whilst recreational fishing policies are designed to meet biological based management objectives, fishers preferences are also incorporated into these decisions. At present there is a lack of transparency about how these preferences are measured and accounted for. This study will test the use of an economic technique known as choice experiments to measure fishers' preferences for suites of management interventions including bag limits, seasonal closures and size limits and attempt to combine these preferences with biological based management strategy evaluations to generate recommendations for policy interventions.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Matt Navarro, matthew.navarro@uwa.edu.au Dr Tim Langlois tim.langlois@uwa.edu.au Dr. Jacquomo Monk jacquomo.monk@utas.edu.au</p>	<p>Spatial usage of the Australian Marine Parks network In 2019 44 new marine parks were implemented in offshore commonwealth waters around Australia as part of the Australian Marine Parks network. At present little is known about how boat based fishers and non-fishing recreators are using these areas. This project will analyse existing data and collect new data on spatial usage patterns at boat ramps adjacent to 13 of these new marine parks. These usage patterns will form baselines in Parks Australia's social and economic monitoring program and inform the planned 10 year review of the marine parks zoning.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Harriet Paterson harriet.paterson@uwa.edu.au Dr Renae Hovey renae.hovey@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Plastics in the regurgitated content from sea birds from Lancelin, Western Australia A number of Brown Noddies were recently banded in Lancelin Western Australia and during the process the birds regurgitated their food which consisted of whole fish. A number of samples were collected and have been stored for chemical analysis, with particular focus on the presence and composition of plastic fibres. This project will process and analyse these fish which will give us some insight into the levels of plastic pollution that sea birds are exposed to in their feeding grounds off the continental shelf of Western Australia.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Giovanni Polverino giovanni.polverino@uwa.edu.au Prof Jon Evans jonathan.evans@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Fitness consequences of personality in guppies and mosquitofish Boldness, aggressiveness, and exploration are three behavioural traits often considered in studies on animal personality. Despite the increasing interest in studying animal personality in the last few decades, we still know little about how variation in these traits is maintained within populations, and, in particular, the reproductive outcome of individuals differing in those traits. This project will test whether fish that invest more in dominance behaviours and searching for mates have a higher fitness return than others when living in social groups. We expect bolder/dominant males producing more offspring and females producing clutches more genetically diverse (multiple paternity).</p>	<p>Honours</p>

<p>Pieter Poot pieter.poot@uwa.edu.au Erik Veneklaas erik.veneklaas@uwa.edu.au Sally Thompson sally.thompson@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Revegetation of solar farms Solar farms are increasingly being established across SW Australia to generate renewable energy and they are an important component into transitioning our economy into one with net zero carbon emissions by 2050 or earlier. For obvious reasons, solar farms cannot have tall emerging vegetation amongst the array of solar panels, and thus solar farms need active management of vegetation, either through regular mowing or herbicide spraying. However, keeping vegetation to a minimum or having bare soil under solar panels could lead to wind or water erosion issues. Both vegetation and erosion control activities add considerable costs to the solar farm operation. Establishing low prostrate native vegetation under solar panels could potentially greatly reduce these ongoing site maintenance costs, while at the same time increasing local biodiversity values. Additionally, the likely reduction in ambient temperatures as a consequence of establishing a native vegetation cover could improve solar panel energy conversion. This project will evaluate the feasibility of establishing a range of prostrate native plant species (~18 species) at the Gingin solar farm. Measurements will include aspects of species growth & survival and linking these to spatial variation in microclimate due to solar panel position and movements. Options may also include investigating changes in faunal assemblages in response to replacing weeds by native plant species. Through collaboration with the Surface and Ecohydrology research group at UWA, there will also be an opportunity to investigate and document changes in microclimate in more detail, including water flows and erosion as a consequence of solar panel placement. The project will be in collaboration with local industry partners (solar energy companies, mining companies & nurseries), and is likely to lead to future grant applications to address these issues at a larger scale.</p>	<p>Honours Masters (with the potential for a follow up PHD)</p>
<p>Dr Cristina E Ramalho cristina.ramalho@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Biodiversity and human-nature connection considerations in urban forest management Urban forests are vital for climate change adaptation and mitigation, human wellbeing, and biodiversity conservation in cities. Although socio-ecological values are normally identified as primary drivers of urban forest management, they are often not properly, if at all, taken into account in the actual decision-making process for tree species selection. This socio-ecological study aims to provide insight and guidance on how to better cater for biodiversity and human-nature connection values in urban forest management. A first component of this project will analyse how biodiversity and human-Nature connection values are considered in other cities located in global biodiversity hotspots. A second component of the project, will survey actors in urban forest management in the Perth Area to understand among others: 1) the biodiversity and social-ecological aspects that they perceive as relevant in urban forest management, 2) the challenges and dilemmas they face when trying to address those aspects in decision making, 3) how those aspects influence practical decision-making on the ground, and 4) the knowledge gaps perceived. Project of the Clean Air and Urban Landscapes hub.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>

<p>Dr Cristina E Ramalho cristina.ramalho@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Ecological benefits and functional gaps in native plant palettes commonly used in urban greening Urban greening often relies on a limited pallet of native and non-native plants that are 'proven performers' and have a range of traits that makes them suitable for urban green spaces. While biodiversity conservation is normally presented as a key reason for the use of native plants, often little thought is put into what ecological functions may be provided by and which native fauna may benefit from a particular plant pallet. Urban plantings have the potential to provide several ecological functions to a variety of native bird, reptile, and arthropod functional guilds. However, the limited range of native plants likely means that their potential for biodiversity conservation is not fully realized. This study aims to understand the biodiversity conservation value of native plant pallets used in urban greening in the Perth Metropolitan Area, and how these pallets could be improved so to cater for a wider range of biodiversity values. The study examines 1) the native fauna functional guilds that are known to or that could use the urban environment (with focus on species with positive or neutral interactions with people); 2) the range of native plants commonly used in urban plantings and that are available in commercial nurseries, the ecological services they provide and the taxa and functions they support; 3) which functional groups are not supported by those plant pallets; 4) candidate species to fill the identified gaps, based on the analysis of local remnant plants, and plant lists provided by specialized native nurseries and volunteering groups (WA Wildflower Society and Friends of Kings Park). Project in collaboration between the Clean Air and Urban Landscapes hub and Kings Park Science.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Kosala Ranathunge kosala.ranathunge@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>E/Prof Hans Lambers hans.lambers@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Understanding the traits of cluster- and non-cluster-roots of Proteaceae plants The ancient, highly-weathered and severely nutrient-impooverished landscapes of south-western Australia are home to an enormous diversity of vascular plants, and one of the world's hotspots for diversity of the Proteaceae family. The extremely low concentration of P in these soils is often unavailable for plants. Almost all Proteaceae are non-mycorrhizal. Instead, they develop 'cluster' roots that exude carboxylates, a remarkable morphological and physiological adaptation that chemically extracts P from P-impooverished soil. Usually, roots undergo intense sealing, depositing suberin and lignin in cell walls. These barriers resist pathogens ingress into roots physically as well as chemically because they do have antimicrobial properties. However, successful carboxylate exudation by cluster-roots of Proteaceae would require a lack of perfect sealing. Absence of barriers in roots would be risky because of increased exposure and vulnerability to pathogens. Do Proteaceae roots have other mechanisms to cope with pathogens? Why don't they have mycorrhizal colonisation? We will explore, how these roots maximise P acquisition and pathogen defence using combination of anatomical, physiological, biochemical and genomic techniques.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Kosala Ranathunge kosala.ranathunge@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Assoc. Prof. Peta Clode peta.clode@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Lukasz Kotula lukasz.kotula@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Gaining deeper insights into silicon-mediated salinity tolerance of crops salinity hinders crop growth and productivity worldwide. Approximately one-third of agricultural land is saltaffected. Recently, silicon has become an exceptional candidate that can significantly enhance plant tolerance to salinity. However, the underlying mechanisms remain poorly understood. This project will use cutting-edge technologies in plant physiology, biochemistry and molecular biology to determine mechanisms of siliconmediated salt tolerance of rice and barley. Understanding of silicon enhanced plant tolerance to salinity will guide development of new plant breeds with better silicon acquisition, thus contributing to increased food safety, higher production with lower input costs and reduced negative impacts on environment.</p>	<p>Soil</p> <p>Honours Masters PhD</p>

<p>Dr Kosala Ranathunge kosala.ranathunge@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Functional roles of different component roots in water and nutrient uptake of rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i> L.) under salinity Water and nutrient uptake is one of the fundamental functions of a root system, which largely determines plant growth. Hydraulic conductivity and solute permeability are important parameters that express the ability of roots to take up water and solutes. The rice root system consists of three different types of roots: adventitious roots, long laterals (L-type) and short laterals (S-type). A series of previous studies have shown that these component roots are different in structure and also the developmental responses to soil water content. These facts strongly indicate that they may differ in water and solute uptake rates, and therefore, differently contribute to the overall water and nutrient uptake of the whole root system. In this project, we will determine water and solute transport rates of each type of component root and examine the relationship with some root traits that are closely linked with transport properties such as aquaporin gene activities and the depositions of apoplastic barriers in cell walls made of lignin and suberin. We will also analyse how these root traits change under salinity. Through these analyses, this study aims to deepen the understanding of different component roots for water and nutrient uptake of rice root system, which would be useful for future plant breeders.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Michael Renton michael.renton@uwa.edu.au Dr Francois Teste francois.teste@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Evolution and ecology of plant-fungal interactions during invasion Most invasive trees depend closely on mycorrhizal symbionts to provide required resources, and thus their invasive success depends on the dispersal of these symbionts as well as their own dispersal. Invasive trees may also be negatively impacted by pathogenic fungi in their natural range, and thus benefit from 'enemy release' if they spread into new areas faster than these pathogenic fungi. Previous empirical and theoretical work has shown that the dispersal characteristics of organisms can undergo selection pressure and evolution during the course of an invasion or colonization of new areas, but the evolutionary dynamics of dispersal during co-invasion has not been considered. This project will use spatially-explicit eco-evolutionary simulation modelling to investigate how the dispersal characteristics of trees and their mycorrhizal symbionts and pathogens evolve over the course of a tree invasion, and how management that accounts for both evolution and ecology can help slow tree invasions and protect natural environments. Applicants do not need prior modelling experience, but should be passionate about ecology and evolution.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Michael Renton michael.renton@uwa.edu.au Dr Pieter Poot pieter.poot@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Evolution of rooting strategies Plants use their roots to forage for the water and nutrients they need to survive and reproduce. Different rooting strategies evolve in different conditions, to enable plants to find these resources as efficiently as possible. This project will use eco-evolutionary models that simulate populations and communities of plants with detailed three-dimensional root structures evolving over time. This modelling can address big questions such as the costs and benefits of phenotypic plasticity, the uniqueness or repeatability of evolution, the drivers of diversity in plant communities, and the processes that lead to the creation of new species. Applicants do not need prior modelling experience, but should be passionate about ecology and evolution.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Dr Michael Renton michael.renton@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Ecological and Evolutionary Modelling for Agriculture and Conservation Modelling can be an essential tool for understanding, predicting and managing many aspects of ecological, evolutionary and agricultural systems. Ecological models can be used to address practical and theoretical questions such as: - How do plants and animals evolve optimal strategies to find, compete for, and share the resources they need to survive and reproduce, in variable and changing environments? - How can we maintain global food security by stopping weeds and pests evolving resistance to pesticides? - What is the best way to search for and manage invasive organisms that threaten our agricultural industries and natural resources? - How do interactions among the individual organisms in ecological communities affect the diversity, stability and resilience of these communities? If you are interested in learning more about ecological and evolutionary modelling, and applying it to important practical or theoretical issues, then please get in contact.</p>	<p>Masters PhD</p>
<p>Assoc Prof Amanda Ridley amanda.ridley@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Understanding the relationship between cooperation communication and cognition. My research lab uses habituated groups of free-living cooperatively breeding Western Australian magpies to ask questions primarily focussed in the field of behavioural ecology. Students are expected to conduct fieldwork on one of the following topics: the benefits and dynamics of cooperation (group-living behaviour), patterns of communication, and casues of variation in cognition. My research lab also looks at research in relation to the impacts of anthropogenic noise on vocal communication, and heat stress effects on animal behaviour (in terms of the impact of heatwaves and increasingly high temperatures on wild animal behaviour). Students applying to my lab should be interested in a project in one of these research areas. I have not posted a specific project here, since there is scope for several research projects depending on the specific interests of the student. The magpies are ringed for individual identification, and can be observed from a distance of a few metres without alteration in their behaviour. The study sites are based within urban Perth. Students will need access to reliable transport, and to have a full driver's license.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Dr Alison Ritchie alison.ritchie@uwa.edu.au Dr Todd Erickson todd.erickson@dbca.wa.gov.au</p>	<p>Developing technologies to overcome barriers to seed recruitment and seedling establishment in restoration This project aims to develop and implement innovative seed enhancement technologies to overcome native plant recruitment barriers. Despite technological advances in the agricultural industry to successfully establish plants, there is currently limited capacity to deliver this technology to restore biodiverse natural ecosystems. With ongoing degradation and significant biodiversity loss occurring in large parts of southern Australia, intervention is needed to reinstate critical ecosystems. In order to so, we need to overcome the diverse array of abiotic and biotic factors that currently limit restoration success. The student will focus on (1) overcoming the barriers to restoration, (2) the development of seed enhancement technologies and (3) test their scalability in the field.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>A/Prof Michael Burton michael.burton@uwa.edu.au Dr Abbie Rogers abbie.rogers@uwa.edu.au Dr Belinda Cannell belinda.cannell@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>How big is the value of a little penguin? Little penguins are the smallest penguin species. Their largest breeding colony in Western Australia is just off the shore of Rockingham, in the Perth metropolitan region. They face many threats given their co-location with a major human population base, including marine and coastal developments, predation, watercraft strikes, and pressures from eco-tourism. To balance the benefits and costs of coastal activities with the benefits and costs of conserving little penguins, decision makers need to identify what the value of the penguin colony is. This project will involve developing a non-market valuation survey to estimate how much people are willing to pay to protect little penguins through improved management outcomes. Applicants will need to have a background in economics (e.g. units in microeconomic theory, environmental and resource economics) or strong skills in statistical analyses.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Dr Ana M M Sequeira (UWA) ana.sequeira@uwa.edu.au Dr Matthew Fraser (UWA) matthew.fraser@uwa.edu.au Prof Gary Kendrick (UWA) gary.kendrick@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Ecological links between coastal habitats and marine megafauna conservation The 2011 Western Australian marine heatwave associated with global climate change has strongly affected the Shark Bay World Heritage Area, known for its extensive seagrass meadows and unique marine megafauna. The aftermath of this heat wave highlighted that strong links exist between the habitat-forming dominant temperate seagrass, <i>Amphibolis antarctica</i>, in Shark Bay and the health and abundance of marine megafauna, such as green turtles and dugongs. Understanding these ecological links is crucial to predicting the effects of predicted seagrass loss in Shark Bay on the populations of marine megafauna species that contribute to its World Heritage status. This project will be a collaboration between UWA and DBCA and will be most suitable for a student passionate about remote iconic areas in the Western Australia coastline and with strong interest in investigating behaviour and movement of marine megafauna in relation to coastal habitats.</p>	<p>PhD Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Ana M M Sequeira (UWA) ana.sequeira@uwa.edu.au Dr Matthew Fraser (UWA) matthew.fraser@uwa.edu.au Dr Hector Lozano-Montes (CSIRO) hector.lozano-montes@csiro.au Dr Ben Radford (AIMS) B.Radford@aims.gov.au Prof Gary Kendrick (UWA) gary.kendrick@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Understanding the iconic World Heritage Shark Bay using an ecosystem modelling framework Regional warming and extreme events such as the 2011 Western Australian marine heatwave associated with global climate change has promoted large ecosystem shifts to the marine ecosystem in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area including extensive loss of seagrasses, starvation in turtles and major effects on invertebrate fisheries and fish communities. Understanding how to predict and manage the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems is a key emerging issue and it is imperative that we are prepared to effectively manage ecosystem scale shifts in Shark Bay to safeguard its World Heritage status. Extreme climatic events are predicted to increase in frequency, intensity and duration. Therefore, understanding the ecosystem impacts of water temperature changes and climate-related seagrass loss is particularly pertinent in ecosystems where foundation seagrasses grow near the edge of their biogeographical range, such as in Shark Bay. This project will pull together physical, habitat, and animal community data into an ecosystem modelling framework to examine physical and biological interactions in Shark Bay, and help predict the trajectory of this World Heritage Site under future climate scenarios. This project will be a collaboration between UWA, AIMS and CSIRO and will be most suitable for a student with strong interest in understanding ecological links within ecosystems and with interest to develop quantitative skills.</p>	<p>PhD Honours Masters</p>
<p>A/Prof Samantha Setterfield samantha.setterfield@uwa.edu.au Dr Caroline Canham caroline.canham@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>The effect of duration of inundation on riparian seedlings Understanding the dynamics of riparian seedbanks is a critical component of informing sustainable water management decisions. There are a number of potential studies to investigate this, including a glasshouse study to investigate the effect of duration of inundation on the emergence of tropical riparian seedlings and a study of seedbank collected from the Fitzroy River.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>A/Prof Samantha Setterfield samantha.setterfield@uwa.edu.au Dr Caroline Canham caroline.canham@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Using land surface temperature to map floodplain wetlands of the Fitzroy River Floodplain wetlands are vital refugia for biota during the dry season in the wet-dry environment of the Fitzroy River in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Remote sensing of land surface temperature can be used to map these habitats and historical datasets may be examined to determine wetland extent and condition under years of different flow. This project will involve significant analysis of datasets collected from remote sensing.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>A/Prof Samantha Setterfield samantha.setterfield@uwa.edu.au Dr Caroline Canham caroline.canham@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Water requirements of riparian vegetation The sustainable management of water resources requires an understanding of the relationship between surface and subsurface water and the plants dependent on it. We do applied research, collaborating with water managers, to work towards understanding the water requirements of riparian and groundwater dependent vegetation in northern and south western Australia. Potential projects may be field or glasshouse based and may include measurements of LAI, plant ecophysiology, seed bank studies or germination trials for native plants.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Professor Leigh Simmons leigh.simmons@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Seminal fluid effects on female sexual receptivity There is considerable evidence that males will increase the numbers of sperm ejaculated in response to sperm competition risk, however the ejaculate also comprises a host of seminal fluid proteins that mediate sperm performance and subsequent fertilization success. Male crickets (<i>Teleogryllus oceanicus</i>) have been shown to adjust the protein composition of the seminal fluid in response to sperm competition risk. Seven seminal fluid protein genes were found to have an increased expression in males exposed to rival calls. However, the function of these seminal fluid proteins remains unknown. This project will use RNA-knockdown to determine whether proteins in the ejaculate affect a females future receptivity to mating.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Professor Leigh Simmons leigh.simmons@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Risk taking behaviour and residual reproductive value Animals are able to modify their behaviour in response to changes in their internal and environmental state. The asset-protection principle predicts that an animal's risk taking behaviour should vary as a result of its residual reproductive value (RRV); animals with greater RRV would incur a greater cost if injured or killed and should therefore take fewer risks than those with low RRV. Despite the intuitive appeal of this hypothesis, few studies have effectively separated the effects of RRV on behaviour from those of age. This project will test the widely invoked hypothesis by measuring the risk-taking behaviour of female Australian field crickets (<i>Teleogryllus oceanicus</i>) of the same age after manipulating their RRV by surgical removal of the ovaries.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Professor Leigh Simmons leigh.simmons@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Sexual selection and sperm competition Research opportunities are available to explore the role of pre-copulatory and post-copulatory sexual selection in the evolution of male and female reproductive behaviour and morphology. We seek to understand how life-history trade-offs affect male allocation of resources to the weapons and ornaments of mating competition and sperm production for competitive fertilization success. These questions can be addressed in a variety of taxa from insects to humans, and using a variety of approaches, from comparative morphology to genetics.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Professor Leigh Simmons leigh.simmons@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>The evolution of mating spurs in trapdoor spiders Many male trapdoor spiders use their front legs to move females into a suitable position during mating, by locking highly specialised mating spurs located on their anterior legs under the female's fangs during copulation. Using landmark geometric analyses, the project will quantify and map shape variation onto a pre-existing molecular phylogeny of the spiders, and test evolutionary hypotheses for the divergence of these male mating structures. The project will involve collaboration with the WA Museum.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Professor Leigh Simmons leigh.simmons@uwa.edu.au Dr Nikolai Tatarnic nikolai.Tatarnic@museum.wa.gov.au</p>	<p>Traumatic insemination in plant bugs In traumatic insemination (TI), males use hypodermic genitalia to inject sperm into the female through the side of her abdomen, bypassing her genitalia. This project will use plant bugs in the genus <i>Coridromius</i> to examine sexual conflict arising from TI. Experiments might include but are not limited to: determining the costs of TI to females; measuring the immune response of females to TI; studies of mating behaviour/mate choice; identifying the sperm pathway through the female bloodstream. The project will involve collaboration with researchers at the WA Museum.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Professor Leigh Simmons leigh.simmons@uwa.edu.au A/Professor Jan Hemmi jan.hemmi@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>The costs of male weaponry: are males with enlarged weapons visually impaired Male dung beetles invest in horns which are used in battles over access to tunnels and the females breeding within. However, some males do not develop horns or fight for access to females, but rather sneak copulations guarded by horned males. Males that develop horns compromise the development of their eyes. This project will compare the visual capabilities of minor and major males using a combination of anatomical, physiological and behavioural methods. You will learn how to make electroretinogram measurements to assess the beetles' visual acuity and light sensitivity and correlate these findings with anatomical predictions based on 3D microCT measurements of the beetles' eyes.</p>	<p>Honours</p>

<p>Prof Leigh Simmons leigh.simmons@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Tim Langlois, tim.langlois@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Simon de Lestang simon.deLestang@fish.wa.gov.au</p> <p>Dr Jason How jason.how@fish.wa.gov.au</p>	<p>Fertilization ecology and implications of sperm limitation in the western rock lobster</p> <p>The western rock lobster fishery is the highest value single species fishery in Australia, worth over \$400 Million per annum. Very little is known about the occurrence of sperm limitation for the fertilization ecology of western rock lobster, however it is assumed that the selective removal of larger males from the fishery could result in the occurrence of sperm limitation. This study will involve conducting mating trials to establish the mechanics of fertilization within western rock lobster. In addition, both laboratory and field investigations will be used to investigate the relationship between sperm abundance and spermatophore size, using methods to count sperm isolated from spermatophores and relate this data to field surveys of spermatophore size across areas of the fishery with contrasting adult body-size distribution.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Greg Skrzypek grzegorz.skrzypek@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Mat Vanderklif mat.vanderklift@csiro.au</p>	<p>Ecology of feral predators at Ningaloo:</p> <p>Feral cats and foxes are a threat to fauna along the Northwest Cape, including to hatchling turtles. This project will work with DBCA (Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Western Australia) to understand what these predators eat, and will use the stable nitrogen and carbon isotopes and stomach content. This is a collaborative project with CSIRO.</p>	<p>Masters</p>
<p>Greg Skrzypek Grzegorz.Skrzypek@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Brad Degens (DWER)</p>	<p>Stable sulfur isotope composition as a tracer of nutrients runoff form agrosystems.</p> <p>This research project is using a unique stable isotope tracer to estimate sulfur budget in ecosystems downstream from a farm testing a new type of product limiting phosphorus leaching. This new product contains gypsum produced through neutralization of mine waste. A unique stable sulfur isotope composition will be distinguishable in soil, water, and plants. The project will include fieldwork and lab experiments. The project is supported by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) and will also offer the opportunity to experience fieldwork for the collection of samples in the Mandurah region with DWER team.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Greg Skrzypek grzegorz.skrzypek@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Liz Barbour liz.barbour@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Identification of honey origin using stable isotope and ecological provenancing.</p> <p>The bees are under pressing threats resulting from climate change, habitat loss/fragmentation, and the spread of diseases. Several radical regulations were implemented to protect honey marked and bees well-being, and therefore an urgent need to develop methods allowing identification of honey origin exists. This study will focus on testing links between the honey stable carbon and oxygen isotope signatures, geographic location, plant communities, and water sources on the landscape scale. The project will be conducted in collaboration with financial support from CRC for Honey Bee Products. Supervisors: Greg Skrzypek, Liz Barbour</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Greg Skrzypek grzegorz.skrzypek@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Erik Veneklaas erik.veneklaas@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Gavan McGrath gavan.mcgrath@dbca.wa.gov.au</p>	<p>Effect of forest thinning on residence times of water used by Jarrah trees</p> <p>Regrowth jarrah forest (Eucalyptus marginata) tends to have a greater density of stems, larger sapwood area, and associated higher level of water use, as compared to old growth forest. Thinning may restore many environmental services and add resilience in a drying and warming climate. It has already been demonstrated that evapotranspiration declines, and both groundwater recharge and streamflow increase after thinning. It is not yet clear how thinning modifies root water uptake dynamics. In this project, advance methods (including in situ sap flow monitoring and stable isotope analyses) will be used to estimate water uptake, water residence time, and response to precipitation pattern. This project is financed by DBCA and will provide opportunity for fieldwork at Yarragil (Dwellingup, WA) and close interaction with DBCA researchers.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Dr John Statton john.statton@uwa.edu.au Prof. Gary Kendrick garykendrick@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Optimising sporophyte growth for commercialisation of the methane mitigating seaweed, <i>Asparagopsis taxiformis</i> Seaweed is one of the most attractive emerging aquaculture industries Australia-wide. The Red Seaweed, <i>Asparagopsis taxiformis</i>, when fed to cattle in small quantities, can mitigate harmful methane emissions from the livestock industry by up to 98%. <i>Asparagopsis</i> could become the 'wheat crop' of Australia's oceans, and is on track to be grown and processed here in Australia. This project will focus on optimising cultivation techniques to produce high quality seed stock for Western Australian conditions. This project is aquaculture focussed and will use dose:response testing of environmental variables (light, nutrients) to optimise this life stage. This project will be based at the Watermans Bay Marine Research Facility (30 minutes north of UWA crawlley campus), successful candidates need to be part-time located at this facility to undertake the research trials. Snorkelling, strongly lab-based project, desire to learn about aquaculture techniques and seaweed.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr John Statton john.statton@uwa.edu.au Prof. Gary Kendrick garykendrick@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Optimise sporophyte density of <i>Asparagopsis taxiformis</i> to enhance seeding onto cultivation string Seaweed is one of the most attractive emerging aquaculture industries Australia-wide. The Red Seaweed, <i>Asparagopsis taxiformis</i>, when fed to cattle in small quantities, can mitigate harmful methane emissions from the livestock industry by up to 98%. <i>Asparagopsis</i> could become the 'wheat crop' of Australia's oceans, and is on track to be grown and processed here in Australia. This project will determine the density that optimises attachment, survivability and growth of sporophytes prior to transfer to grow-out trials. This project will be based at the Watermans Bay Marine Research Facility (30 minutes north of UWA crawlley campus), successful candidates need to be part-time located at this facility to undertake the research trials. Snorkelling, strongly lab-based project, desire to learn about aquaculture techniques and seaweed.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr John Statton john.statton@uwa.edu.au Prof. Gary Kendrick garykendrick@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Enhance gametophyte fecundity of <i>Asparagopsis taxiformis</i> for aquaculture Seaweed is one of the most attractive emerging aquaculture industries Australia-wide. The Red Seaweed, <i>Asparagopsis taxiformis</i>, when fed to cattle in small quantities, can mitigate harmful methane emissions from the livestock industry by up to 98%. <i>Asparagopsis</i> could become the 'wheat crop' of Australia's oceans, and is on track to be grown and processed here in Australia. This project aims to enhance fecundity of gametophytes by testing dose:response relationships of environmental conditions (nutrients x light x temperature). Enhanced fecundity of gametophytes is a necessary pathway to developing the commercialisation potential of this seaweed species. This project will be based at the Watermans Bay Marine Research Facility (30 minutes north of UWA crawlley campus), successful candidates need to be part-time located at this facility to undertake the research trials. Snorkelling, strongly lab-based project, desire to learn about aquaculture techniques and seaweed.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Joseph Tomkins joseph.tomkins@uwa.edu.au Jason Kennington jason.kennington@uwa.edu.au Wladimir Fae wladimir.faeneto@research.uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Experimental Evolution of Anisogamy Anisogamy is of central importance to the evolution of the sexes, however it is very difficult to understand from an experimental perspective. We have that opportunity for exciting and ground-breaking evolutionary research. We have a number of experimental evolution lines of the single celled alga <i>Chlamydomonas reinhardtii</i> that have diverged in size and in their growth conditions. These evolved lines are of interest to us from an evolutionary perspective in terms of the evolution of anisogamy, since we can test the fundamental assumptions behind the evolution of the sexes. Skill set preferred would be sterile lab techniques.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Joseph Tomkins joseph.tomkins@uwa.edu.au Jason Kennington jason.kennington@uwa.edu.au Wladimir Fae wladimir.faeneto@research.uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Experimental Evolution of Algal Production We have a number of experimental evolution lines of the single celled alga <i>Chlamydomonas reinhardtii</i> that have diverged in size and in their growth conditions. These evolved lines are of interest to us from the perspective of applying them to questions of algal production (e.g. biomass, pigments and lipids) in the lab and 'field' conditions. Skill set preferred would be sterile lab techniques.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Joseph Tomkins joseph.tomkins@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Jason Kennington jason.kennington@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Wladimir Fae wladimir.faeneto@research.uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Experimental evolution of plastic tolerance</p> <p>The environment is accumulating plastic representing an evolutionary challenge to the biota that live alongside it. One of the effects of plastic is the toxicity to cells. This novel evolutionary environment might be easily adapted to or it might be evolutionarily challenging. Microplastics are toxic to algal cells, but can algae evolve to tolerate the presence of plastic? We have a number of lines of the single celled alga <i>Chlamydomonas reinhardtii</i>. These algae reproduce readily in the laboratory at a rate of 3-4 divisions per day. The large population sizes and rapid division mean that <i>Chlamydomonas</i> is a useful organism for studying adaptation. We would like to investigate the evolution of plastic tolerance over numerous generations. Fitness can be easily assayed in the lab. Skill set preferred would be sterile lab techniques.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Assoc.Prof Erik Veneklaas erik.veneklaas@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Paul Drake paul.drake@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Water and CO2 transport in relation to stomatal distribution</p> <p>Why do fast-growing crops and drought-tolerant trees, very different plant types, have pores on both sides of their leaves, when the vast majority of plants don't? This project aims to assess the (dis)advantages of having stomata (leaf pores bound by guard cells) on both leaf sides (amphistomaty), rather than on one side (hypostomaty), and determine how these traits relate to the leaf's specific micro-climate. This knowledge will provide novel insights into the functional diversity of plants, direct plant breeding targets and contribute to the fundamental understanding of plant transpiration and photosynthesis, two processes that regulate the global exchange of water, CO2 and energy.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Assoc. Prof Erik Veneklaas erik.veneklaas@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Paul Drake paul.drake@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>How does vegetation affect the water balance on mine waste rock dumps?</p> <p>Vegetation on mine waste rock dumps is not only a legal requirement but also provides "ecosystem services". On waste dumps where net percolation is undesirable because of toxic material, plant transpiration helps create a favourable "store-and-release" function. This line of research aims at determining the ideal mix of water use behaviours and drought tolerance levels in plant species, as dependent on substrate properties and climate. Projects may have an emphasis on transpiration, root water uptake, hydraulics, etc.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Assoc. Prof Erik Veneklaas erik.veneklaas@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Fiamma Riviera fiamma.riviera@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Justin Valliere justin.valliere@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Ecophysiological research to support mine-site restoration</p> <p>Restoring a diverse plant community on post-mining sites in WA is challenging our understanding of what substrate and climatic conditions plants need and tolerate. Ecophysiology can help to identify the drivers of species success in plant establishment, growth and survival. Ongoing research addresses issues of plant nutrition, plant water relations, heat tolerance etc. in relation to soils, climate, seed provenance, management and other relevant factors. Our projects use traditional and novel technology in plant physiology to measure plant traits and plant condition. This includes gas exchange, hydraulics, spectral and thermal sensing and several other field and lab methods. Projects on plant-plant, plant-microbe and plant-pathogen interactions are also possible.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Assoc. Prof Erik Veneklaas erik.veneklaas@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Carolyn Harding carolyn.harding@dbca.wa.gov.au</p>	<p>Salinity and drought tolerance of samphires in a Swan river saltmarsh</p> <p>Ashfield Flats is a threatened temperate coastal saltmarsh in the Perth Metropolitan Area. Changes are expected in the local hydrology of the site, due to likely modifications to urban drainage and due to climate change. Samphires are a characteristic element of salt marshes. Contrasting spatial distributions of the five species occurring at Ashfield Flats suggest that there is niche differentiation related to salinity and inundation regimes. This project, supported by DBCA, involves experimental research in a controlled environment to assess tolerance to salinity and inundation, which will assist with conservation efforts.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Assoc. Prof Erik Veneklaas erik.veneklaas@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Plant water relations</p> <p>Water is an essential but scarce resource for almost all plants in WA. We do fundamental and applied research to understand how plants maximise water uptake, minimise water loss, and optimise water use efficiency. The projects can be field or lab-based, and may focus on roots, stems, leaves or whole plants. Techniques include hydraulics, gas exchange (photosynthesis/transpiration), micrometeorology, microscopy, stable isotopes and others.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>

<p>Prof Erik Veneklaas erik.veneklaas@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Siegy Krauss siegy.krauss@dbca.wa.gov.au</p> <p>Dr David Merritt david.merritt@dbca.wa.gov.au</p> <p>Dr Michael Renton michael.renton@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Dr Suzanne Prober suzanne.prober@csiro.au</p> <p>Dr Martin Breed martin.breed@flinders.edu.au</p>	<p>Optimising seed sourcing for effective ecological restoration</p> <p>As the demand for ecological restoration grows rapidly, there is an increasingly urgent need and responsibility to use native seed for restoration as efficiently as possible. Our project's broad goal is to derive seed sourcing solutions that improve restoration efficiency under current and future environmental conditions. Specifically, we seek to comprehensively assess whether predictive sourcing for climate change increases restoration success. We are pursuing our aims by integrating cutting-edge approaches in plant physiology, seed biology, soil science, and plant genomics with experiments embedded within post-mining rehabilitation sites. Experimental trials in the glasshouse and seed lab will explicitly address hypotheses on provenance fitness and environmental factors for key restoration species of banksia woodlands to determine a mechanistic understanding of provenance related variation in adaptation. In particular, we seek to identify how provenances differ in their capacity to respond to environmental stressors associated with climate change (such as moisture and temperature), and the thresholds for different provenances. These experiments will help to attribute genetic differences observed in field trials to climate effects rather than site effects. Expected outcomes include clear seed-sourcing solutions for better restoration in a climate-change context. This research program is supported by an ARC linkage grant, with strong industry support from sand mining companies Hanson and Tronox.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Bruce Webber bruce.webber@csiro.au, bruce.webber@uwa.edu.au</p> <p>Mariana Campos mariana.campos@csiro.au</p> <p>Raphael Didham raphael.didham@uwa.edu.au raphael.didham@csiro.au</p>	<p>Identifying vulnerabilities to improve the management of threatening weeds.</p> <p>Improvements in weed management can be achieved through a greater understanding of the population ecology of the species in question, as well as its plant ecophysiology and plant-ecosystem interactions. Niche theory can then be applied to identifying vulnerabilities to target for improved control. Projects are available, depending on the interests of the applicant, including controlled condition studies in Perth, as well as fieldwork in exotic locations across WA, interstate and overseas</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Thomas Wernberg thomas.wernberg@uwa.edu.au, wernberglab.org</p>	<p>Thresholds for kelp forest loss and turf expansion.</p> <p>Pervasive habitat deterioration and destruction presents one of the biggest threats to species and global ecological function. There has been an accelerating loss kelp forests globally, and an associated rise and persistence of degraded seascapes of sediment-laden algal 'turfs'. This project will conduct field experiments on kelp and turf reefs across different environments to identify thresholds for collapse and mechanisms for recovery. Advances here will improve how we understand the stability of these marine habitats, and the reversibility of sudden changes in the context of ongoing climate change. This is a collaborative project between UWA and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Thomas Wernberg thomas.wernberg@uwa.edu.au, wernberglab.org</p>	<p>Using strong genotypes to boost resistance or restore threatened kelp forests</p> <p>Research on marine habitat loss has mainly focused on negative impacts and declining performance of foundation species, and the effectiveness of passive strategies for recovery (e.g. marine reserves). Instead, an innovative approach targets individuals and areas that perform well under stress ('bright spots') to discover mechanisms, traits and active interventions that promote persistence. This project will use cutting edge genetic analyses to identify strong genotypes in natural 'bright spots' where surviving kelps have resisted or adapted to degraded conditions. This will provide a foundation to develop innovative proactive restoration and conservation solutions to breed resistance or promote recovery of degraded systems. This is a collaborative project between UWA and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>

<p>Thomas Wernberg thomas.wernberg@uwa.edu.au Karen Filbee-Dexter karen.dexter@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Export of blue carbon from kelp forests to deep marine sinks. One approach to combat climate change is to increase carbon storages and sinks. Recent research suggests that large seaweed forests may sequester substantial amounts of carbon in the deep sea. Key unknowns remain about the fate of this carbon once it leaves the shallow reefs; especially how much is transported across the shelf and reaches deep marine sediments. This project will use an underwater camera system to track kelp detritus moving from shallow reefs (<20 m) to deeper areas (20 - 100 m) off Western Australia. Laboratory flume trials will be used to measure deposition and resuspension thresholds of different types of kelp detritus, which are essential to predict movement along the seafloor. This research should help assess the carbon storage potential of kelp forests. The project will involve work in the field and the lab. A background in field ecology and/or oceanography would be helpful but not essential.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Prof. Thomas Wernberg- thomas.wernberg@uwa.edu.au Dr. Karen Filbee-Dexter- karen.dexter@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Developing a novel restoration tool for threatened kelp forests Human-driven impacts on our oceans are intensifying and there is urgent need for novel solutions to combat habitat loss and promote resilience in marine ecosystems. In warmer margins of their range kelp forests are being replaced by algal turfs. This project will help develop and test a novel restoration tool 'green gravel' and evaluate its ability to restore kelp forests in Australia. Green gravel involves seeding kelp spores onto pebbles, where they grow into small sporophytes that can be scattered across an impacted area. This tool could be effective at overcoming reinforcing feedbacks (propagule and recruitment limitation) that prevent recovery of kelp forests after shifts to turf. This is a collaborative project between UWA and the NSW Department of Primary Industries. This project can be field based or laboratory based. There are also opportunities for this project to include social-ecological research and science communication, such as engaging with communities to evaluate and test this restoration tool.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr Albert Pessarrodona- albert.pessarrodona@research.uwa.edu.au Prof Thomas Wernberg- thomas.wernberg@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Historical changes in the distribution and productivity of WA marine forests The marine environment is becoming increasingly modified by human pressures, driving the reconfiguration of marine ecosystems worldwide. Establishing a historical baselines to compare change to is however a central challenge in the subtidal marine environment, which has traditionally been less accessible. This project will use historical ecology to investigate potential changes in the distribution and productivity of marine forests across the coast of WA. The project will involve the examination of archived herbaria specimens, compilation of anecdotal evidence, and repeat of historical surveys. A background in field ecology would be helpful but is not essential.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr George Wood george.wood@uwa.edu.au Prof Thomas Wernberg thomas.wernberg@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Mapping where seaweed restoration should occur As the demand for seaweed restoration increases globally, scientists, communities and businesses need solid frameworks that identify when and where restoration is needed. This project will use biodiversity and satellite data to identify thresholds of ecosystem collapse and develop an interactive map of areas where seaweed restoration is not only needed but expected to be successful.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Dr George Wood- george.wood@uwa.edu.au Prof Thomas Wernberg- thomas.wernberg@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Development of furoid gene-banking techniques Worldwide, kelp and furoid forests are in decline with the loss of unique genetic diversity presenting real problems for adaptability and ecosystem resilience. Ex situ seed banking is important for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, however many furoid gametes lose viability within hours. This project will utilise experimental cryogenic approaches to investigate methods for preserving viable seaweed germplasm that may be used for restoration and assisted gene flow in several key Australian furoid species.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Dr Dan White daniel.white@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Conservation genetics and population modelling to secure wild populations of the Shark Bay mouse Australia currently has the world's greatest mammal extinction rate - since the arrival of Europeans there have been 29 recorded extinctions. This can be explained by habitat reduction and fragmentation, predation by damaging invasive predators such as cats and foxes and the ongoing impact of climate change. In response the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions of WA (DBCA) has initiated an exciting and ambitious project to return the flora and fauna of Dirk Hartog Island (DHI) to what it was before the arrival of Europeans in 1616. This project provides an opportunity to help inform management of populations of the Vulnerable (IUCN, EPBC Act) Shark Bay mouse (<i>Pseudomys fieldi</i>). In collaboration with DBCA and the Australian Wildlife Conservancy, you will be working with genome-wide SNP data to help understand the current diversity that exists within the remnant population on Bernier Island, reintroduced population on Faure Island and introduced population on North West Island (Montebello islands). You will incorporate these data into population viability analysis models for predicting extinction probabilities of remaining populations, as well as design translocation scenarios for successful establishment on DHI. This project would suit someone with experience in, or knowledge of, population genetic analyses and with an interest in population modelling. You will be working closely with DBCA so that your work has most impact and direct uptake for effective and dynamic conservation management, ultimately to ensure a sustainable future for one of Australia's most charismatic rodents. Visits to the islands to help with monitoring and to learn more about the context of the project can be arranged, likely in March/April and also possibly in September.</p>	
<p>Professor Philip Withers philip.withers@uwa.edu.au Dr Christine Cooper c.cooper@curtin.edu.au</p>	<p>What controls insensible evaporative water of mammals and birds? The insensible evaporative water loss (non-thermoregulatory evaporative water loss, EWL) has traditionally been considered to be a passive biophysical process, not under physiological control, but we have recently shown that it is regulated by mammals (dasyurid marsupials) and birds (parrots). This project will measure the effect of ambient relative humidity on the insensible EWL of a mammal or bird, and investigate the biological control of its regulation, either water conservation at low humidities or facilitation of thermoregulation at high humidities.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Professor Philip Withers philip.withers@uwa.edu.au Dr Emma Dalziell emma.dalziell@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Using metabolic rate to predict viability of seeds in conservation seed banks Preservation of seed stocks for plant species in seed banks is an important conservation strategy, and it is important to be able to routinely assess the viability of stored seeds. We are investigating various aspects of the survival of stored seed collections, including physiological assessment of viability of seeds by measuring their metabolic rate, but this is a difficult proposition because most seeds enter a dormant stage and have a low metabolic rate. We are investigating the potential for measurement of metabolic rate as an index of viability and its relationship to temperature and humidity using highly sensitive state-of-the-art carbon dioxide analyser.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Professor Philip Withers philip.withers@uwa.edu.au Dr. Christine Cooper c.cooper@curtin.edu.au</p>	<p>Comparison of thermal imaging and spot-lighting as tools for nocturnal mammal surveys Environmental researchers have typically used spotlights or head torches as the primary technique for non-invasive fauna observations and surveys of nocturnal fauna. In recent years, thermal technology has advanced and there are now commercially available high quality thermal scopes. But, are they as good as a spotlight or a head torch in determining abundance, based on distance sampling (now widely used to determine relative abundance based on transect searches). Distance sampling techniques will be used to test the comparative efficacy of these relatively new thermal imagery devices compared with traditional spotlighting in relatively open areas (e.g. pastures) and in open Banksia and eucalypt woodlands, which are both typically found on the Swan Coastal Plain. The project will involve collaboration with a local environmental consulting company.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>

<p>Prof Phillip Withers phillip.withers@uwa.edu.au Dr Graham Thompson graham.thompson@uwa.edu.au Dr Christine Cooper christine.cooper@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Assessing the efficacy of camera traps for fauna surveys Camera traps are now widely used in vertebrate fauna surveys and monitoring programs. There is a general assumption that these traps are a reliable and valid tool that record all or at least a majority of mammals that pass through the detection zone. However, some literature suggests that camera traps are not as reliable as many users believe, and modification of camera settings can improve detection sensitivity from 33% to 75%, including appreciable room for improvement. This research project will use 100 Reconyx (HC600) camera traps to test their efficiency to detect cat/fox sized mammals in a variety of orientations and settings. The outcome of this project has wide application for vertebrate fauna surveys, assessments and monitoring programs, and should interest a student that is intending to establish a career as a field zoologist that undertakes vertebrate fauna surveys. Equipment, advice and assistance for this project are available from experienced zoologists that routinely use camera traps as a detection and survey method.</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Prof Phillip Withers phillip.withers@uwa.edu.au Dr Sean Thomlinson sean.thomlinson@dbca.wa.gov.au Dr Christine Cooper christine.cooper@uwa.edu.au Amanda Bourne aboutne.uct@gmail.com</p>	<p>Validation of non-invasive measurement of energy and water turnover for birds Stable isotopes (doubly-labelled water, 2H₂O¹⁸) are now routinely used to measure energy and water turnover of free-living animals but the traditional protocol involves capture, injection of isotopes, blood sampling and recapture, which can be experimentally challenging especially for small birds. An alternative non-invasive approach is to administer the stable isotope mixture to free-living birds in food, and using faeces collected from birds to measure isotope turnover rates. This project will compare isotope turnovers for captive birds using both the traditional and non-invasive approaches to determine whether the non-invasive approach is feasible. We anticipate studying small bird species with varied diets (e.g. insectivorous, granivorous, nectarivorous).</p>	<p>Honours Masters</p>
<p>Professor Dirk Zeller dirk.zeller@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Fisheries in Indian Ocean Rim countries Science and policy on Indian Ocean fisheries are heavily skewed towards industrial tuna fisheries, yet most Indian Ocean Rim countries gain domestic food security, livelihoods and economic benefits from domestic non-tuna fisheries within their Exclusive Economic Zone waters. These coastal fisheries, however, are often heavily under-valued and under-represented in fisheries science at the national and regional level, as they are often dominated by marginalized small-scale fisheries with substantial data gaps. As part of the international Sea Around Us - Indian Ocean research initiative (www.seaaroundus-io.org), students will engage in country-level or ocean-basin scale aspects of fisheries science using big-data approaches. These types of projects could be especially interesting for students that are excited by data mining and historical ecology, or wish to be challenged by big-data approaches in an interdisciplinary setting. The Sea Around Us – Indian Ocean collaborates closely with the global Sea Around Us initiative (www.seaaroundus.org) and the interdisciplinary Global Fisheries Cluster (http://global-fc.oceans.ubc.ca/) at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, and with FishBase (www.fishbase.org) and SeaLifeBase (www.sealifebase.org) hosted in the Philippines. Most Sea Around Us research does not involve field-based data collection, as we emphasize the utility of pre-existing secondary data and databases for enhancement through data harmonization, data gap assessments and large-scale data approaches. An open and keen mind, critical thinking skills, team work abilities and a curiosity about fisheries data science is all that is required, but if you also have programming skills (e.g., R) or even advanced computing skills for big-data approaches all the better.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>

<p>Prof Dirk Zeller dirk.zeller@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>Using satellite-data from the Global Fishing Watch to infer likely catches by foreign fleets inside EEZs and on the High Seas in the India Ocean</p> <p>Recent technological advances in remote monitoring technology are increasingly being used to assist broad-scale marine conservation and fisheries management objectives. These technologies are particularly useful for fisheries monitoring in low-income regions and on the High Seas, where the lack of resources for adequate monitoring and surveillance and the vast extents of ocean make it difficult to keep track of fishing activity. To address this issue, the Global Fishing Watch initiative has developed a fisheries monitoring tool that enable the estimate of fishing effort by registered commercial fishing vessels anywhere in the world. The proposed project will adopt a novel approach to expand the use of this tool by combining the Sea Around Us fisheries catch reconstructed data with the Global Fishing Watch fishing effort dataset to generate estimates of foreign fishing catches within EEZs of low-income countries and on the High Seas in the Indian Ocean region. Thus, despite potentially high uncertainty, this project will generate urgently needed estimates on foreign and distant-water fisheries, which are hard to monitor, to enable national and regional decision-makers to better manage fisheries. This research does not involve field-based data collection, as we emphasize the utility of pre-existing databases and data sets. Students are expected to have R programming skills, exercise use of their critical thinking skills, be self-driven and have curiosity about fisheries data science. Good and collegial communication, networking and collaborative skills are also required, as this project form part of the Sea Around Us' international collaboration with the Global Fishing Watch initiative.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>
<p>Prof Dirk Zeller dirk.zeller@uwa.edu.au</p>	<p>The largest freshwater fishery data challenge in Africa: Lake Victoria</p> <p>Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda are the major stakeholders in the largest freshwater body in Africa, Lake Victoria, which has the biggest freshwater fishery in Africa. Much of the regional food security, domestic livelihoods and local economic benefits are derived from this freshwater fishery, yet it is heavily under-valued and under-represented in fisheries science and policy at the national and regional level, as it is largely dominated by marginalized small-scale fishers that do not feature adequately or accurately in national data used for decision making. As part of the international <i>Sea Around Us - Indian Ocean</i> research initiative (www.seaaroundus-io.org), the student will engage in a fisheries data science project to improve and update the globally available data on freshwater fisheries catches and fishing effort of Lake Victoria's freshwater fisheries. This research builds on a successful freshwater project in 2020 for Kenya, and may directly contribute to and participate in a regional capacity enhancement workshop and training initiative for the Lake Victoria scientific community being held in late 2021. These projects generally do not involve field-based data collection, as we emphasize the utility of pre-existing data sets and close international collaborations with in-country experts for enhancement through data gap assessments and large-scale meta-analyses. Such collaborations require sensitivity and diplomatic interpersonal skills due to the sensitivity associated with the colonial history in East Africa. An open, curious and keen mind, critical thinking skills, self-drive and a curiosity about fisheries data science is crucial. While not crucial, if you also have some R programming skills all the better.</p>	<p>Honours Masters PhD</p>