A primary driver of trait evolution is sexual selection, both intersexual (male-female interactions used in mate attraction) and intrasexual (male-male interactions used in competition). We are examining the role of vocal communication during male-male interactions in Xenopus (African clawed frogs), a fully aquatic genus. One vocal behavior used by all species is the release call, a call produced by a male when clasped by another male. Release calls function to terminate clasp attempts, freeing up time and energy for the pursuit of females.

In this study, we will use a number of behavioral experiments to record and analyze release calls in different species. Further, males of different species will be paired and the duration of clasps measured. These experiments require careful observation and some computer analysis skills. Interested students should contact Darcy Kelley: dbk3@columbia.edu