

Dear E3B Family,

As another academic year winds down, it's a good time to look back and reflect on the achievements of E3B students and faculty. Once again, there were many this year.

Students continue to make great contributions with their research and other activities. We are happy to congratulate three E3B Ph.D. students who successfully defended their dissertations: **Matt Fagan**'s dissertation was titled, "The changing matrix: Reforestation and connectivity in a tropical habitat corridor" – Matt is now working as a NASA Postdoctoral Fellow based at Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. **Su-jen Roberts**' dissertation was titled, "Intra-sexual competition and reproduction in wild blue monkeys" – Su-jen is now weighing her options and deciding on the next step in her career. **Meha Jain**'s dissertation was titled, "Adaptation to Climate Variability in Social Agro-ecological Systems." Meha is starting a post-doctoral fellowship at Stanford University in the Department of Environmental Earth System Science and Center on Food Security and the Environment. Congratulations! We applaud you on passing this milestone in your careers!

In addition, many Ph.D. students received prestigious awards, among them: **Bob Muscarella**, who was awarded a National Science Foundation fellowship for a project titled, "Evaluating determinants of demographic variation across tree species ranges"; **Steve Wood**, who was granted a Fulbright award for field work in southeastern Senegal to study how landscape configuration and agrobiodiversity influence soil organic matter stabilization, as well as a United States Agency for International Development/Feed the Future Borlaug Food Security Fellowship this year; **Sarah Guindre-Parker**, who won a research grant from the American Ornithologists' Union; **Megan Cattau**, who won a US-Indo Grant in June 2013, an Explorers Club Grant in March 2014, and a CIFOR Grant in early 2014, in addition to her Fulbright grant for research in Indonesia; and **Maressa Takahashi**, who received an award from the Explorers Club to support her research on nutritional ecology of monkeys.

Our students in the Master's program for Conservation Biology continue to excel: **Natalie Hofmeister** was awarded a research grant from the American Ornithologists' Union; **Erin Eastwood** and **Allison Roth** both received National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program Honorable Mentions this year; **Kaggie Orrick** and **Cynthia Malone** both received AC⁴ 2014 graduate student fellowships from the Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict, and Complexity, part of the Earth Institute at Columbia University; **Cynthia** was also listed as Honorable Mention for a Ford Foundation PreDoctoral Fellowship.

Undergraduates in the E3B programs were also honored with many awards: **Margarete Diaz Cuadros** has the great honor of being the Columbia College Class of 2014 Valedictorian (Margarete is a biochemistry major with a concentration in the E3B program Evolutionary Biology of the Human Species). A grand total of five of the graduating Evolutionary Biology of the Human Species Seniors are being inducted into *Phi Beta Kappa*: **Margarete Diaz Cuadros, Evelyn Jagoda, Michael Kelly, Leslie Quade and Misha Solomon**. Two graduating Environmental Biology Seniors are also *Phi Beta Kappa*: **Isabelle Fisher** and **Abigail Golden**. Congratulations to all of the graduating students and to their major advisors Jill Shapiro (EBHS) and Matt Palmer (EB)!

We are happy to see so many of our students graduate and move on in their careers. There are 12 graduates from the EBHS Undergrad program this year, and 13 graduates from the EB Undergrad program. Six M.A. students are graduating this year: **Erica Fischer, Nichar Gregory, Chris Haight, Hannah Jaris, Alyssa Klavans, and Debra Kriensky**. Congratulations, and best of luck as you go on to future endeavors. We look forward to welcoming the new M.A. and Ph.D. students who will be joining the program in the Fall.

Carla Staver, who held the first Columbia Prize Postdoctoral Fellowship that was awarded to E3B, will be assuming a tenure-track position at Yale University in the Fall. Congratulations, Carla!

Finally, our faculty has also made great strides in research and teaching. Lecturer **Josh Drew** was awarded a grant by The Mindlin Foundation this year for a project on "The Conservation and Phylogeny of Fijian Coral Reefs". Senior lecturer **Matthew Palmer** and Barnard Assistant Professor **Krista McGuire** are part of a team of 20 investigators who were awarded a five-year \$3 million grant from the National Science Foundation to study how urban green infrastructure (GI) can mitigate the city's role in coastal zone pollution. This award is among the first Science, Engineering, and Education for Sustainability awards to fund studies of coasts in the U.S. and the world. Senior lecturer **Jill Shapiro**, director of the Evolutionary Biology of the Human Species undergrad major in E3B has had an amazing group of students this year. Lecturer **Elisa Bone** is part of a team working on developing a standard protocol to assess the habitat value of ecologically enhanced engineered shorelines in the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary. We are sorry to see Elisa leave E3B, but wish her well in her next endeavors!

Assistant Professor **Dustin Rubenstein**'s course on Tropical Biology and Sustainability in Kenya (and former lab members) was featured in the Columbia College Today publication this Winter, as well as in the Columbia College Annual Report. This global immersion experience gives students the opportunity to study ecology, evolutionary biology, conservation biology, environmental engineering, and sustainable development in the environmental hub of East Africa. Assistant Professor **Duncan Menge** was named an Early Career Fellow of the Ecological Society of America for 2013-2017. This designation is made to members "...who have begun making and show promise of continuing to make outstanding contributions...".

Professor **Marina Cords** was a contributor of multiple profiles to a 5-volume set, Mammals of Africa. This reference publication was awarded The Dartmouth Medal 2014 by the American Library Association, Reference and User Association, for "best new reference published in 2013". Professor **Maria Uriarte**, along with E3B post-doctoral scientist **Jesse Lasky**, was lead author of a paper recently in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (March 2014), entitled "Trait-mediated assembly processes predict successional changes in community diversity of tropical forests". Professor **Shahid Naeem**, Director of the Earth Institute Center for Environmental Sustainability (EICES), presented work on science standards for payments for ecosystem services (PES) at the National Academies Keck Future Initiatives (NAKFI). NAKFI awarded EICES a grant to develop basic natural science standards for PES projects and to create an online platform. Professor **Don Melnick**, along with Mary Pearl, and Rodrigo Medellin, authored an op-ed in the New York Times (May 12, 2014) on threats to bats

from disease (white-nose syndrome) and wind turbines. Professor **Kevin Griffin** took on a new role as the President of the Black Rock Forest Consortium. The Black Rock Forest Consortium is a nonprofit organization founded in 1989 to advance scientific understanding of the natural world through research, education and conservation programs. I (Ruth) was pleased to organize, along with Postdoctoral Research Scientist **Pinki Mondal**, and Ph.D. student **Meghna Agarwala** a symposium on the Kanha-Pench Landscape in Madhya Pradesh, India. The meeting aimed to develop a shared vision among all stakeholders for science-based conservation in this globally important landscape for tigers and other species.

Our incredible front office staff is the backbone of the department: **Lourdes Gautier**, **Maria Estrada-Werst**, **Jae McFadden** and **Amy Kohn**. Their commitment and dedication makes E3B an efficient and fun place to work. Thanks to them for all their efforts!

These are just some of the updates and achievements from our talented, productive and engaged students and faculty as we seek to understand and conserve the living world. I close with the news that I will step down as Chair and start a sabbatical in July, 2014. It has been a privilege to serve in this role for the last three years and get to know first-hand the amazing talent and enthusiasm in our small department. **Kevin Griffin** will assume responsibilities as chair. We all look forward to Kevin's leadership as he takes over the helm.

Best wishes to all for a relaxing and productive summer!

