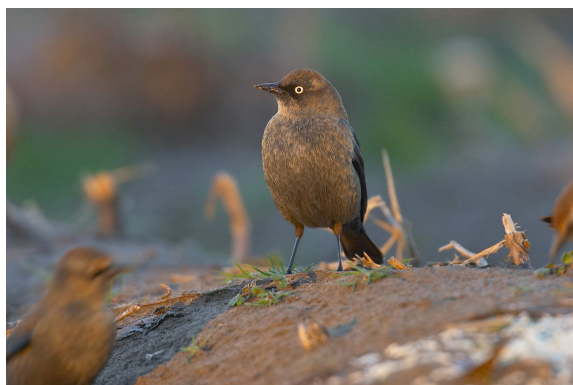


Researching the Rusty Blackbird

Dr Claudia Mettke-Hofmann recently went on a research trip to the US and Canada funded by HEFCE. She visited the USDA Forest Service in Stoneville, MS, the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center in Washington, DC, and the University of Western Ontario, in London, Canada, presenting her research on the decline of the rusty blackbird on its wintering ground. Claudia also learned a new metabolite profiling method which has suggested interesting differences in habitat quality in the rusty blackbird's wintering areas.



The Avian Research Center in Ontario is possibly becoming one of the most influential and advanced bird research centres in the world. Recently, they finished a new aviary building with opportunities for keeping more than 400 birds, including shorebirds, with state-of-the-art laboratory and experimental facilities among them a wind tunnel. Additionally, a RV was refurbished for fieldwork with a magnetic-resonance-imaging unit which allows measuring body mass and fat content in living birds within minutes (up to now this was only possible by analysing dry mass of dead birds). This vehicle is also available for the winter work on the rusty blackbird.

Scholarship project publication

The second Rare Breeds Survival Trust vacation scholarship, awarded to NSP Ecology student Nick Golding in 2007, has led to a short paper in *Research in Veterinary Science*. After graduating in 2008 Nick was employed as a research assistant at the Institute of Animal Health, Pirbright working on the midge vectors of bluetongue disease, but has now been accepted for a PhD on UK mosquitoes at Oxford University/Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

Prize winning poster

PhD student Valerie Todd won the £200 prize for best research poster at the Salford Postgraduate Research Conference (SPARC) in May. This conference is attended by PhD students from Universities across the North West of England. Valerie's winning poster was entitled *Mood regulation in obesity surgery patients: A qualitative study*. She also delivered a conference paper on the same topic.

Evolution of the human foot

Dr James Ohman gave an invited Keynote Lecture entitled: *Footsteps into the past* at the 7th Staffordshire Conference on Clinical Biomechanics, held at Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent, in April 2009. The conference was for consultants, podiatrists, chiropodists and researchers concerned with the movement of the foot during gait.

Reflecting on computer use

Dr Stephen Fairclough presented a paper entitled 'monitoring mental overload via the biocybernetic loop' at the *Future and Emerging Technology (FET) Conference* in Prague. This paper was part of a special session devoted to the REFLECT project, which is funded by CEC under Framework 7. The REFLECT project involved LJMU as well as a number of academic and industrial partners (Fraunhofer FIRST, the University of Groningen, Pavia University, Munich University, Philips Research and Ferrari). The project is concerned with the development of computer systems that monitor the psychological/physical status of the user and adapt themselves accordingly. For example, if the user is frustrated, the system may automatically offer help information. The REFLECT project was featured on a special section of the BBC technology programme 'Click' which was recorded at the Prague conference. For more information see <http://reflect.pst.ifi.lmu.de/>

Evolution of the human mind

Professor Filippo Aureli presented the Plenary lecture at the interdisciplinary meeting *The Primate Mind: Built to Connect with Other Minds* which was held in Erice, Italy, in early June. (http://www.emory.edu/LIVING_LINKS/primate_mind/). NSP PhD students Barbara Tiddi and Eugenia Polizzi di Sorrentino, and former PhD student Orlaith Fraser (now a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Vienna) also attended the meeting and presented posters.

Research seminars

Natural science research seminars take place every week on Wednesdays at 4.30pm in room 327, Byrom Street. The first few talks for next semester are:

September 30th Anna Nilsson, University of Oslo. *Climate change effects on the ecology and migration of birds - from blue tits to dippers.*

October 7th Julien Louys, LJM. *From bones to biomes: new approaches in vertebrate palaeoecology.*

October 14th Warren Eastwood, University of Birmingham. *Integrating palaeoenvironmental and historical/textual archives: evidence for environment and landscape change in Cappadocia (Turkey) since late Antiquity (AD 300).*

October 28th Christopher Beatty, Universidad de Vigo. *Mimics, models and myths: do the *Polythore damselflies* of Peru resemble toxic butterflies?*

Some forthcoming and recent publications by staff within the School

Antón, M., Salesa, M.J., Galobart, Á., Pastor, J.F., **Turner, A.** in press. Soft tissue reconstruction of *Homotherium latidens* (Mammalia, Carnivora, Felidae). Implications for the possibility of representation in Palaeolithic art. *Geobios*.

Asensio, N., Korstjens, A.H., **Aureli, F.** 2009. Fissioning minimizes ranging costs in spider monkeys: a multi-level approach. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* 63: 649-659.

Braun, D., Plummer, T., Ditchfield, P., **Bishop, L.**, Ferraro, J. 2009. Oldowan technology and raw material variability at Kanjera South, Kenya. In: Hovers, E. & Braun, D. (Eds.) *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Understanding the Oldowan*. New York: Springer.

Clare, T. in press. A magical thing: symmetry and inversion; appropriation and evocation. The layout of the Long Meg enclosures. *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*.

Fisher, J., Barker, T., James, C., Clarke, S. in press. Water Quality in chronically nutrient-rich lakes: the example of the Shropshire-Cheshire Meres. *Freshwater Reviews*.

Fraser, O.N., Koski, S.E., Wittig, R.M., **Aureli, F.** 2009. Why are bystanders friendly to recipients of aggression? *Journal of Communicative and Integrative Biology* 2-3: 1-7.

Golding, N., **Small, R.W.** in press. The relative resistance to gastrointestinal nematode infection of three British sheep breeds. *Research in Veterinary Science*.

Kastenmueller, A., Fischer, P., Jonas, E., Greitemeyer, T., Frey, D., Köppl, J., Aydin, N. 2009. Selective exposure: The impact of framing information search instructions as gains and losses. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 39: 1-10.

Plummer, T., **Bishop, L.**, Ditchfield, P., Kingston, J., Ferraro, J., Hertel, F., Braun, D. 2009. The environmental context of Oldowan hominin activities at Kanjera South, Kenya. In: Hovers, E. & Braun, D. (Eds.) *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Understanding the Oldowan*. New York: Springer. pp. 149-160.

Sneddon, J., Clemente, R., Riby, P., **Lepp, N.W.** in press. Source-Pathway-Receptor investigation of the fate of metals and metalloids derived from shotgun pellets discharged into woodland and pasture ecosystems managed for game shooting: Examples from Cheshire, UK. *Environmental Pollution*.

Todd, V., **McIlroy, D.**, Bunting, B. 2009. Individual differences in education: What do we know beyond ability? *The Irish Journal of Psychology* 30: 145-158.

Turner, A. in press. The evolution of the guild of large Carnivora of the British Isles during the Middle and Late Pleistocene. *Journal of Quaternary Science*.

Wilkinson D.M. (2009) Treelines, climate and temperature regulation in plants – a wider context for Korner's views on the importance of plant architecture. *Plant Ecology and Diversity* 2: 1-4.