



DEPARTMENT OF
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
Charles E. Schmidt College of Science
Florida Atlantic University



Fall 2015

The **Department of Biological Sciences** is the largest department at FAU. We have over 2,500 undergraduate majors, 75 Ph.D. students and 70 M.S. students. Three hundred students graduate per year with Bachelors degrees in Biology.

Biologicals Sciences In The News

Dr. John (Jay) Baldwin - "Bald eagles" - Palm Beach Post - April 18, 2015

Dr. Stephen Kajiura - "FAU Professor Leads Research on Sensory Biology of Sharks and Massive Seasonal Migration of Blacktip Sharks in South Florida" - Newswire - June 16, 2015

Dr. Ken Dawson-Scully - "Fruit flies 'push the limit' and lead researchers to an unexpected discovery" - Science Daily - June 16, 2015

Dr. Erik Noonburg - "Scientist Sundays" - Miami New Times - July 5, 2015

Dr. Dale Gawlik - "Past Water Patterns Drive Present Wading Bird Numbers" - EurekaAlert - June 25, 2015

New People

Dr. Rindy Anderson joined the department as an Assistant Professor and has set up her Davie-based lab. She studies the evolutionary ecology of behavior, with a focus on animal social behavior, communication and cognition. Anderson will start mentoring her first FAU graduate student this fall.

Dr. Marianne Porter also joined the department as an Assistant Professor and her lab is in Boca. She studies the cartilaginous "backbones" of elasmobranchs (sharks, skates, and rays), specifically their material properties and dynamic mechanics. Porter has two graduate students in her lab.

Dr. Alex Keene joins the department as Associate Professor this fall and is currently setting up his Jupiter-based lab. Keene brings two NSF and two NIH grants to FAU. He studies the genetic basis of sleep and memory using fruit fly and blind Mexican cavefish. Five graduate students and one postdoc will accompany him to FAU

Sixteen new Ph.D. students will join the IB, IB-ES and IB-N programs in fall 2015 bringing the total program enrollment to 75 students: Mary Bowers (FAU), David Bradshaw (U. Illinois), Hersh Chaitin (FAU), Sarah Hoffman (Clemson), Lauren Kircher (U. New Haven), Conall McNichol (Temple), Karlis Justs (FAU), Camilo Yepes (FAU), David Essian (Northern Michigan U.), Marissa Martinez (Texas A & M), Joseph Niederhauser (UCF), Wesley Bollinger (Georgia Fox University), Melissa Slocumb (University of Nevada, Reno), Kazuma Murakami (University of Nevada, Reno), Maria Yurgel (Marist College), and James Jaggard (University of Nevada, Reno).

Congratulations To The Following

- **Dr. Kailiang Jia** was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor.
- **Drs. Stephen Kajiura** and **Charles 'Ed' Proffitt** were promoted to Full Professor.
- **Dr. Tim Theisen** was promoted to Senior Instructor.

IB Ph.D. Alumni Highlights

Dr. James Beerens ('14) is an ecologist with the USGS and an affiliate FAU faculty member. Along with Drs. Gawlik and Noonburg, he recently published in *PlosOne*.

Dr. Christine Bedore ('13), has completed a postdoc at Duke University and accepted a tenure-track faculty position at Georgia Southern University Biology Department starting this fall. Last year Bedore, along with recent FAU M.S. graduate Lindsay Harris and Dr. Kajiura published a paper in the journal *Zoology* (that was highlighted on the cover).

Funding Over the Past Twelve Months

- Over \$3M in federal funds (for the entire grant duration, direct plus indirect costs) were awarded to Drs. Brian Benscoter, Dale Gawlik, Kailiang Jia, Marguerite Koch-Rose, Alex Keene, Sarah Milton, Greg Macleod, Dianne Owen and Xing-Hai Zhang.
- Foundation and other funds totaling over \$475,000 were awarded to Drs. Ken Dawson-Scully, Steve Kajiura, Marguerite Koch-Rose, Michael Salmon and Jeanette Wyneken. An additional \$268,000 for IB Ph.D. student stipends was received from Torrey Pines Institute for the Molecular Studies, Scripps and Max Planck.

Summer Conferences

- Drs. Marianne Porter and Tricia Meredith (IB Ph.D. alumnus) attended the HHMI Summer Institutes this year and look forward to implementing different active learning methods into their teaching.
- An USGS-FAU Technical Meeting was held in June to strengthen partnerships and projects addressing "how precipitation downscaling might be used to improve Everglades science and restoration" on the Davie campus.