

BioNews – September 2020

New publication from the Trapani Lab

Prof. Joe Trapani, along with several Amherst College students, including Biology major Eileen Troconis-Gonzalez '15, recently published [this paper](#): Ozdemir YI¹⁹, Hansen CA¹⁷, Ramy MA¹⁸, Troconis EL¹⁵, McNeil LD²¹, Trapani JG. Recording Channelrhodopsin-Evoked Field Potentials and Startle Responses from Larval Zebrafish. *Methods Mol Biol* 2191:201-220. Congrats to all the authors!

Congrats to 2020 Biology SURF students

This month the eight SURF students working in Biology labs gave their virtual presentations. They were: Dagim Belete (Edwards lab), Alireza Khoddam Mohammadi (Edwards lab), Javier Londono (Jeong lab), Sam Park (Jeong lab), Ainsley Mackenzie (Kristensen lab), Nicole Song (Lee lab), Gary Sun (Lee lab), and Justin Su (Lee lab). Congratulations everyone!

Get involved with the Biology Steering Committee

The Biology Steering Committee (formerly the 3+4 Committee) works to build community within the Biology Department. The committee has been very active so far this semester, hosting a kick-off trivia event and a very important discussion about diversity and inclusion in STEM departments. Email biology3plus4@gmail.com to find out more about future events, and to get involved!

Staff milestone

Congratulations to our animal care technician Robert Hamel for his 10-year employment anniversary at Amherst College. Thanks Robert, for taking such good care of our rodents, fish, sea anemones and other critters!

News from Biology Department alumni

There are LOTS of exciting updates from recent Biology and BCBP grads from the Jeong lab: **Jenny Gallegos-Iraheta '20** started her new job as a clinical technician at the Inova Health System Loudoun Hospital; **Leah Kim '19** started medical school at NYU Grossman School of Medicine; and **Emily Park '19** started medical school at Yale School of Medicine. **Chris DaVeiga '20** and **Liz Parsons '20** published an [outreach article for kids](#). This was a side project Chris and Liz started as rising sophomore SURF students. Liz and Chris started new jobs, too: Liz is now at the Ragon Institute as a research technician and Chris is a clinical research coordinator at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Jonathan Perez '10 has just started a tenure-track faculty position in the Department of Biology at the University of South Alabama.

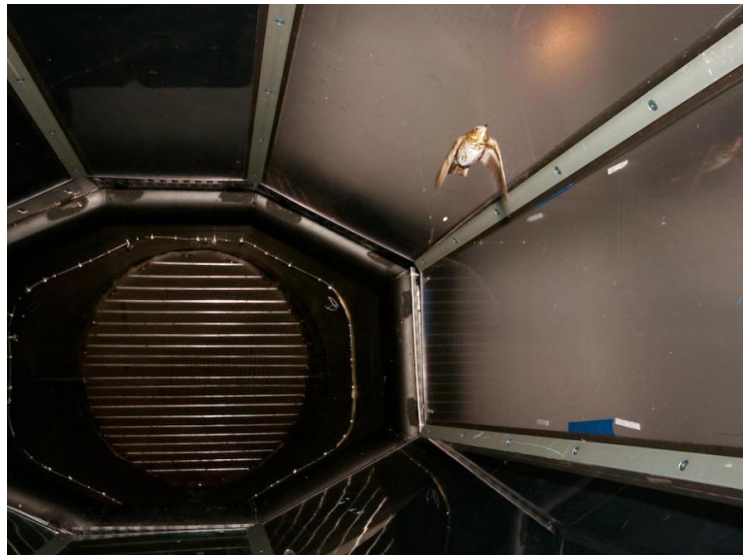
Tracy Montgomery '10 is starting a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Konstanz in Germany, where her research will focus on Verreaux's sifakas, a kind of lemur.

Julia Vrtilik '15 is starting a Ph.D. program at the Ohio State University, where she will be studying the evolution of social behavior in vampire bats.

Amanda Patsis '17 is starting a Ph.D. program in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Minnesota, where she'll study microbes living deep down in iron mines.

After leaving Amherst, **Joely DeSimone '15** and **Betsy Black '16** spent several months training birds to simulate migratory flight in a wind tunnel. The paper describing that work has [just recently been published](#) in the *Journal of Experimental Biology*. A photo of this wind tunnel is shown at right.

Recently, Betsy has been working in Hawai'i as part of an invasive fire ant removal project. You can watch a clip about their work [here](#) (profanity alert!).



Julia Burnett '20 just started a job in August as a research assistant in a *C. elegans* lab at NYU Grossman School of Medicine. Here she is at her bench, with a view of the Empire State Building.

If you have items for BioNews, please send them to Ethan Clotfelter (edclotfelter@amherst.edu)!