

British Ecological Society  
Tropical Ecology Group

**3<sup>rd</sup> EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER MEETING**  
**University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University**  
**30-31<sup>st</sup> March 2009**

Congratulations to Francis Brearley, Jennifer Rowntree, Emma Shaw and Sharon Zytynska for organising the major TEG event of 2009; and thanks to the staff at Manchester Metropolitan University and University of Manchester for being helpful hosts. This year seventeen UK and two overseas institutions were represented with the largest contingents from University of Oxford (6 delegates), University of Nottingham (5) and Manchester University (5). It is also worth noting that the two students who attended from the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh returned north with both the student prizes: best oral presentation (Alex Twyford), and poster (Jane Droop) – well done them in a very competitive field!

Many thanks also go to our plenary speakers. Day one was kicked off by Prof. Robin Chazdon (University of Connecticut) who talked about the development of appropriate tools for understanding patterns of biodiversity in human-dominated landscapes. This was a fascinating insight into the powers of forest recovery following clearance; given favourable opportunities and conditions. Day two started with a 'shocking' talk from Prof. Charles Sheppard (University of Warwick) highlighting the devastating impact of sea surface temperature change on coral reef ecosystems. He also provided useful guidance on how to deal with politicians and princes, the use of the term "Sir" is apparently very handy! In addition, I would like to thank Prof. Lloyd Peck (British Antarctic Survey) for providing two talks. The first gave a useful insight into the NERC themes for funding **2007-2012** (<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/themes/>), his take home message from this was GET INVOLVED! The second, comparing tropical and Antarctic ecosystems, argued that organisms in these two regions are particularly vulnerable to predicted global climate change because of recent (millions of years) stability within their respective climate zones.

The twenty early career researcher talks over the two days were of an exceptionally high quality and wide ranging. These included examination of the physical characteristics of dry forest trees in Zambia, conservation policy development (for rhinos or for people?), drivers of biodiversity and phylogenetic niche partitioning.

Away from the lecturer theatre entertainment was provided after the conference dinner by first, a belly dancing display, and second an opportunity to learn some belly dancing moves! This gave many of us the opportunity to discovered muscles that we didn't know we had... whilst others escaped back to the bar!

The meeting ran exceptionally smoothly and it was great to talk tropical ecology with so many enthusiastic researchers. I hope you all found it as useful as I did and that we are able to build on this success next year. *University of Nottingham has been proposed as a possible host for next year's event; however, if you are interested in getting involved, or have suggestions for other events, please let me know...*

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