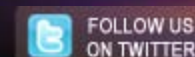


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Guam Guam News UOG Researchers Search for Rare Butterflies and Snails

UOG Researchers Search for Rare Butterflies and Snails

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Guam News - Guam News

Guam - University of Guam (UoG) researchers, faculty, and students found a unique way to spend their spring break, they hiked in limestone forests around the island looking for rare butterflies and snails.

In 2012, UOG was awarded a \$330,000 cooperative agreement by Department of Defense (DoD) to survey the portions of the island for three tree snail species (Samoana fragilis (fragile tree snail), Partula radiolata (Guam tree snail), Partula gibba (humped tree snail)) and two species of butterflies (Hypolimnas octocula marianensis (Mariana eight-spot butterfly or forest flicker), Vagrans egistina (Marianas rusty)).

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[Listed as critically endangered by IUCN, a Guam tree snail, *Partula radiolata* slides across a leaf.]

"This cooperative agreement has allowed UoG to bring in experts from University of Hawaii, Manoa (UHM) as well as provide valuable field and laboratory experience to UoG students underscoring the importance of research and its connection with undergraduate and graduate teaching," says Dr. Dan Lindstrom, principal investigator for the project. "We have assembled a great team and the camaraderie is unprecedented. We are having a wonderful time doing good science."

Lindstrom is the genetics team leader for the project working closely with Dr. John Benedict, project coordinator and botany/GIS specialist. UoG, Western Pacific Tropical Research Center scientist Dr. Aubrey Moore and biology professor Dr. Curt Fiedler are the butterfly team co-leaders. Drs. Alex Kerr and Frank Camacho are the snail team co-leaders. Kerr is a professor with UoG's Marine Lab and Camacho is a biology/ecology professor.

Visiting snail specialist Dr. Brenden Holland, is the director of the Endangered Tree Snail Conservation Lab at UHM. Dr. Daniel Rubinoff, also from UHM is an entomologist with a strong background in conservation and tropical butterflies. This project is fortunate to have the expertise of these visiting scientists as well as that of their postdoctoral research assistants Drs. David Sischo and William Haines.

"Scientifically, we want to follow up on decades of research on Guam's land snails for information on how populations are doing, where they are located, as well as looking at other animals that prey on them or their host plants," says Lindstrom.



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Funds from this cooperative agreement have allowed Lindstrom to take genetic samples with the purpose of comparing genetic populations on the island and the region with practical applications for genetic management. Undergraduate research assistant Sherri Mantanona says, "Working on this project adds to my experience with local endemic species. Previously, I worked on the ecology of bird loss project, but having a chance to do field work on a new project for a different species, I look at the environment in a new way. Having lab work coupled with field work strengthens my skills for graduate school." Other biology majors working on the project are Steve Pillman, Patrick Mantanona, Michael Natuel, and Megan Volsteadt. Recent UOG graduates Julie Duay from the Master of Science Environmental Science program and Rob Ady with a bachelor degree in biology, add their skills to the scientific posse.

Collaborative efforts between Department of Defense and University of Guam researchers, faculty, students and visiting scientists benefit the island and the region in numerous ways including deepening our understanding of island flora and fauna and the conservation of natural resources.

Suggested tag lines:

Listed as critically endangered by IUCN, a Guam tree snail, *Partula radiolata* slides across a leaf.

Photo credit: Dr. G. Curt Fiedler



Photo 2:

University of Guam researchers, students and visiting scientists survey a limestone forest for the Mariana Eight Spot butterfly. In the foreground is the host plant for the butterfly, *Procris pedunculata*.

Photo credit: Dr. Dan Rubinoff.

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