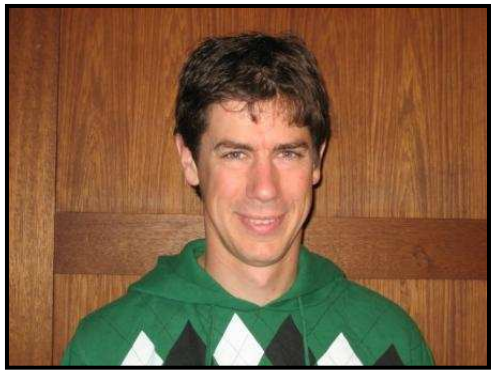
Scott Foster's profile, July 2008



Member since: 2003 – I think

Current work position: Statistician

Employer: CSIRO Mathematical and Information Sciences

Location: Hobart, Tasmania

Describe one of your current work projects:
I am currently working on a number projects. Some are ongoing, some are just starting. These topics are: fast, accurate estimation methods for generalised linear mixed models; developing statistical methods to analysis and predict video transect data on the continental slopes; developing methods for the analysis of fisheries catch and effort data that takes into account targeting patterns and; modelling biodiversity through species (rank) abundance distributions. All of these topics involve a majority of statistical methodology development. However, they are firmly based in real world applications and try to bring statistical methods up to where the data needs them to be.

What do you like about your work?
Perhaps, the single aspect that I like most about statistical science is that it provides a method to turn data (too vast to be intelligible) into information. I am also in the very lucky situation where the problems I get to work on often require statistical development. In this case both the statistical and application science benefit - I hope!

I particularly like working on environmental, ecological and biological problems. The problems that stem from these areas have real potential to benefit society and the environment that we live in.

The scientists that I work with are highly motivated, interested, and above all, are friendly and likeable. This makes a big difference to the level of enjoyment I get from work.

Qualifications

1998	B.Sc.	The University of Tasmania
1999	B.Math (Hons)	The University of Newcastle
2006	Ph.D (Statistical Genetics)	The University of Adelaide

Work history

2000 – 2002	Biometrician, Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries
2006	Lecturer, Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Sciences
2006 – present	Statistician, CSIRO Mathematical and Information Sciences

Any advice for prospective "biometricians"?
I'm not sure I'm qualified to give advice – my face is not wizened enough and my voice not gravelly enough. However, I will. Enjoy what you do. Be interested in the statistical aspects AND the application of any project that you are involved with. Try to understand what the statistical methods are actually doing – don't necessarily just believe the output from your favourite stats package. Remember that it is important to ask 'why?'