

## **Curriculum Vitae**

### **Benjamin J. Liebeskind**

Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Systems and Synthetic Biology - University of Texas at Austin  
bliebeskind@austin.utexas.edu

## **EDUCATION**

Ph.D., Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior - University of Texas (2009-2014), Drs. H. Zakon and D. Hillis.  
B.A., Liberal Arts - St. John's College, Santa Fe (2003-2008).

## **APPOINTMENTS**

Teaching Assistant, Workshop on Molecular Evolution, Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole MA  
(summer 2013, '14, and '15)

Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Texas at Austin, Drs. R. Aldrich and E. Marcotte. January 2015 - present

Teaching Assistant, 2009 (F), 2010 (F&Sp), 2011 (F&Sp&Sum), 2012 (F&Sp), 2013 (Sp).

Classes assisted: Vertebrate Neurobiology - Neurobiology Lab - Ecology - Introductory Biology.  
Research Assistant, 2010 (Sp&Sum), 2012 (Sum), 2013 (Sum) - 2014.

## **AWARDS**

Outstanding Dissertation Award, University of Texas College of Natural Sciences 2014.

Runner-up, Hamilton Award, Evolution 2014.

Nominated, Hamilton Award, Evolution 2013.

## **SUPPORT**

NIH NRSA Post-Doctoral Training Grant 2015

IB DDIG-like grant (University of Texas), Fall 2011.

IB startup fellowship (University of Texas), Spring 2010.

## **INVITED TALKS**

"Ion Channels and the Tree of Life," Baylor 2015

## **PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES**

### **Talks:**

Quest for Orthologs 2015, Barcelona

Evolution 2014, Raleigh NC

SICB 2014, Austin TX

Evolution 2013, Snowbird UT.

Brain Behavior and Evolution 2013, University of Texas at Austin

Choanoflagellate Workshop 2011, Berkeley CA

### **Posters:**

BEACON Congress 2013, Michigan State University

Evolution 2010, Portland OR.

## **PUBLICATIONS (\* Co-first authorship)**

**Liebeskind**, Hillis, Zakon, Hofmann. "Complex homology and the evolution of nervous systems."

Trends in Ecology and Evolution 2016; doi: 10.1016/j.tree.2015.12.005

McWhite\*, **Liebeskind**\*, Marcotte. "Applications of comparative evolution to human disease genetics."

Current Opinions in Genetics and Development 2015; vol. 35, 16-24

**Liebeskind**, Hillis, Zakon. "Convergence of ion channel genome content in early animal evolution."

PNAS 2015; vol 112 no. 8, E846-E851.

- Moran, Barzilai, **Liebeskind**, Zakon. "Evolution of voltage-gated ion channels at the emergence of Metazoa." *Journal of Experimental Biology* 2015; vol 218 issue 4, 515-525
- Ghezzi\*, **Liebeskind**\*, Thompson, Atkinson, Zakon. "Ancient association between cation leak channels and Mid1 proteins is conserved in fungi and animals." *Frontiers in Molecular Neuroscience* 2014; vol. 7 num. 00015
- Liebeskind**, Hillis, Zakon. "Independent acquisition of sodium selectivity in bacterial and animal sodium channels." *Current Biology* 2013; vol. 23 issue 21, R948-R949.d
- Liebeskind**, Hillis, Zakon. "Phylogeny Unites Animal Sodium Leak Channels with Fungal Calcium Channels in an Ancient, Voltage-Insensitive Clade." *Molecular Biology and Evolution* 2012. 10.1093/molbev/mss182.
- Liebeskind**. "Evolution of sodium channels and the new view of early nervous system evolution." *Communicative & Integrative Biology* 2011; 4(6).
- Liebeskind**, Hillis, Zakon. "Evolution of Sodium Channels Predates the Origin of Nervous Systems in Animals." *PNAS* 2011; vol. 108 no. 22, 9154-9159.

## SYNERGISTIC ACTIVITIES

### Teaching:

Co-founded, designed and taught a biological computing working group for graduate students and post-docs at University of Texas (spring 2013):

<https://wikis.utexas.edu/display/CCBB/Introduction+to+Biological+Computing+Course>

Teaching Assistant, Software Carpentry workshop, University of Texas at Austin, January 2013.

### Manuscript Reviews:

*PNAS* — *Mol Biol Evol* — *PLOS One* — *Ecol Evo* — *Sci Rep* — *BMC Genomics*

### Undergraduate Training:

Trained and guided two undergraduate researchers in bioinformatics, phylogenetic methods, and molecular biology. These projects are expected to lead to publications in the near future. Both students are now in graduate school (North Carolina State University and the University of Chicago)

### Public Outreach:

I have presented my research on public radio (<http://www.kvrx.org/schedule/programs/337>), on blogs (<http://beacon-center.org/>), for a local homeschooling group, and at a public lecture series which I helped organize for the year 2011 – 2012 (<http://scienceunderthestars.org/about/>). This lecture series is put on by graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin and provides free lectures on current research at UT geared towards a general audience and children. I have also participated in local science outreach events not related to my research, such as Darwin Day at the Texas Natural Science Center (<http://www.utexas.edu/tmm/events/darwin/>), where I created a station for children on the phylogeny of vertebrates.