

Nicholas A. Mason (he/him/his)

[updated on December 4, 2020]

Museum of Natural Science
Louisiana State University
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PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS:

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|---|--------------|
| Assistant Professor, Department of Biological Science, Louisiana State University | 2020–current |
| Curator of Ornithology, Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana State University | 2020–current |
| Postdoctoral Fellow, NSF Biological Collections Program, UC Berkeley | 2018–2020 |
| Doctoral Fellow, EPA STAR Fellowship Program | 2015–2017 |

EDUCATION:

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| PhD Cornell University, Dept. of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Advisor: Dr. Irby J. Lovette | December 2017 |
| MSc San Diego State University, Dept. of Biology, Evolutionary Biology Program Advisor: Dr. Kevin J. Burns | August 2012 |
| BA Vassar College, Dept. of Biology, Honors Honors Thesis Advisor: Dr. Erica J. Crespi | May 2008 |

PUBLICATIONS:

28 total | 715 Citations | h-index: 12, i10-index: 16 | [Google Scholar](#)
equal contributions^{ec} | mentees: postdoc^P; graduate^G; undergraduate^U

Under review / in revision / in press

31. Yang, E.^U, Unitt, P., and N.A. Mason. In review. Dorsal color variation among subspecies of the "Oregon" Dark-eyed Junco complex *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*.
30. Cicero, C., Mason, N.A., Jiménez, R.A., Wait, D.R., Wang-Claypool, C.Y., and R.C.K. Bowie. Integrative taxonomy and geographic sampling underlie successful species delimitation. In review. *Auk: Ornithological Advances*.
29. Demery, A., Burns, K.J., and N.A. Mason. In review. Bill size, but not bill shape, impacts vocal evolution in a large clade of Neotropical songbirds. *Auk: Ornithological Advances*.

Peer-reviewed manuscripts since arriving at LSU

28. Mason, N.A., Unitt, P., and J.P. Sparks. 2020. Agriculture induces isotopic shifts and niche contraction in Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*) of the southern Colorado Desert. *Journal of Ornithology*.
27. Mason, N.A. and R.C.K. Bowie. 2020. Plumage patterns: ecological functions, evolutionary origins, and advances in quantification. *Auk: Ornithological Advances* 137:1–29.
26. Chesser, R.T., S.M. Billerman, K.J. Burns, C. Cicero, J.L. Dunn, A.W. Kratter, I.J. Lovette, N.A. Mason, P.C. Rasmussen, J.V. Remsen, D.F. Stotz, and K. Winker. 2020. Sixty-first supplement to the American Ornithological Society's Check-list of North American Birds. *Auk: Ornithological Advances* 137:1–24.
25. Cicero, C., Mason, N.A., Benedict, L.S., and J.D. Rising. 2020. Behavioral, morphological, and ecological trait evolution in two clades of New World Sparrows (*Aimophila* and *Peucaea*, Passerellidae). *PeerJ* 8:e9249.

Peer-reviewed manuscripts before arriving at LSU

24. Mason, N.A., Fletcher, N.K., Gill, B., Funk, C., and K. Zamudio. 2020. Geographic sampling and isolation by distance impact coalescent-based species delimitation. *Systematics and Biodiversity* 18:269–280.
23. Mason, N.A., Pulgarin, P., Cadena, C.D., and I. J. Lovette. 2020. De novo assembly of a high-quality reference genome for the Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*). *G3: Genes, Genomes, Genetics* 10:475–478.
22. Mason, N.A., Brunner, R., Ballen, M.C., and I.J. Lovette. 2018. Cognitive and social benefits among underrepresented first-year biology students in a field course: a qualitative case study of experiential learning in the Galápagos. *Frontiers: International Journal of Study Abroad*. 30:1–19.

21. Drury, J.P., Tobias, J.A., Burns, K.J., **Mason, N.A.**, Shultz, A.J., and H. Morlon. 2018. Contrasting impacts of competition on ecological and social trait evolution in songbirds. *PLoS Biology* 16:e2003563.
20. **Mason, N.A.** and P. Unitt. 2018. Rapid phenotypic change in a native bird population following conversion of the Colorado Desert to agriculture. *Journal of Avian Biology* 49:e01507.*
19. **Mason, N.A.**, Olvera-Vital, A., Lovette, I.J., and A.G. Navarro-Sigüenza. 2018. Hidden endemism, deep polyphyly, and repeated dispersal across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec: Diversification of the white-collared seedeater complex (*Sporophila torqueola*). *Ecology and Evolution* 8:1867–1881.
18. Goldberg, N.R.^U and **N.A. Mason**. 2017. Species identification of vagrant *Empidonax* flycatchers in northeastern North America via non-invasive DNA sequencing. *Northeastern Naturalist* 24:499–504.
17. Ballen, M.C. and **N.A. Mason**. 2017. Longitudinal analysis of a diversity support program in STEM: a national call for further assessment. *BioScience* 67:367–373.☐
16. **Mason, N.A.**, Burns, K.J., Seddon, N., Tobias, J., Claramunt, S., and E.P. Derryberry. 2017. Song evolution, speciation, and vocal learning in passerine birds. *Evolution* 71:786–796.☐[†]
15. **Mason, N.A.** 2017. Effects of wind, ambient temperature, and sun position on damselfly flight activity and perch orientation. *Animal Behaviour* 124:175–181.☐
14. Ligon, R., Simpson, R., **Mason, N.A.**, Hill, G., and K. McGraw. 2016. Evolutionary innovation and diversification of carotenoid-based pigmentation in finches. *Evolution* 70:2839–2852.
13. **Mason, N.A.**, Butler, M.W., and J.C. Owen. 2016. Membership trends in the American Ornithologists' Union and the evolving role of professional ornithological societies. *The Auk: Ornithological Advances* 133:806–811.
12. Zamudio, K., Bell, R.C., and **N.A. Mason**. 2016. Phenotypes in phylogeography: species' traits, environmental variation, and vertebrate diversification. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* 113:8041–8048.
11. Burns, K.J., Unitt, P., and **N.A. Mason**. 2016. A genus-level classification of the family Thraupidae (Class Aves: Order Passeriformes). *Zootaxa* 4088: 329–354.
10. Toews, D.P.L.^{ec}, Campagna, L.^{ec}, Taylor, S.A.^{ec}, Balakrishnan, C.N., Baldassarre, D.T., Deane-Coe, P.E., Harvey, M.G., Hooper, D.M., Irwin, D.E., Judy, C.D., **Mason, N.A.**, McCormack, J.E., McCracken, K.G., Oliveros, C.H., Safran, R.J., Scordato, E., Stryjewski, K.F., Tigano, A., Uy, A.J., and B. Winger. 2016. Genomic approaches to understanding population divergence and speciation in birds. *The Auk: Ornithological Advances* 133:13–30.
9. Freeman, B.G.^{ec} and **N.A. Mason**^{ec}. 2015. The geographic distribution of a tropical montane bird is limited by a tree: Acorn Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) and Colombian Oaks (*Quercus humboldtii*) in the northern Andes. *PLoS One* 10(6):e0128675.
8. **Mason, N.A.** and S.A. Taylor. 2015. Differentially expressed genes match bill morphology and plumage despite largely undifferentiated genomes in a Holarctic songbird. *Molecular Ecology* 24:3009–3025.[‡]
7. Barve, S.S.^{ec} and **N.A. Mason**^{ec}. 2015. Interspecific competition affects evolutionary links between cavity nesting, migration, and clutch size in Old World flycatchers. (Muscicapidae) *Ibis* 157:299–311.[§]
6. **Mason, N.A.** and K.J. Burns. 2015. The effect of habitat and body size on the evolution of vocal displays in the largest family of songbirds (Aves: Thraupidae). *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 114:538–551.
5. Freeman, B.G. and **N.A. Mason**. 2014. New Guinean passerines have globally small clutch sizes. *Emu – Austral Ornithology* 114:304–308.
4. **Mason, N.A.**, Shultz, A.J., and K.J. Burns. 2014. Elaborate visual and acoustic signals evolve independently in a large, phenotypically diverse radiation of songbirds. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 281:20140967.[¶]
3. Burns, K.J., Shultz, A.J., Title, P.O., **Mason, N.A.**, Barker, F.K., Klicka, J., Lanyon, S.M., and I.J. Lovette. 2014. Phylogenetics and diversification of tanagers (Passeriformes: Thraupidae), the largest radiation of Neotropical songbirds. *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 75:41–77.

*Popular press coverage:1

[†]News feature in PNAS

[‡]Popular press coverage:1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and Perspective in Molecular Ecology

[§]Popular press coverage:1

[¶]Popular press coverage:1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32

2. **Mason, N.A.**, Title, P.O., Cicero, C., Burns, K.J., and R.C.K. Bowie. 2014. Genetic variation among western populations of the Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) indicates recent colonization of the Channel Islands off southern California, mainland-bound dispersal, and postglacial range shifts. *The Auk: Ornithological Advances* 131:162–174.
1. **Mason, N.A.** and K.J. Burns. 2013. Molecular phylogenetics of the Neotropical seedeaters and seed-finches (*Sporophila*, *Oryzoborus*, *Dolospingus*). *Ornitología Neotropical* 24:139–155.*

BOOK CHAPTERS:

1. **Mason, N.A.**, Pasch, B., Burns, K.J., and E.P. Derryberry. 2017. Integrating museum and media collections to study vocal ecology and evolution. Pp. 57–74 in M. S. Webster (editor), *The Extended Specimen: Emerging Frontiers in Collections-Based Ornithological Research*. Studies in Avian Biology (no. 50), CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL.

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AWARDS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS:

Fellowships:

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| NSF Postdoctoral Fellowship (\$138,000) | 2017–2019 |
| EPA STAR Fellowship (\$70,000) | 2015–2016 |
| Cornell Lab of Ornithology Halberstadt Graduate Fellowship | 2014 |
| Cornell University Fellowship | 2012–2013 |
| California State University Predoctoral Fellowship | 2010–2011 |
| NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Honorable Mention (x2) | 2010, 2011 |

Grants:

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| NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (\$20,001) | 2016 |
| Cornell Sigma Xi Grant in Aid of Research (\$700) | 2015 |
| American Society of Naturalists Student Research Grant (\$2000) | 2015 |
| Andrew W. Mellon Student Research Grant (\$1000, \$1000) | 2014, 2015 |
| Sustainable Biodiversity Fund from the Atkinson's Center for a Sustainable Future (\$5060) | 2015 |
| Cornell Lab of Ornithology Athena Fund (\$3000) | 2014 |
| Graduate Student Research Award from the Society of Systematic Biologists (SSB) (\$2000) | 2014 |
| Society for the Study of Evolution (SSE) Rosemary Grant Graduate Student Research Award (\$2500) | 2014 |
| AMNH Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund (\$1708) | 2014 |
| Betty Miller Francis '47 Graduate-Undergraduate Collaboration Grant (\$1520) | 2014 |
| Garden Club of America Frances M. Peacock Scholarship (\$4000) | 2014 |
| National Geographic Young Explorers Grant (\$4995) | 2013 |
| Cornell Lab of Ornithology Athena Fund (\$5278) | 2013 |
| Kieckhefer Adirondacks Fund, Cornell University (\$3000) | 2013 |
| Systematics Research Fund Award (\$1400) | 2013 |
| AOU Student Research Award (\$2495) | 2013 |
| Paul P. Feeny Graduate Student Research Fund, Cornell University (\$500) | 2013 |
| National Sigma Xi Grant in Aid of Research (\$500) | 2013 |
| Cornell Lab of Ornithology Athena Fund (\$5450) | 2012 |
| Collins Student Research Award, Vassar College (\$500) | 2008 |

Awards and Accolades:

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| American Ornithological Society James G. Cooper Early Professional Award | 2020 |
| American Ornithological Society Marion Jenkinson Service Award | 2018 |
| American Ornithological Society Elective Member | 2017 |
| Stephen and Margery Russell Distinguished Teaching Award, Cornell University | 2017 |
| American Ornithological Society Student Presentation Award x2 | 2017, 2014 |
| Cornelia Ye Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Cornell University | 2014 |

*Selected as an [Editor's Choice](#)

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| Slevin Assignment Sequence Prize – Knight Institute for Writing, Cornell University | 2014 |
| Whittaker Award – Best Graduate Student Presentation at EEB Symposium, Cornell University | 2013 |
| Book Award – Best Presentation by a First Year Student at EEB Symposium, Cornell University | 2012 |

Scholarships:

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| Nancy Skinner Clark Fellowship, Vassar College (\$1300; \$2000) | 2014, 2015 |
| Crouch Scholarship for Avian Behavior, San Diego State University (\$3000) | 2011 |
| Mabel Meyers Memorial Scholarship, San Diego State University (\$2000) | 2011 |

PRESENTATIONS:

Invited Talks and Seminars:

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| Early Professional Plenary, <i>North American Ornithological Conference</i> . Virtual Conference | 2020 |
| Symposium, <i>American Ornithological Society</i> . Anchorage, AK | 2019 |
| Departmental Seminar, <i>Louisiana State University</i> . Baton Rouge, LA | 2018 |
| Departmental Seminar, <i>Clemson University</i> . Clemson, SC | 2018 |
| Departmental Seminar, <i>Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, MVZ Lunch Seminar Series</i> . Berkeley, CA | 2018 |
| Departmental Seminar, <i>University of Minnesota</i> . Saint Paul, MN | 2018 |
| Symposium, <i>American Ornithological Society</i> . East Lansing, MI | 2017 |
| Symposium, <i>EvoDay Symposium, Cornell University</i> . Ithaca, NY | 2017 |
| Symposium, <i>Inclusive Teaching in STEM, Cornell University</i> . Ithaca, NY | 2016 |
| Departmental Seminar, <i>Universidad de los Andes</i> . Bogotá, Colombia | 2015 |
| Departmental Seminar, <i>Universidad Autonoma de Mexico</i> . Mexico City, Mexico | 2015 |
| Symposium, <i>American Ornithologists' Union</i> . Estes Park, CO | 2015 |
| Symposium, <i>CIRTL Online Symposium on Teaching as Research</i> | 2015 |
| Connie Wilkins Lecture, <i>SUNY Cortland Biology Club</i> . Cortland, NY | 2013 |
| Seminar, <i>Cayuga Bird Club Monthly Seminar Series</i> . Ithaca, NY | 2013 |
| Seminar, <i>EvoGroup Seminar, Cornell University</i> . Ithaca, NY | 2013 |
| Seminar, <i>San Diego Field Ornithologists</i> . San Diego, CA | 2011 |
| Seminar, <i>BioFest 2011 Departmental Symposium, San Diego State University</i> . San Diego, CA | 2011 |

Contributed Talks and Posters:

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| American Ornithological Society, Tucson, AZ | 2018 |
| Evolution, Portland, OR | 2017 |
| North American Ornithological Conference, Washington, DC | 2016 |
| American Ornithologists' Union, Norman, OK | 2015 |
| Evolution, Guarujá, Brazil | 2015 |
| Evolution, Raleigh, NC | 2014 |
| American Ornithologists' Union, Chicago, IL | 2013 |
| North American Ornithological Conference, Vancouver, Canada | 2012 |
| American Ornithologists' Union, Jacksonville, FL | 2011 |
| Evolution, Norman, OK | 2011 |
| Evolution, Portland, OR | 2010 |

TEACHING:

Courses

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| WRIT1430: First-year Writing Seminar: The Enchanted Isles, <i>Cornell University</i> | Spring 2015 |
| WRIT7100: Teaching Writing, <i>Cornell University</i> | Fall 2015 |
| BioEE1780: Writing in the Majors: Evolution and Diversity in the Galápagos, <i>Cornell University</i> | Spring 2014 |
| BioEE1640: First-year Writing Seminar: Origin and Future of Biodiversity, <i>Cornell University</i> | Fall 2013 |
| BioEE 2650: Tropical Field Ecology and Behavior, <i>Cornell University</i> | January 2013 |
| Biol101L: The World of Animals, <i>San Diego State University</i> | Fall 2009 – Spring 2012 |

Workshops

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| Secuenciación de Nueva Generación y su Aplicación a la Ecología Molecular, <i>UNAM</i> | Summer 2015 |
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MENTORSHIP:

Postdoc Mentees (2)

Subir Shakya (2020–present); Louisiana State University
Maggie MacPherson (2020–present); Louisiana State University

Graduate Mentees (1)

David Vander Pluym (2020–present); Louisiana State University

Undergraduate Mentees (12)

Emma Arulanantham (2018–present); Undergraduate at UC Berkeley
Elisa Yang (2018–present); Undergraduate at UC Berkeley
Oong Zheng (2018–2019); Research assistant at UC Berkeley; PhD student at University of Minnesota
Nathan Goldberg (2016–2017); Undergraduate at Cornell; published first-author paper
Kate Bemis (2015–2016); Undergraduate at Cornell; PhD student at Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Rachel Armstrong (2014–2015); Undergraduate at Cornell
Mary Margaret Ferraro (2013–2014); Undergraduate at Cornell; Collections Manager at Cornell University
Josh Li Espinoza (2011–2012); Undergraduate at SDSU; PhD student at UC Santa Cruz
Annabelle Bernabe (2011–2012); Undergraduate at SDSU; Biologist at US Fish and Wildlife
Deena Emerson (2011–2012); Research Assistant at SDSU; PhD student at San Francisco State University
Heather Macdonald (2011–2012); Undergraduate at SDSU
Cate Thelkeld (2011–2012); Undergraduate at SDSU

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND FIELD WORK:

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| Death Valley Grinnell Resurvey Collecting Trip, <i>UC Berkeley & Museum of Vertebrate Zoology</i> | July 2018 |
| Nebraska Hybrid Zone Collecting Trip, <i>Cornell University Museum of Vertebrates</i> | July 2016 |
| Adirondacks General Collecting Trip, <i>Cornell University Museum of Vertebrates</i> | June 2015, May 2013 |
| Oaxaca, Mexico Targeted and General Collecting Trip, <i>Cornell University Museum of Vertebrates</i> | July 2014 |
| Grinnell Centennial Resurvey Project, <i>San Diego Natural History Museum</i> | October 2010, August 2012 |
| Grinnell Centennial Resurvey Project, <i>UC Berkeley & Museum of Vertebrate Zoology</i> | July 2011 |

SERVICE TO THE FIELD:

Peer Reviews

53 total peer reviews for 24 journals: Evolution (9); Molecular Ecology (7); Journal of Avian Biology (4); Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution (4); Ostrich (3); American Naturalist (2); Proceedings of the Royal Society B (2); The Auk: Ornithological Advances (2); Ecological Monographs (2); Wilson Journal of Ornithology (2); Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society (2); African Journal of Zoology (1); Biological Journal of the Linnean Society (1); BMC Evolutionary Biology (1); The Condor: Ornithological Applications (1); Ecology and Evolution (1); Ecological Applications (1); Journal of Field Ornithology (1); Journal of Natural History (1); Molecular Biology Reports (1); PeerJ (1); Proceedings of the San Diego Society of Natural History (1); Trends in Ecology and Evolution (1); Zoologia (1); Zoological Science (1).

Grant Review (ad hoc / external)

National Science Foundation (2020)

Member of AOS Scientific Program Committee

Spring 2018 – Present

Helped develop schedule and organize concurrent sessions for annual AOS meeting.

Chair of AOS Early Professionals Committee

Spring 2018 – Present

Organize events, seminars, and workshops geared toward promoting Early Professional development in the American Ornithological Society.

Member of AOS Collections Committee

Fall 2014 – Present

Supported the museum-based ornithology community by organizing workshops at annual meetings; advancing biodiversity informatics; and assisting ornithologist with issues concerning IACUC, import/export, and Federal agency policies.

Member of AOS Membership Committee

Fall 2015 – Present

Revise AOS strategy and policy to build and maintain society membership and promote ornithology in North America.

Member of AOS Meeting Continuity Committee

Spring 2017 – Present

Promote continuity of organizational efforts among annual ornithology conferences, including symposia and plenary speakers, local logistical efforts, and maintain institutional knowledge

Co-chair of AOS Student Systematics Group

Spring 2015 – Spring 2018

Prepare 4–5 proposals annually for submission to the AOU Checklist Committee. Recruit new student members and coordinate efforts to revise avian taxonomy in North America.

Member of AOS Early-career Professionals Committee

Fall 2017 – Spring 2018

Organize events and initiative to promote professional development of early-career academics and non-academic professionals in ornithology.

Chair of AOS Student Affairs Committee

Fall 2013 – Fall 2017

Chaired the AOS student affairs committee by managing a budget. Oversaw organization and logistics of student events, including professional development workshops, the Quiz Bowl, student-professional mixers, and silent auctions to raise funds for the AOS.

Chair of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Invited Speaker Committee

Spring 2013 – Fall 2013

Surveyed a large community of graduate students and faculty for invited speaker nominations and tallied votes. Served as a liaison between the graduate student committee, faculty advisor Dr. Irby Lovette and the invitees.

Member of AOS Student Affairs Committee

Fall 2012 – Fall 2013

Assisted with the organization and implementation of the Student-Professional Ornithological Social and the Student Quiz Bowl at the 2013 Chicago AOU/COS meeting and the 2012 NAOC-V meeting.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES:

American Ornithological Society (2009–present)
Society for the Study of Evolution (2009–present)
Society of Systematic Biologists (2009–present)
American Society of Naturalists (2013–present)
Wilson Ornithological Society (2020–present)