Scientific Spotlight: Scott V. Edwards

1. Scott Edwards is a scientist that has accomplished much and applied himself to his life’s work, which surrounds increasingly interesting and scientifically relevant topics. I enjoyed reading about his work on disease resistance in wild birds, as well as disease outbreaks, and the change in genome as reptiles transitioned into birds (*More detailed bio-Edwards Lab*, n.d.).

2. His work is closely related to our class material, more specifically his study of the genomic changes as a species evolves into something else (reptile into birds), which ties into our study of the gradual evolution of all life on Earth, from the beginnings of life in water to the diversity of life we have today. Birds, being descendants of dinosaurs, are also descendants of reptiles. Specifically, this come into play when looking at diapsids, a clade of sauropsids that has two temporal holes in their skull, being a common ancestor of modern-day lizards and birds. (Kerr et al.,n.d.). 3. The tools used by Edwards lab included the many different genomes from specific types of birds such as extinct moa and flightless birds. Additionally, with their collaborators, who included experts in Statistics based in Harvard, a new statistical method was developed in order to provide the most accurate results in regard to correlation in genome data between different species (Reuell, 2019). This method is called bayesian comparative method and was utilized in the study to estimate the size of 31 extinct species of dinosaurs and birds (Organ et al., 2007).

4. The most interesting part of Scott’s journey towards an established career in science is his early fieldwork experience, specifically taking a year off from his undergraduate studies to volunteer at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum. This clearly demonstrates his heightened interest in biology, even birds, from such an early point in his career. I feel that further validates his passion for what he does and makes the work he does that much more interesting.

5. Although I cannot relate with his career choice and what he has dedicated his life to, I admire and consider his story an inspiration to reach that level of passion. A critical difference would be the dissimilarity in career interest, as I have no interest in a career in biology.

References

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