

# Kevin Surya

Department of Mathematical Sciences  
Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717  
[kevinsurya@montana.edu](mailto:kevinsurya@montana.edu) | [suryakevin.github.io](https://suryakevin.github.io) | [Deep Time Biology Lab](#)

## Curriculum Vitae

August 2022

### Education

- 2020– Ph.D. Montana State University, Statistics
- 2015–19 B.Sc. Montana State University, Directed Interdisciplinary Studies  
(biology, statistics, and earth sciences)

### Appointments

- 2021– Graduate teaching assistant  
Department of Mathematical Sciences, Montana State University
- 2020– Graduate student researcher  
Macroevolution Lab (PI: Chris Organ, University of Reading since 2022)
- 2020–20 Research intern/volunteer  
DinoChicken Lab (PI: Dana Rashid), Montana State University
- 2016–19 Undergraduate research assistant  
MSU Macroevolution Lab (PI: Chris Organ), Montana State University
- 2015–19 Undergraduate research assistant  
DinoChicken Lab
- 2017–19 Undergraduate research assistant  
Varricchio Lab (PI: David Varricchio), Montana State University

### Publications

8. **Surya, K.**, and C. L. Organ. (2022). The driver of phenotypic diversity is molecular change, not time. *To be submitted to Nature*.
7. Sheheen, J. R., D. J. Rashid, **K. Surya**, J. B. Sanders, T. Huey, J. R. Horner, and S. C. Chapman. (2022). Nonpathological inflammation drives tail fusion in avian dinosaurs. *To be submitted*.
6. **Surya, K.**, J. D. Gardner, and C. L. Organ. (2022). Detecting punctuated evolution in SARS-CoV-2 over the first year of the pandemic. *In review at PLOS ONE*.
5. Fernandes-Martins, M. C., L. M. Keller, M. Munro-Ehrlich, K. R. Zimlich, M. K. Mettler, A. M. England, R. Clare, **K. Surya**, E. L. Shock, D. R. Colman, and E. S. Boyd. (2021). Ecological dichotomies arise in microbial communities due to mixing of deep hydrothermal waters and atmospheric gas in a circumneutral hot spring. *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*. [Link](#).
4. Nemudryi, A., A. Nemudraia, T. Wiegand, **K. Surya**, M. Büyükyörük, C. Cicha, K. Vanderwood, R. Wilkinson, and B. Wiedenheft. (2020). Temporal detection and phylogenetic assessment of SARS-CoV-2 in municipal wastewater. *Cell Reports Medicine*. [Link](#).
3. Rashid, D. J., R. Bradley, A. M. Bailleul, **K. Surya**, H. N. Woodward, P. Wu, Y-H. Wu, D. B. Menke, S. G. Minchey, B. Parrot, S. L. Bock, C. Merzdorf, E. Narotzky, N. Burke, J. R. Horner, and S. C. Chapman. (2020). Distal spinal nerve development and divergence of avian groups. *Scientific Reports*. [Link](#).
2. Gardner\*, J. D., **K. Surya\***, and C. L. Organ. (2019). Early tetrapodomorph biogeography: Controlling for fossil record bias in macroevolutionary analyses. *Comptes Rendus Palevol*. [Preprint Link](#).

\* contributed equally to the study

1. Rashid, D. J., **K. Surya**, L. M. Chiappe, N. R. Carroll, K. L. Garrett, B. Varghese, A. Bailleul, J. K. O'Connor, S. C. Chapman, and J. R. Horner. (2018). Avian tail ontogeny, pygostyle formation, and interpretation of juvenile Mesozoic specimens. *Scientific Reports*. [Link](#).

## Grants & Awards (\$41,363)

17. Montana State University (MSU) Office of Student Engagement Student Club Rolling Funding: Molecular Biosciences Program student club. 2021. \$522.
16. MSU Graduate School Community-Building Mini-Grant. (2021). \$500.
15. Molecular Biosciences Program Fellowship. (2020). \$22,000++.
14. Society for the Study of Evolution (SSE)/BEACON Center for the Study of Evolution in Action Undergraduate Diversity at Evolution travel award. (2019). \$250++.
13. MSU Undergraduate Scholars Program (USP) Research Grant: Which phylogenetic branch length unit better fits species' phenotypic traits: Time or genetic substitution? (2018–2019). \$1,800.
12. MSU Office of Student Engagement Student Club Mass Funding: Dead Lizards Society, a paleontology journal club. (2018–2019). \$1,726.
11. Sigma Xi Grants-In-Aid of Research Program: Which phylogeny better fits species' trait data: Time or molecular tree? (2017–2018). \$1,000.
10. Geological Society of America (GSA) Rocky Mountain Section Travel Grant. (2017). \$90.
9. MSU USP Research Grant: Which phylogeny better fits species' trait data: Time or molecular tree? (2017–2018). \$1,800.
8. MSU College of Letters and Science Student Research Travel Grant. (2017). \$375.
7. GSA On To The Future Travel Awards. (2017). \$500++.
6. MSU USP Travel Grant: Paleohistology technique for sub-fossilized bone. (2017). \$500.
5. Kenny Dye Memorial Scholarship. (2017–2018). \$1,900.
4. Natural History Museum of Los Angeles Student Collections Study Award: Avian pygostyle fusion. (2017). \$1,300.
3. Montana Academy of Sciences Student Research Grant: Chicken pygostyle fusion sheds light on ankylosing spondylitis pathology. (2017–2018). \$700.
2. Montana IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) Undergraduate Student Research Program: Chicken pygostyle fusion sheds light on ankylosing spondylitis pathology. (2017). \$4,600.
1. MSU USP Research Grant: Pelvic sexual dimorphism in Palaeognathae (Aves: Neornithes) and its evolutionary relationship with relative egg size. (2016–2017). \$1,800.

## Teaching

### Teaching Assistantships

2021– M 121 – College Algebra, MSU (x2), Eval: 4.3/5

## Software

1. **Surya, K.** (2022) *fallpaddy*: R codes for simulating and detecting punctuated evolution in any clades, from dinosaurs to viruses. [Link](#).

## Presentations

17. **Surya, K.**, J. D. Gardner, and C. L. Organ. (2021) SARS-CoV-2 evolution is punctuated. Molecular Biosciences 1<sup>st</sup>-Year Fellow Presentations.
16. **Surya, K.**, and W. J. Freimuth. (2019) Montana State University (MSU) EARTH101 – Earth System Sciences: Fossils and Evolution. *Guest Lecture*.
15. **Surya, K.**, and C. L. Organ. (2019) Molecular branch lengths fit trait evolution better than does time. Evolution Meeting.
14. Gardner, J. D., **K. Surya**, and C. L. Organ. (2019) Phylogeography of the tetrapod water-land transition. MSU Earth Sciences Colloquium.
13. **Surya, K.**, and C. L. Organ. (2019) Does trait evolution follow time or genetic substitution? National Conference of Undergraduate Research (NCUR).
12. **Surya, K.**, D. J. Rashid, and S. C. Chapman (2019) Chicken tail vertebral fusion sheds light on a human backbone disease. Montana Academy of Sciences Annual Meeting.
11. **Surya, K.**, D. J. Rashid, L. M. Chiappe, N. R. Carroll, K. L. Garrett, B. Varghese, A. Bailleul, J. K. O'Connor, S. C. Chapman, and J. R. Horner. (2018) Bird tail growth necessitates re-interpretation of Mesozoic bird fossils. MSU Earth Sciences Colloquium.
10. **Surya, K.**, and C. L. Organ. (2018) Which phylogeny better fits species' trait data: Time or molecular tree? MSU Student Research Celebration Topical Session: *Macroevolution: The Fellowship of the Tree*.
9. **Surya, K.**, and C. L. Organ. (2018) Which phylogeny better fits species' trait data: Time or molecular tree? NCUR.
8. **Surya, K.**, I. M. Brenes, J. D. Gardner, L. W. Viñola López, C. L. Organ, and D. J. Varricchio (2017) Pelvic coevolution with egg size and shape: Implications for extinct dinosaurs. Geological Society of America Annual Meeting.
7. Rashid, D. J., **K. Surya**, S. C. Chapman, L. M. Chiappe, A. M. Bailleul, and J. R. Horner (2017) Pygostyle development and its implications for the Cretaceous long- to short-tailed avian transition. Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Annual Meeting.
6. **Surya, K.**, D. J. Rashid, and S. C. Chapman (2017) Chicken pygostyle fusion sheds light on ankylosing spondylitis pathology. Montana IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) Summer Research Poster Session.
5. **Surya, K.**, L. W. Viñola López, and E.-T. Lamm (2017) Paleohistology technique for sub-fossilized bone. International Symposium on Paleohistology.
4. **Surya, K.**, I. M. Brenes, L. W. Viñola López, J. D. Gardner, C. L. Organ, and D. J. Varricchio (2017) Pelvic sexual dimorphism in modern birds (Aves: Neornithes) and its evolutionary relationship with relative egg size. MSU Student Research Celebration.
3. **Surya, K.**, I. M. Brenes, L. W. Viñola López, J. D. Gardner, C. L. Organ, and D. J. Varricchio (2017) Pelvic sexual dimorphism in modern birds (Aves: Neornithes) and its evolutionary relationship with relative egg size. MSU Earth Sciences Colloquium.
2. **Surya, K.**, L. W. Viñola López, I. M. Brenes, J. D. Gardner, C. L. Organ, and D. J. Varricchio (2017) Pelvic sexual dimorphism in modern birds (Aves: Neornithes) and its evolutionary relationship with relative egg size. NCUR.
1. **Surya, K.** (2016) Assessment on the origins of avian active flight. MSU Earth Sciences Colloquium.

## Professional Service

### Panel Organizer

2021 Molecular Biosciences Career Panel: Primarily Undergraduate Institutions

2021 Molecular Biosciences Career Panel: NIH and Health/Bioinformatics Industries (moderator)

*Service to Profession*

- Peer reviewer ( $n = 4$ ; *Biology Letters* [1], *Evolution* [1], and *Journal of Evolutionary Biology* [2])

*Memberships*

- Society for the Study of Evolution
- Society of Systematic Biologists
- MSU Molecular Biosciences Program Student Committee (treasurer/general student committee member 2020–2022)
- MSU Dead Lizards Society (paleontology journal club; co-president 2017–2018)
- MSU Asian Student Interracial Association (officer 2021)
- Sigma Xi (2017–2018)
- Montana Academy of Sciences (2016–2018)
- Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (2015–2019)
- Geological Society of America (2016–2018)

**Volunteer & Public Outreach**

2018, 19 Montana State University (MSU) Family Science Day  
2018 Montana Science Olympiad  
2018 Morning Star Elementary School STEM Expo  
2017 Society of Vertebrate Paleontology volunteer at the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting  
2017 Museum of the Rockies (MOR) Scout's Day  
2016 MOR volunteer in *MSU Catapalooza*  
2016 MOR volunteer in *Adventures in the Lost World*  
2016–17 MOR dinosaur educational cart and fossil preparation volunteer (212.5 hours)  
2015–16 Volunteer fossil preparator for L. J. Krumenacker, Ph.D

**Conferences Attended**

2019, 21 Evolution Meeting  
2017 Geological Society of America Annual Meeting  
2017 International Symposium on Paleohistology  
2016, 17 Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Annual Meeting

**Workshop Attended**

2020 Multiscale Microbial Dynamics Modeling Summer School (online)  
2018 RevBayes Demonstration and Mini Workshop by Tracy Heath

**Paleontological Field Experience**

2018 Excavation, Foremost Formation, north of Rudyard, MT, USA (10 days)  
2016 Excavation and prospection, Two Medicine Formation, west of Choteau, MT, USA (31 days)

**Skills**

- Programming (R, PYTHON, REVBAYES and BASH)
- Package development (R)
- Data science (R, PYTHON, and GIT)
- Bayesian regression modeling (R, STAN, PYTHON, and REVBAYES)
- Machine learning (e.g., random forest), multivariate statistics (e.g., PCA), and nonparametric statistics (R and SAS)
- Phylogenetic comparative methods (BAYESTRAITS, R, and LEVOLUTION)
- Multiple sequence alignment and editing (ALIVIEW, JALVIEW, MUSCLE, MAFFT, PAGAN, TRIMAL)
- Phylogenetic inference and divergence time estimation (MESQUITE, RAPIDNJ, SDM, PHYD\*, TREEPL, LSD2, FASTTREE, PHYML, RAXML, IQ-TREE, MRBAYES, BEAST1, and BEAST2)
- Selection inference (HYPHY/DATAMONKEY)
- Biostatistics (R)
- Cloud computing (Amazon Web Services)
- Histochemistry (picrosirius red, alcian blue, modified tetrachrome, von Kossa, Giemsa, hematoxylin, eosin, and toluidine blue stainings)
- Immunohistochemistry (tuj1, TUNEL assay, and sambucus nigra stainings)
- Light and fluorescence microscopy
- Bone demineralization with a cation exchange resin
- Dissection (embryonic and post-hatching birds)
- Paleontology field work (excavation and prospection)
- Paleontology techniques (fossil preparation, molding, and casting)
- Paleohistology techniques

## References

1. **Chris Organ**  
School of Biological Sciences  
University of Reading, Reading, UK  
[c.l.organ@reading.ac.uk](mailto:c.l.organ@reading.ac.uk) | 406 589 6462
2. **John Borkowski**  
Department of Mathematical Sciences  
Montana State University, Bozeman, MT, USA  
[john.borkowski@montana.edu](mailto:john.borkowski@montana.edu) | 406 994 4606
3. **Matt Lavin**  
Plant Sciences & Plant Pathology Department  
Montana State University, Bozeman, MT, USA  
[mlavin@montana.edu](mailto:mlavin@montana.edu) | 406 994 2032
4. **Dana Rashid**  
Department of Microbiology and Immunology  
Montana State University, Bozeman, MT, USA  
[danarashid5@gmail.com](mailto:danarashid5@gmail.com) | 406 994 6525
5. **Blake Wiedenheft**  
Department of Microbiology and Immunology  
Montana State University, Bozeman, MT, USA  
[bwiedenheft@montana.edu](mailto:bwiedenheft@montana.edu) | 406 994 5009

6. **David Varricchio**

Department of Earth Sciences

Montana State University, Bozeman, MT, USA

[djv@montana.edu](mailto:djv@montana.edu) | 406 994 6907