



MEET THE MVZ

A newsletter highlighting members of our community

WELCOME TO THE MVZ

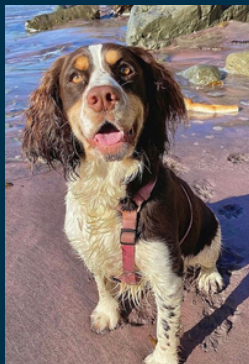
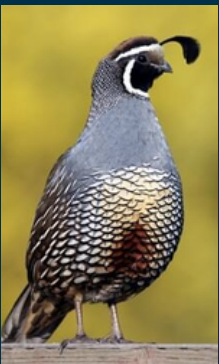
Please help us welcome our newest members to the MVZ! Read on to learn more about our new graduate students, affiliated members, and post-doctoral fellows!



INTRODUCING OUR NEW MEMBERS!



**Emily's favorite vertebrates
are California quails,
walruses, and her dog, Salem!**



EMILY BÖGNER

PhD Student, Tseng Lab

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

I am a third year student in IB; prior to coming to Berkeley, I received my B.S. in Geology and Biology from Kutztown University, and my M.S. in Geosciences with a concentration in Paleontology from East Tennessee State University. In my spare time I enjoy spending time with my pup and backpacking!

WHAT ARE YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS?

As a paleontologist, I am broadly interested in evolutionary biomechanics and functional morphology of vertebrates. My dissertation research focuses on how the carnivoran skeleton has evolved for prey acquisition and processing.

HOW DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY?

There have been several key points in my life. The first is when my parents let me watch Jurassic Park at too young of an age; after getting over being terrified, I was captivated that you could dig in the dirt and find fossils. I knew going into undergrad I wanted to pursue a career in paleontology, but it wasn't until my senior year when I took comparative anatomy and dissected animals for the first time that I decided I wanted to specifically study how animals move and what makes them move the way they do.

CHRIS KOZAK

*Assistant Project Scientist,
Nachman Lab*

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

I'm a versatile scientist interested in building international collaborations to challenge existing ideas, tackle major problems, and aid equitable global development. I specialize in the adoption of the latest sequencing and information technologies to investigate imperiled biodiversity.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS?

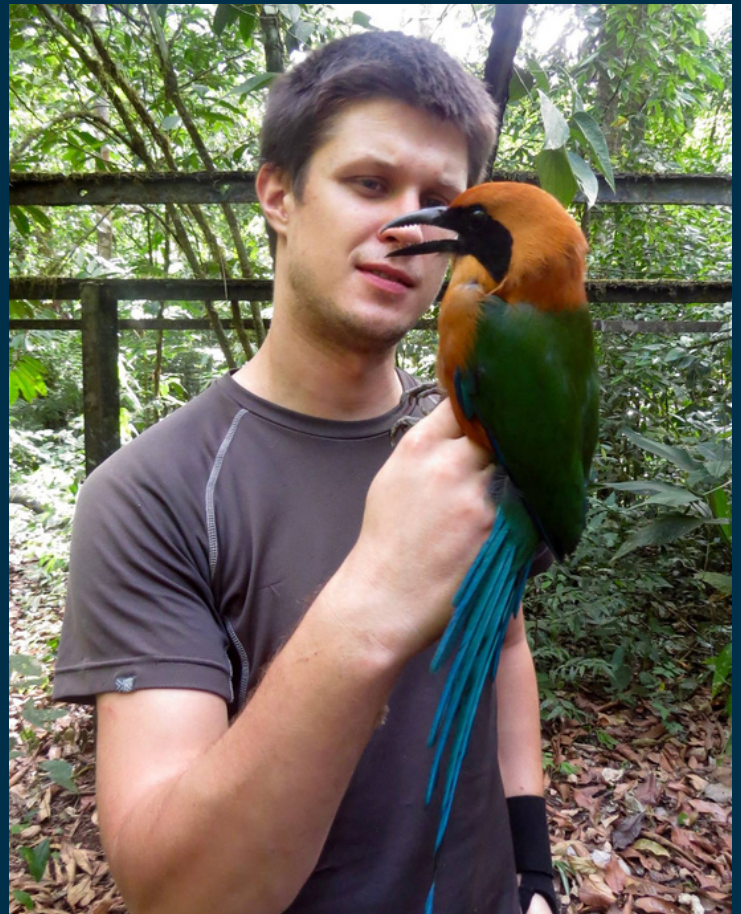
[My] PhD [was] on the adaptive radiation of *Heliconius*, followed by a five year stint studying butterfly population genetics in Panama. I am a tropical biologist at heart, but my research is questions-driven. Currently [I'm] investigating small mammals with Michael Nachman for the California Conservation Genomics Project.

WHAT HAS BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE MVZ MEANT TO YOUR CAREER?

A return to my first study system—rodents—and an opportunity to learn from leading experts.

ARE YOU INVOLVED IN EVOLUTION OUTREACH? TELL US ABOUT IT!

I guided several tours around the Smithsonian in Panama, and organized bioinformatics workshops for talented high schoolers in Poland.



**Chris' favorite vertebrates are
"badgers badgers badgers"!**



VANESSA MUHL

Lab Manager, Martin Lab

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

I was born and raised in Germany and moved to the U.S.A. in 2012. I received my B.S. in Cell & Molecular Biology from CSUN and M.S. in Zoology from the University of Florida. I love the outdoors...I love hiking, camping, and rock climbing.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS?

I'm fascinated by how organisms' physical and behavioral characteristics change in response to environmental stress. I'm not set on a specific species. In general, I'm very interested in the genetic aspect; how different stressors contribute to genetic variation or mutation, and what benefits or costs they may have on an organism's physical and behavioral trait.

WHAT HAS BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE MVZ MEANT TO YOU OR YOUR CAREER?

It's a great opportunity to grow as a scientist and be able to learn more about evolutionary biology. I have just joined in July of this year but I feel like I have learned so much already in such a short time.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST SURPRISE SO FAR ABOUT BEING A SCIENTIST?

It's less of a surprise but something more positive. I love being able to always learn something new as science keeps on evolving.



Vanessa's favorite vertebrate is a lungfish!



NIKKI LEE

Postdoctoral Fellow, Lacey Lab

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

I'm a neuroendocrinologist originally from SoCal who has spent the last 11 years in the Northeast—it's great to be back in CA! I love food (but hate cooking), clothes, and literature.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS?

Broadly, I am interested in hormones and social behavior. What neural and hormonal mechanisms mediate social behavior across diverse species? Why are some species more social than others?

BESIDES THROUGH YOUR RESEARCH, HOW DO YOU PROMOTE SCIENCE?

Mentoring and teaching undergraduates is very important to me. Between finishing my PhD and coming to Berkeley, I spent a year as a teaching postdoc at Colgate, where I taught my own courses (at a liberal arts college, which is where I'd like to end up!) and ran my own lab.



**Nikki's favorite
vertebrates are
voles!**





KINSEY BROCK

Postdoctoral Fellow, Wang Lab

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

I am a NSF postdoctoral fellow studying evolution in the Greek islands. Every summer I take a team of undergraduates (Team Savres) to catch and measure hundreds of Aegean wall lizards from different islands to understand their evolutionary history and environmental influences on their genes, behavior, and phenotype. I love discovering new things about wall lizards with students.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS?

I am interested in how phenotypic variation is generated, maintained, and lost [at] different biological scales. My current work is focused on parallel color morph evolution in isolated island populations of Aegean wall lizards. I'm also studying invasive Italian wall lizards [in] LA to understand how just 7 founding lizards successfully established a thriving population in a novel environment.

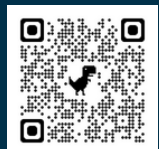
HOW DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY?

On an art school trip to Madagascar I got distracted by how incredible the geckos and chameleons were and came home a herpetologist.

HOW DO YOU LIKE TO PROMOTE SCIENCE?

I love communicating my science through art. I create ink drawings inspired by the Greek landscape, mythology, ancient art, and our lizard discoveries. I sell my lizards artwork on my website to fund student memberships to the Herpetologists' League, an academic society that has grant opportunities for student members studying reptiles and amphibians.

**Check out
Kinsey's
artwork!**



**Kinsey's favorite vertebrates
are *Podarcis* (wall lizards)!**



ALEX GUZMAN

PhD Student, Martin Lab

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

I am originally from Austin, Texas and super excited to be living in the Bay Area. I enjoy being anywhere outdoors, hanging out with my cat (Coochie) or at the bar.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS?

I am generally interested in evolutionary physiology and population genetics. I am particularly interested in using genomic tools to investigate how evolutionary forces and mechanisms are responsible for the maintenance and diversification of species, and speciation. I am also interested in trait variation and the bidirectional influence of hormones in the evolution of novelty.

HOW DO YOU LIKE TO PROMOTE SCIENCE?

During my undergraduate and graduate studies I had the opportunity to be a peer learning leader for lower level biology courses which focused on collaboration, group study, and interaction for assisting students in undertaking "traditionally difficult" courses. These tutoring opportunities have broadened and strengthened my teaching expertise and has ultimately aided in my ability to explain and bring awareness to the importance of science and research. Further, it has provided me the opportunity to be a mentor to others.

FAVORITE DEI INITIATIVES YOU ARE FOLLOWING RIGHT NOW?

@500QueerScientists @oSTEM @SACNAS



**Alex's favorite vertebrate
is the dwarf pufferfish
(*Carinotetraodon
travancoricus*)!**





**Poppy's favorite
vertebrates are
sea otters!**



POPPY NORTHING

Research Technician, Tarvin Lab

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

I grew up nearby in Walnut Creek, and I graduated from Haverford College this past spring. I love spending time in nature, and I'm especially fond of desert ecosystems.



WHAT ARE YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS?

My research interests are broad, but center around a curiosity about how global change is driving rapid evolution in species and what effects these changes may have on biodiversity and ecosystem functioning. I am especially interested in museum collections and the role they play in conservation.

TOMMY HERRERA

PhD Student, Nachman Lab

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

I am from Kansas City, Kansas, and come from an Indigenous American and Mexican background. I am an outdoorsman and enjoy playing string instruments.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS?

I am interested in understanding host-parasite evolution between small mammals and the infectious agents they carry. I want to elucidate the increasing threat environmental change will have on the zoonotic landscape, and hope to contribute to a One Health framework for managing and predicting the outbreak of zoonotic diseases across the globe.

WHAT HAS BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE MVZ MEANT TO YOU OR YOUR CAREER?

As an aspiring museum curator, being in the MVZ community is unlike any learning experience. It demonstrates every aspect of what an active and well-curated collection should be and the research potential that biorepositories have. I could not ask for a better experience to prepare myself for a career in natural history and academia.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST SURPRISE SO FAR ABOUT BEING A SCIENTIST?

Coming from a background where my only exposure to science was from books about larger-than-life figures like Charles Darwin, I am always pleasantly surprised by the extreme humanity that is intrinsic to science. That is to say, scientists like myself are like anyone else and are genuinely motivated by a passionate interest in their work and what it can do for others.



Tommy's favorite vertebrates are "any and all small mammals; it's simply too hard to pick just one!"

