

carried through for the long term, and that have repeatedly demonstrated the importance of long-term data sets for interpreting ecological questions. Few ecologists have personally generated more—and more important—long-term data sets on the evolutionary ecology of interspecific interactions than Dr. Herrera.

Finally, Dr. Herrera has been an undoubted inspiration to a whole generation of new ecologists working on plant–animal interactions worldwide, with special impact in Europe, Central America, and South America. Many young ecologists in Spanish-speaking countries point to Dr. Herrera’s impressive career as a major inspiration to them. He has led field courses in multiple countries and has given his time generously to new students. This contribution as role model has helped bright students choose to become ecologists, and many of his former students are now in the ecological vanguard around the world. The ESA is most pleased to award Carlos Herrera Honorary Membership.

Honorary Membership Award Subcommittee: Laurel R. Fox (Chair), Edith Allen, Richard Ostfeld, Sandra Tartowski, and Denise Dearing.

GEORGE MERCER AWARD

The oldest of the awards granted by ESA, the George Mercer Award, is given in memory of a young British ecologist who was killed in action in World War I. The award is made to an author less than 40 years old, in recognition of a single outstanding paper in ecology published during the past two years. The winner of the Mercer Award for 2002 is Jonathan M. Levine of the University of California at Los Angeles for his paper, “Species diversity and biological invasions: relating local process to community pattern,” published in 2000 in *Science* 288:852–854.

In this paper, Dr. Levine presents experiments conducted in a California riparian system, in which he seeded three invasive plant species into tussocks of native species whose diversity had been directly manipulated. Although the most diverse natural assemblages in this riparian system are the most invaded by exotic plants, his experimental results clearly indicate that increased native diversity decreases invader performance. In explaining this apparent contrast, he points out that the environmental factors determining native diversity in natural tussocks are also likely to determine invasibility. All communities are assembled via a sequence of invasions and extinctions; communities that achieve high native diversity are just those communities in which new invaders (either native or nonnative) are most likely to succeed.



Jonathan M. Levine

This conceptual insight resolves the apparent contrast between comparative studies (which, like Levine's, typically find that naturally diverse native communities are the most frequently invaded) and theoretical predictions (which ignore environmental factors to focus on the independent effect of native diversity on invasion resistance). Levine's work raises the bar for future work on invasibility, and shows the power of combining comparative and experimental approaches in the same system. The results have fundamental implications for theories of community assembly: in focusing exclusively on the effects of native diversity on invasibility, these theories neglect more important determinants of invasibility operating at larger spatial scales. The results also have implications for the management of exotic species. For these reasons, Jonathan Levine's paper was the standout choice for the 2002 Mercer Award in this year's competition.

Mercer Award Subcommittee: Nicholas J. Gotelli (Chair), Brian Enquist, Alice Winn, Susan Mopper, Shahid Naeem, Steven Heard, and Judy Stamps.