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Numbat Media: A case study in the challenges of starting an outreach project

Matt Wilkins

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, m.r.wilkins06@gmail.com

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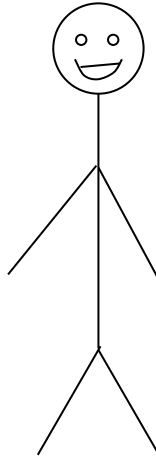
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Numbat Media: A case study in the challenges of starting an outreach project

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1PToCigmMw-cxdSV-iVBWkM20X2QGHfshtV0MnAOMrVI/edit#slide=id.g17e16daba9_1_216

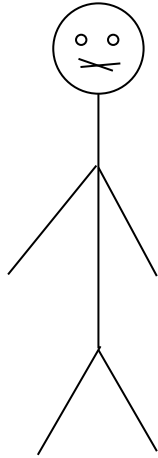
Matt Wilkins
Postdoctoral Fellow
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
School of Biological Sciences
@mattwilkinsbio

Why do scientists do outreach?



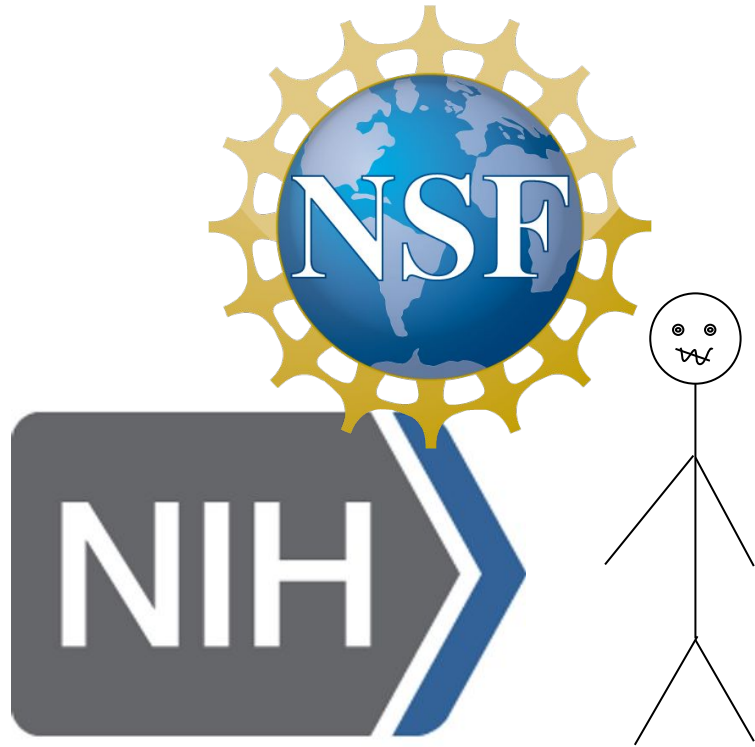
**Broader
Impacts
Requirements**

Why do scientists do outreach?



**Broader
Impacts
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Why do scientists do outreach?

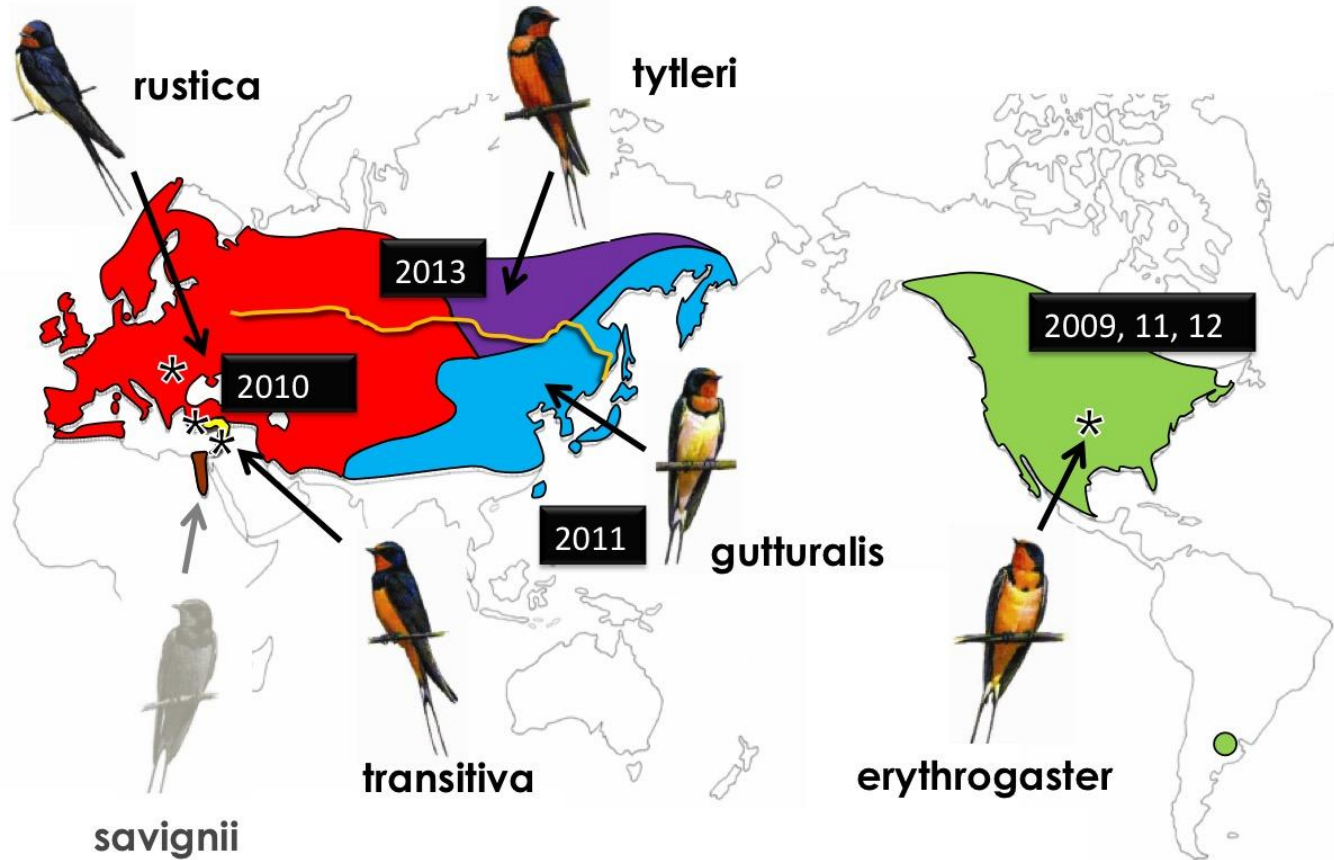


**Broader
Impacts
Requirements**

Why do scientists do outreach?



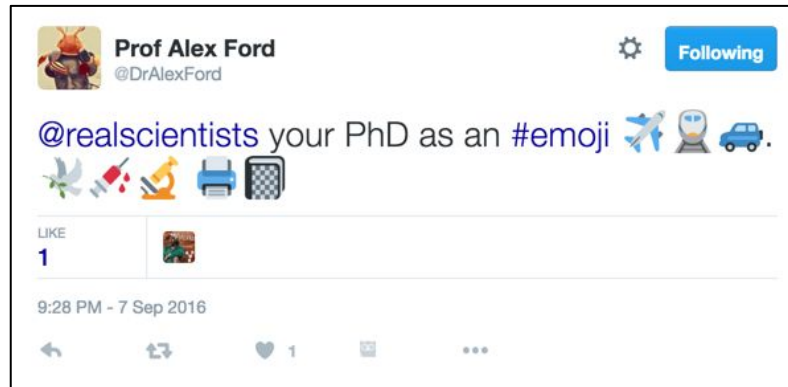
Sampling for My PhD



My 6 Year PhD in 25 Words

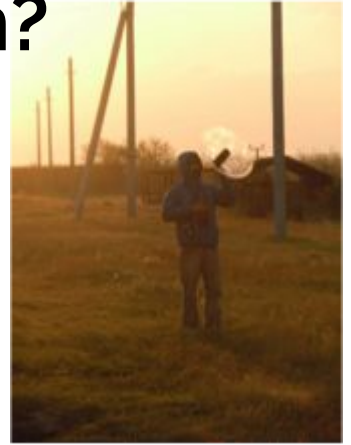
I studied how differences in female mate choice, based on song and feather ornaments, lead populations to evolve to look and sound different over time.

Or Even More Succinctly...





Why do scientists do outreach?



Why do scientists do outreach?



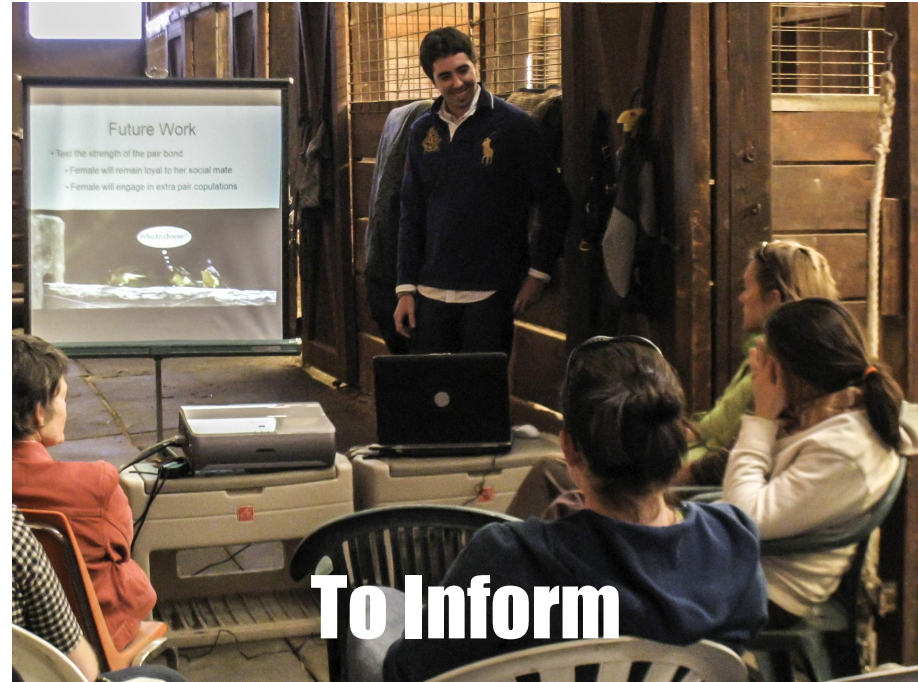
To Inspire

Why do scientists do outreach?



To Inspire

Why do scientists do outreach?



Why do scientists do outreach?



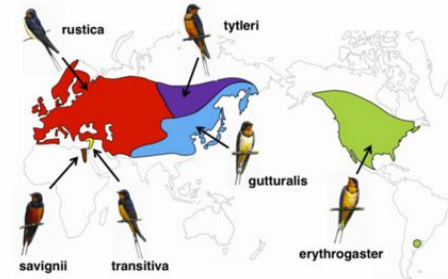
Trans-Siberian Summer

5/16/2013

0 Comments

Why we're going to Siberia

This summer is our first field expedition on the new barn swallow grant, and Matt and I will be traveling across Russia studying three different subspecies- *H. r. rustica*, *H. r. tyleri*, and *H. r. gutturalis*. One of the big goals of this project is understanding why the subspecies look different (check out the [About](#) page for more info). Traits such as plumage, song, and morphology are used in mate choice decisions, and population-level variation in these traits can therefore initiate the speciation process by generating reproductive barriers. It's particularly important to study these traits in contact areas between different subspecies, because this is where barriers between differentiated groups are most likely to break down. When we visit these "contact zones," we can see if there's any evidence for hybridization (i.e., weak reproductive barriers), or if neighboring populations are very differentiated (i.e., strong reproductive isolation). These different patterns provide clues to the processes causing subspecies to diverge from each other.



barnswallowproject.com

Archives

July 2015
June 2015
May 2015
April 2015
June 2014
July 2014
April 2014
July 2013
June 2013
May 2013
February 2013

Categories

All
China
Field Work
Introduction
Siberia

RSS Feed

TransparentSci: Graduate Research, Start to Finish

Please feel free to post if you have questions or comments!

Friday, July 2, 2010

Bad news for birdies



10 Day Old nestling barn swallows wait for mom and pop to bring food

Throughout the field season, the birds in our study have worked diligently to pair up, build nests one beak full of mud at a time, lay and incubate eggs, feed nestlings, and in their down time, feed themselves by hunting down hundreds of fast-moving aerial insects. You have to be impressed with the little guys. But often times, despite all this effort, eggs disappear in the night, nestlings

Click to See Field Photos

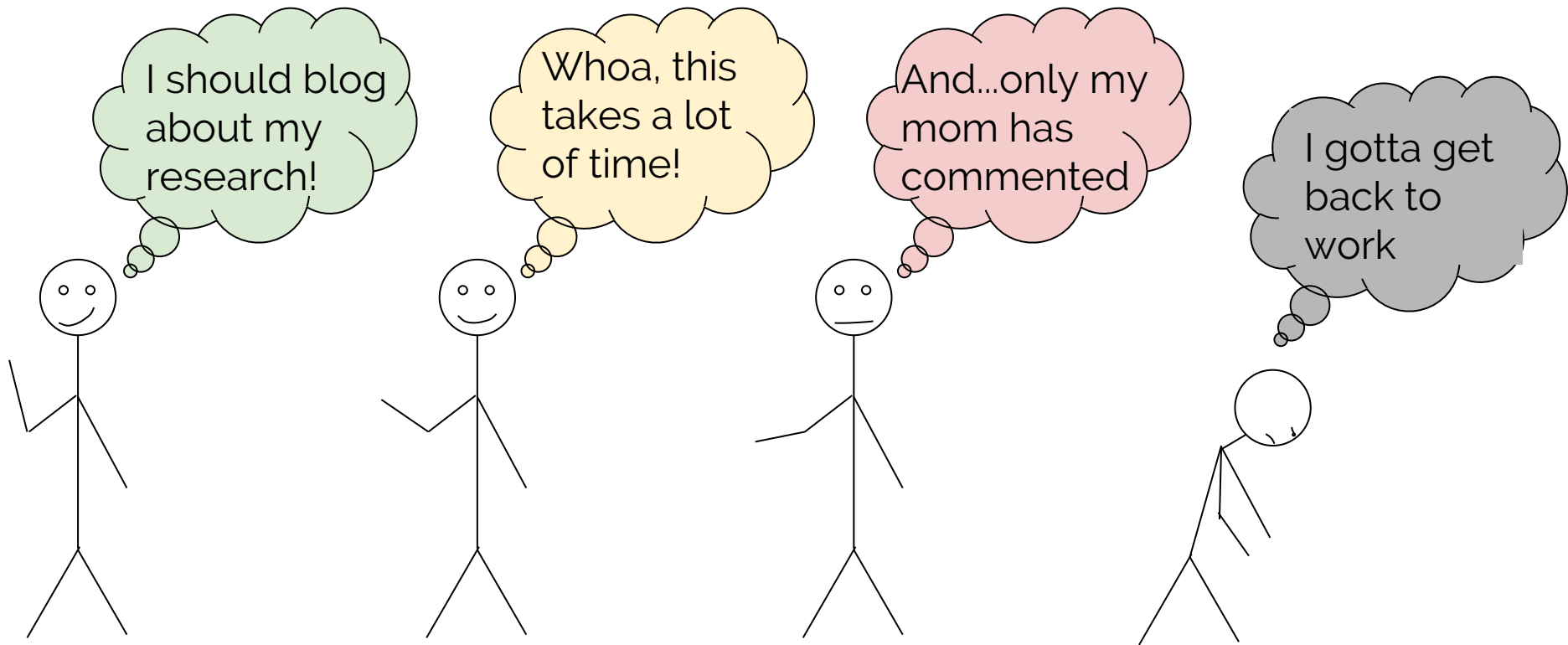


Useful Links

- [1-Field Season 2011 Photos](#)
- [2-My First Trip to the Study Site \(Turkey\)](#)
- [3-AB: Gen Field Assistant Jobs](#)
- [4-BotNet--Field Jobs w/ Birds](#)
- [5-OSNA-Field Jobs w/ Birds](#)
- [6-SSAR: Field Jobs w/ Reptiles](#)

transparentsci.blogspot.com

Familiar Outreach Trajectory



Outreach Fatigue

Symptoms May Include:

- Headaches
- Loss of sleep
- Feeling like you're not doing your research effectively
- Feeling like you're not doing your outreach effectively
- Intermittent, unguided hyperopic transfixia
 - AKA 'staring off into space'



Outreach Fatigue

Long-Term Effects on Researchers:

- Increased stress
- Reduced job satisfaction
- Reduced ambitions for outreach success
 - AKA 'Being Realistic'

Long-Term Effects on Outreach:

- Updates reduced or stopped
- Links get broken
- Functionality lost
- Audience shrinks & moves on



Problem: We're asking too much of scientists

Required duties you are rewarded for:

- Do research
- Publish papers
- Write grants
- Win grants
- Design courses
- Teach courses
- Mentor students
- Serve on committees

Required duties that don't really count for much:

- Review papers
- Come up with outreach projects (for grants)
- Work out the logistics
- Do the outreach
- Find an audience
- Grow the audience

**Outreach
Fatigue**



Outreach is hard!

How do we get our hard-won science resources out to more people?

Possible solutions to the audience gap

1. **Active promotion**--doing the hard work to make personal connections through social media
 - (Preferably somebody else does this)
 - (Cuz who's got time?!)
2. **Collaboration**-- if we cross promote each other's projects, we can help each other out
 - (Our small audiences combine to a large audience)

Numbat

Media



Why Numbats?

A numbat is an endangered marsupial anteater with less than 1k individuals in the world!

They also have a funny name.

*Speaks to the fragility, beauty,
and humor of LIFE.*

Numbat

Media



Started in February, 2016 to:

Connect scientists (including myself) to the general public

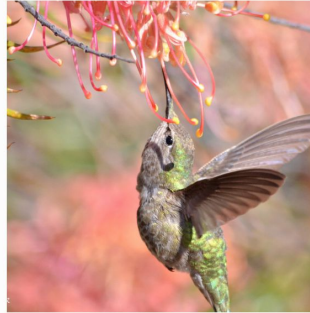
Aims:

1. Grow an audience on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram & the web
2. Promote the work of myself & others (*new outreach*)
3. Promote great *existing outreach*
4. Increase connectivity & impact of science communicators

What do we do?

Creative multimedia to engage K-12 students & the general public in science

- Photo galleries from scientists



THEADORA BLOCK



AARON COMEAULT



MARIA GOLLER



ASIA MURPHY



GEORGY SEMENOV



MATT WILKINS

What do we do?

Creative multimedia to engage K-12 students & the general public in science

- Photo galleries from scientists
- #InTheLineOfScience Blog

#InTheLineOfScience



NATURAL SELECTION WORKS ON ECOLOGISTS, TOO

from Joe Mihajevic: A story about moth caterpillars, their devastating effects on fir trees, viruses, fire, & suffering for science! All in a days' work for an ecologist!

Apr 7, 2016



I WILL NEVER FORGET WHAT A BOTFLY IS!

Maria Goller went to Belize to study birds. She came back with some amazing photos, great stories, and some slow-aways! Read on to hear about her rite-of-passage in the tropics!

Feb 25, 2016



THE RUSSIAN DAIRY INCIDENT (AKA THE HAZARDS OF SPYING ON BIRDS)

from Matt Wilkins: A story of birds, their songs, and a terrible thing that happened to him in a Russian dairy.

Mar 23, 2016



CUANDO RUGE LA MARABUNTA (VERSIÓN NEMATÓFAGA)

de Fernando Mateos-González: ¿Qué hacer cuando una horda invasora de mosquitos tigre amenaza con aniquilar tu colonia de aves (y, con ella, tu tesis doctoral)? Sea lo que sea, ¡has de actuar rápido!

Feb 25, 2016



CULVERT-1, JOEY-0

from Joey Hubbard: You don't think studying a tiny, 20g bird is dangerous?! Let me tell you a little story about barn swallows, sleep deprivation, and how I broke my arm in a ditch in the middle of the night!

Mar 14, 2016



TAGS:

animals
birds
botfly
call caterpillars
cows ecology
fieldwork
fieldwork fails
fire forest
mosquitos
moths news
parasites
recording
research song
viruses x-ray

ARCHIVE:

April 2016 (1)
March 2016 (2)
February 2016 (4)

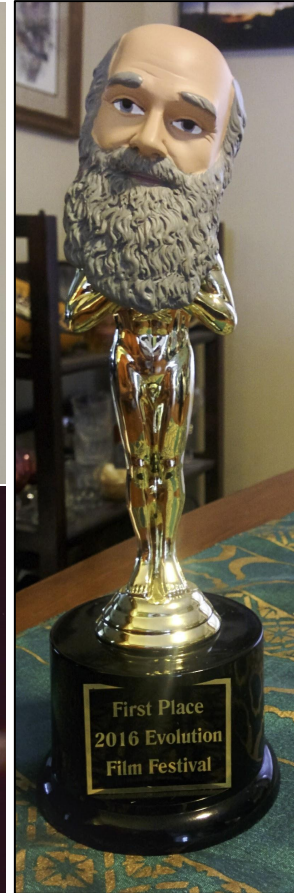
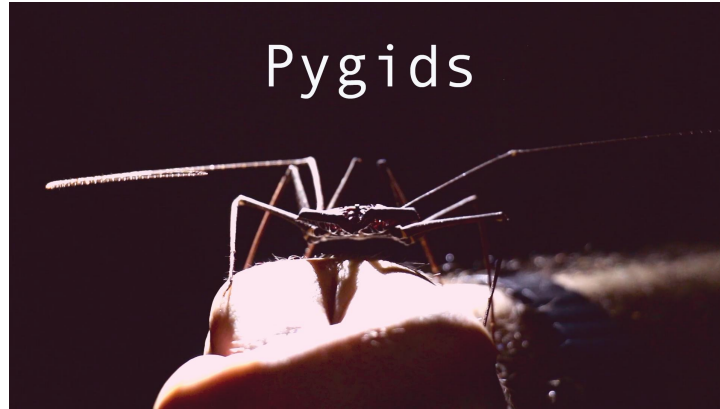
FIND A STORY:

Search

What do we do?

Creative multimedia to engage K-12 students & the general public in science

- Photo galleries from scientists
- #InTheLineOfScience Blog
- Original short films



“Pygids”

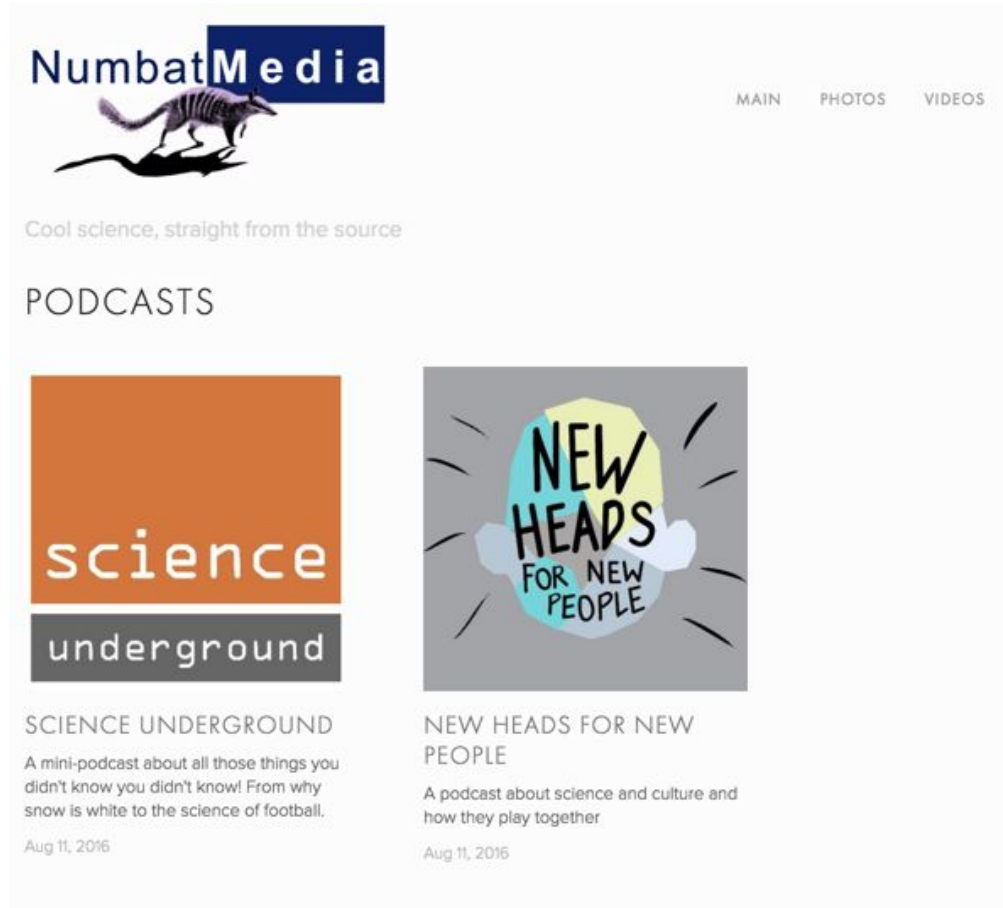
A short music video about Amblypygids, a cool group of Arachnids that we currently know little about



What do we do?

Creative multimedia to engage K-12 students & the general public in science

- Photo galleries from scientists
- #InTheLineOfScience Blog
- Original short films
- Numbat Recommends
 - Our favorite outreach projects from around the web



The screenshot shows the Numbat Media website. At the top left is the logo "NumbatMedia" with a stylized numbat illustration below it. To the right are navigation links for "MAIN", "PHOTOS", and "VIDEOS". Below the logo is the tagline "Cool science, straight from the source". A section titled "PODCASTS" features two recommendations:

- SCIENCE UNDERGROUND**: A mini-podcast about all those things you didn't know you didn't know! From why snow is white to the science of football. Aug 11, 2016
- NEW HEADS FOR NEW PEOPLE**: A podcast about science and culture and how they play together. Aug 11, 2016

This is just the beginnr

Numbat provides a forum for:

- Scientists to do outreach with minin
 - An #InTheLineOfScience story
 - A photo gallery
 - Some other content we could create a sj
- Scientists to get the word out about
 - On social media
 - On the website with Numbat Recommender
- Students to get engaged & connecte
 - Not just the facts, but the people, their p

THEADORA BLOK

contributions: **Photos**

Theadora is working on her PhD at University of California Santa Cruz in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. She focuses on Behavioral ecology, specifically studying the individual soap-opera-like lives of golden-crowned sparrows. She has spent more time watching them than most people would find healthy. She also enjoys bird watching, photography, sleeping and other things in any spare time. Find out more about her research [here](#) or look at more photos on her [Flickr page](#).



AARON COMEAULT

contributions: **-Photos**

Aaron is currently working as a postdoctoral researcher in the lab of Dr. Daniel Matute at UNC, Chapel Hill. He studies the California stick insect in the genus *Timema*, and more recently the common fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster* to study how new species form. Even though Aaron is a real-life Canadian, he almost never says the word "Eh". He's also a huge fan of vizslas, climbing on rocks, and watching Xena: Warrior Princess reruns on Netflix. Follow Aaron [@AAComeault](#) and read about his research [here](#).



TYLER COREY

contributions: **-Film**

Tyler is a PhD student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He studies sexual communication in Amblypygids, a group of (sub)tropical arachnids that are super cool and are definitely NOT spiders! Tyler loves playing bass guitar, listening to the latest WTF podcast, & dreaming of dog ownership. His spirit animal is a meerkat. Follow Tyler [@BassBugsJokes](#) or read about his research in the [Hebets Lab](#).



MARIA GOLLER

contributions: **-Story "I Will Never Forget What a Botfly Is!" -Photos**

Maria Goller is a PhD Student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She works in Dr. Dai Shizuka's lab, studying how song dialects form in populations of European starlings (introduced to the US by a bunch of not-so-forward thinking literary fans in the 1800s). Maria loves bird watching, mud oozing between her toes, and her two pet guinea pigs, among many other things.





Cool science, straight from the source

USING NUMBAT IN THE CLASSROOM

A major impetus for starting this site was to create a portal for young students to find out about science and how it gets done. Ask any researcher how they got into science and they will usually tell you: 1) As a kid, I had NO IDEA how to get into a career in science, and 2) I only stumbled onto this career because of Person X. We want to change this, and provide a showcase of the diversity of science and scientists out there, and the wealth of fantastic outreach tools that are scattered around the web. Our goal is to make it clearer how one might pursue a career in science, but more importantly, to impress on students how essential science is in our daily lives.

Here are some suggestions for classroom exercises. If you have an idea for other exercises, please [email us](#).

EXERCISE 1: MEET A SCIENTIST

Give students 20 minutes to browse the Contributors tab. This will be a growing list of scientists—hopefully there will be someone who each student can identify with on some level. The rest of the class period can be spent summarizing the person, their work, and their personality/interests. If people overlap, they can fill in gaps that one person missed or share what they found most interesting/compelling about that person and their research.

EXERCISE 2: RESEARCH AN ANIMAL

Eight months on, how'd we do?

Audience Stats

Facebook:	99 Likes
Instagram:	89 Followers
Twitter:	537 Followers
numbatmedia.com:	1,435 Visits
	3,822 Page Views
	901 Audience Size



This project needs more hands. **Let's collaborate!**

- Write an #InTheLineOfScience
 - Contribute a photo gallery
- Spotlight your project on Numbat Recommends
- **Educators:** How can you use this in the classroom?
 - Become Numbat's voice on Social Media
 - Help curate materials

Thanks!



Matt Wilkins @mattwilkinsbio @numbatmedia