

Sierra Hellwitz

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EDUCATION

University of California Irvine

PhD Student, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Sept 2022 - Current

State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

B.S. in Wildlife Science, Graduated cum laude

Aug 2011-May 2015

Dean's list 3 semesters

Jan 2010-May 2015

PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND AWARDS

Awards

Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) Fellowship

Recipient: January - September 2025

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program (NSF-GRFP)

Honorable Mention: Spring 2024

Publications

Lead Author *"Independent and combined effects of predators and mutualists on pine-associated arthropod communities"*

Accepted, *Ecology*, October 2024

Collaboration with Carla Vazquez-Gonzalez, Lydia Dean, Tyler Zarubin, and Kailen Mooney, UCI

Collaborator *"Decomposing an elevational gradient in predation by insectivorous birds"*

***Ecosphere*, November 2023**

Collaboration with Lydia Dean, Carla Vázquez-González, Luis Abdala-Roberts, and Kailen Mooney

Collaborator *"Review of epigenetic reader domains in neurobiology"*

Current work, 2024

Collaboration with Jennifer Stanford, Emily Sterner, Annette Dean, and Daniel Marena

Presentations

"Independent and combined effects of predators and mutualists on pine-associated arthropod communities"

Oral Presentation for Ecological Society of America, August 2024

Oral Presentation for Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Graduate Symposium, March 2024

Collaboration with Carla Vazquez-Gonzalez, Lydia Dean, Tyler Zarubin, and Kailen Mooney

"PCBs in Select Organisms of the Hudson River Floodplains: Frogs, Small Mammals, and Birds"

Poster Hudson River Environmental Society's Hudson River Symposium, May 2018

Collaboration with Sean Madden, and Scott Jamieson, NYS DEC

"Data Report for the Collection of Gray Catbird Eggs Along the Hudson River from Hudson Falls to Schodack Island, New York for Exposure to Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)."

Orally Presented for NYS Habitat Meeting, March 2017, Public Release November 2017

Collaboration with Sean Madden, Scott Jamieson, and Elise Rodriguez, NYS DEC

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of California Irvine, Irvine, CA

PhD Student – Mooney Lab

- Graduate Research Assistant
- Teaching Assistant
- Undergraduate Student Mentorship

Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA

Research Technician, Lab Manager – Stanford Lab, Biology Department

September 2019- August 2022

- Conceptualized and conducted experiment on epigenetic readers and their effects on behavior and neurological disorders.
- Collaborated on related research in the lab and Review Article
- Managed Laboratory Safety and EHS compliance

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Albany, New York

Fish and Wildlife Technician - Hudson River Natural Resource Damages Unit

December, 2016- October, 2018

- Collected data and managed field teams for the restoration of the Hudson River
- Collaborated on management and restoration projects across the State
- Collaborated with other Government bodies and Organizations

University of Exeter, Exeter, England

Field Technician- research conducted on Cayo Santiago, Puerto Rico

May - October, 2016

- Familiarize Rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*) with human presence and stimuli for experimentation
- Conducted behavioral experiments and collect data on Rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*)

USFWS, Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee Wildlife Refuge, Brooksville, Mississippi

Intern, September, 2015- January, 2016

- Execute and independently manage research and conservation projects within the refuge.
- Provide and deliver educational material to Public visitors
- Organize community events and foster engagement

The Peregrine Fund, Ponce, Puerto Rico

Field Technician, May- July, 2015

- Conduct ecological and behavioral research projects for the conservation of Puerto-Rican sharp-shinned hawks (*Accipiter striatus venator*)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Mooney Lab Undergraduate Mentorship – **September 2022- Present**
- Certificate in Teaching Excellence for Inclusive Pedagogy – **September 2023**
- CIRTL Associate level of Accomplishment - **September 2023**
- Short essay on inclusive teaching in STEM education, published on the UCI website – **September 2023**
- Member of UCI's Graduate Leadership Organization- **Winter 2024- Present**
- Participant with UCI's reach out teach out (ROTO) which partners with URM schools – **Spring 2022, 2023**
- Invited guest lecture for *Field Biology*- **Fall 2023**