



Whitman Today

Monday, July 12, 2021

Un-bee-lievable Insect Research



This article originally appeared in the [June 25, Summer Science and Research Community newsletter](#).

This summer, Spencer F. Baird Professor of Biology Heidi Dobson is conducting three field-based research projects with six students studying local insect diversity. To assess diversity, the students collect insects using a variety of methods, freeze them, pin and label them, and identify them down to the species level. This type of research is a collaborative effort, with each of the students in charge of identifying bugs of specific orders, regardless of which project they are working on. Students are also in charge of collecting and identifying the plant species that the flower-visiting insects are landing on, with lots of guidance from Dobson.

Two of Dobson's students, Beth Kutina ('22) and Mohammed Rashed ('22), are conducting an insect faunal survey in the Blue Mountains, collecting at both the Whitman-owned Johnston Wilderness Campus and the college campus. Each week, Kutina and Rashed capture insects using a variety of methods, including hand nets, pitfall traps, baits using overripe fruit, and even a bedsheet and floodlight for the nocturnal insects. To get a representative sample of insects of different habitats, the students collect on flowers, in the air, and on the ground. Every other week, they collect nocturnal insects and aquatic insects as well. "This work has definitely opened my eyes to the quantity of insects that are around us at all times," says Kutina. "I think a lot of people take insects for granted or tend to just label them as nuisances, but they are such an important part of the biodiversity in any area." No insect is too small or too big for their collection, but successfully capturing tiny insects into vials definitely involves a learning curve.

Kutina and Rashed's project is not only serving as research for their upcoming senior thesis, but will be one of the only community studies of insects in the Blue Mountains. As the effects of climate change become more noticeable and more destructive worldwide, it is important to have a comprehensive understanding of how the biodiversity of places are being affected. Without devoting time to identify and collect them, insects could be easily overlooked. By establishing an initial and comprehensive community study, Kutina and Rashed have hopes that their project will be a starting point for future Whitman students to continue studying and look for changes in the insect communities of the Blues over time.

Q: I'm vaccinated, but I was exposed to someone who has COVID-19. What should I do?

A: According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, if you are fully vaccinated and you've been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay away from others or get tested unless you have symptoms. However, if you do develop symptoms you should quarantine and get tested.

We do not currently offer symptomatic or exposure-related coronavirus testing at Whitman. If you are in Walla Walla, local COVID testing locations are listed on the [Walla Walla County Department of Community Health's COVID-19 website](#).

Announcements

Upcoming Faculty and Staff DEI Learning Opportunities

Whitman is a member of the [Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance](#), which provides monthly virtual learning sessions on topics of antiracism, diversity and equity. Faculty and staff wishing to join any of the upcoming sessions should contact Laura Sanchez (sanchell@whitman.edu), director of the Intercultural Center.

Recovering from COVID-19 Racial Inequities: Thursday, July 15, 9 a.m.—12 p.m.

Teaching the Truth About Slavery and America's Racial History: Wednesday, August 25, 9 a.m.—12 p.m.

Strategically Hiring Faculty of Color: Thursday, September 16, 9 a.m.—12 p.m.

Grand Opening: Whitman Athletics Online Store

Whitman Athletics is thrilled to announce the grand opening of the [Blues' BSN Sports online apparel store](#). As a part of the grand opening, fans get a 25% discount on all purchases through **Friday, July 16**. The online apparel store has a customizable feature that allows fans to create hundreds of different options for supporters of all of Whitman's athletic programs.

Your Experiences Matter: Cascade Centers EAP Resources

Cascade Centers, Whitman's Employee Assistance Program, understands the importance of emotional safety, inclusive and equitable resources and access to diverse, culturally competent, mental health providers who can meet the diverse needs of our members. They have coaches and counselors available to offer support, along with work/life services for financial, legal, housing and more.

Access diversity and inclusion resources, articles, webinars and more on the [Member Site](#). Haven't logged into the Member Site yet? To access the portal:

- Go to: [cascadecenters.com](https://www.cascadecenters.com)
- Click 'Member Log In: EAP Member Site'
- Register as a new user

Upcoming Events

TUESDAY, JULY 13

8:30–10 a.m.

Employee COVID-19 Testing

Any employee who has not submitted proof of COVID-19 vaccination must be tested in order to receive the weekly campus access badge. Testing will take place at Welty Student Health Center.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 14

noon

Internships and Interviewing Seminar

Join the Summer Science and Research Community in person (and inside!) in Brattain Auditorium for a discussion on internships and interviewing with Mitzy Rodriguez from the SEC. Feel free to bring your lunch. You can also [join on Zoom](#) if you are unable to make it in person.

THURSDAY, JULY 15

9 a.m.

FAO Schwarz Fellowship in Social Impact Info Session

The FAO Schwarz Fellowship is a paid, two-year placement program with leading nonprofit organizations. In this info session, hear directly from current FAO Schwarz Fellows, alumni Fellows and Executive Director Priscilla Cohen about how participants use this experience to launch a career in social impact and ask questions about direct service and strategic projects.

FRIDAY, JULY 16

9 a.m.

How to Use Handshake Workshop

Are you new to Handshake? Do you want to know how to use it to find jobs, internships and other opportunities? This quick info session will cover job searches, Handshake events and how you can utilize this platform to build for your future.



Save the date! The Community Engaged Summer Research Program (CESRP) is pleased to invite you to join this year's Share-Out event on Tuesday, July 27, from 12–1:30pm.

The Share-Out is a space to celebrate the work of this year's CESRP cohort, whose research topics include language justice, oral histories, and refugee centered arts practice. The event is fully virtual and open to all. Please add this Zoom link (<https://whitman.zoom.us/j/99179556782>) to your calendar to join us!

If you have any questions, please contact Community Learning Specialist, Kelsey Martin, at martinka@whitman.edu.

Whitman Events Calendar

Have a virtual event you'd like to share with campus? Email the details to whitmantoday@whitman.edu.

"Whitman Today" is produced by the Office of Communications and is emailed Monday and Thursday to Whitman College staff, faculty and students. All times are listed in Pacific Daylight Time.

Submissions are welcome! If you have a professional or personal accomplishment to celebrate, an event to promote or other content to share with the Whitman community, email whitmantoday@whitman.edu. Submissions should be 125 words or less. The deadline for submissions is noon for the following day's newsletter, though submissions may be held for a later date according to space and editorial needs. By submitting to Whitman Today you also authorize use on Whitman's social media unless otherwise specified.

Previous issues of Whitman Today are [archived on our website](#).



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