

# Robert R. Fitak, PhD

*Curriculum Vitae*

Robert.Fitak@ucf.edu

[Google Scholar Profile](#)

[Fitak Lab website](#)

[ResearchGate Profile](#)

[GitHub Site](#)

(*h* = 21)

## EDUCATION

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- 2008 – 2013     **Ph.D in Genetics**  
University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, USA  
Dissertation Advisor: Melanie Culver  
Dissertation Title: “*Conservation genomics of the endangered Mexican wolf and de novo SNP marker development in pumas using next-generation sequencing*”
- 2003 – 2006     **B.S. in Molecular Genetics**  
The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA  
Cum Laude and with distinction in Molecular Genetics  
Thesis Advisor: Paul A. Fuerst  
Thesis Title: “*Analysis of the prevalence and diversity of rickettsial species found in Ohio Amblyomma americanum ticks, assessed by the analysis of the 17kDa surface antigen gene*”

## POSITIONS

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- 2026 – present     **Associate Professor**  
Department of Biology  
Genomics and Bioinformatics Cluster  
University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL, USA
- 2019 – 2026     **Assistant Professor**  
Department of Biology  
Genomics and Bioinformatics Cluster  
University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL, USA
- 2015 – 2019     **Postdoctoral Scientist**  
Department of Biology, Duke University  
PI: Dr. Sönke Johnsen  
Project Title: “*Long-range Geomagnetic Navigation in Sea Turtles: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Localizing Magnetite-based Biological Magnetoreceptors*”
- 2013 – 2015     **Postdoctoral Scientist**  
Institut für Populationsgenetik (Institute for Population Genetics)  
Veterinärmedizinische Universität Wien (Veterinary Medical University Vienna)  
PI: Dr. Pamela Burger  
Project Title: “*Detecting footprints of selection in Old World Camelids using genome sequencing*”
- 2012     **Graduate Teaching Assistant**  
University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, USA
- 2008 – 2012     **National Science Foundation IGERT Fellow in Comparative Genomics**  
University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, USA  
Selected as a fellow for four years, three years of full tuition and salary
- 2008 – 2009     **Science Foundation Arizona Fellow**  
University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, USA

One-year full tuition and salary

2006 – 2007     **Laboratory Technician**  
Department of Molecular Genetics  
The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA

## RESEARCH

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**Peer-reviewed publications** *Lab members in boldfaced type; \*graduate student, \*\*undergraduate student, or §postdoctoral researcher under my supervision; ‡corresponding author*

50. \***Zaragoza G<sup>‡</sup>**, **Fitak R.** (2026) Evaluating the impact of landscape barriers on genetic structure using a hypothesis-based Bayesian approach. *Biological Conservation*. 319:111877.
49. \*Adams-Herrmann E<sup>‡</sup>, \*Morgan T, \*Deaner L, Johnsen S, Wheeler BR, and **Fitak RR.** (2026) A dataset of whole-genome sequencing and genomic variants for the American Shad, *Alosa sapidissima*, from the Neuse River, North Carolina. *Data in Brief* 65:112625.
48. Stager M, Benham PM, Senner NR, **Fitak RR.**, Denmead K, Andringa RK, Grace JK, Dittman DL, Siegrist J, Forsman AM. (2026). Storm-induced mass mortality results in both immediate and long-term consequences for a migratory songbird. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*. 10:907-918.
47. Folsom J, Whitfield S, **Fitak R.**, Frias-Soler R, Wink M, Alvarado-Bremer J, Migoya R, van Slobbe F, Cant S, Hoffman E. (2026) Spatial and temporal population genomics of *Phoenicopterus ruber* (American flamingos). *Ornithological Applications*. 128(1):1-12.
46. \*\***Fackler ER.**, Kishkinev D, Procházka P, **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**. (2025) Elucidating the genetic architecture of migratory timing in a songbird migrant, the great reed warbler, *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*. *Biology Open*. 14(11):bio.062039.
45. Vortman Y, **Fitak RR.**, and Natan E. (2025) Magnetoreception and the ruling hypothesis. *Journal of Experimental Biology*. 228(7):jeb250252.
44. Aguilar-Gómez D, Yuan L, Zhang Y, **Ochoa A<sup>§</sup>**, Culver M, **Fitak R.**, Onorato D, Lohmueller KE, Nielsen R. (2025) Genetic rescue of Florida panthers reduced homozygosity but did not swamp ancestral genotypes. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences U.S.A.* 122(31):e2410945122.
43. \*\***Sharkey E.**, Onorato DP, Roelke-Parker ME, **Ochoa A<sup>§</sup>**, Culver M, and **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**. (2025) Prion gene sequencing in Florida panthers (*Puma concolor coryii*) suggests no differential susceptibility to transmissible spongiform encephalopathy. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*. 61(1):262-266.
42. DiSciullo RA, Forsman AM, **Fitak RR.**, Hunt J, Nietlisbach P, Thompson CF, Sakaluk SK. (2024) Male song structure predicts offspring recruitment to the breeding population in a migratory bird. *Evolution*. 78(6):1054-1066.
41. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**. (2024) The magneto-microbiome: a dataset of the metagenomic distribution of magnetotactic bacteria. *Data in Brief*. 53:110073.
40. \*Brosnan E, \*Palmisano JN, \***Martin J.**, **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**. (2023) Novel genome sequences of *Ophidiomyces ophiodocola*, the causative agent of snake fungal disease. *Microbial Resource Announcements*. 12(7):mra.00093-23.
39. \***Palmisano JN<sup>‡</sup>**, Farrell TM, \***Gustafson TM.**, **Fitak RR.** (2023) The mitochondrial genome of the pentastome parasite *Raillietiella orientalis* Hett, 1915 (Raillietiellida; Raillietiellidae) with notes on its phylogenetic position. *Mitochondrial DNA Part B*. 8(7):756-759.
38. Sharif MB, **Fitak RR.**, Wallner B, Frewin S, Fremaux M, Mohandesan E. (2022) Reconstruction of the major maternal and paternal lineages in the feral New Zealand Kaimanawa horses. *Animals*. 12(24):3508.
37. **Ochoa A<sup>§‡</sup>**, Onorato DP, Roelke-Parker ME, Culver M, and **Fitak RR.** (2022) Give and take: effects of genetic admixture on mutation load in endangered Florida panthers. *Journal of Heredity*. 113:491-499.

36. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**. (2021) OptM: estimating the optimal number of migration edges on population trees using Treemix. *Biology Methods and Protocols*. 6(1):bpab017.
35. Erwin JA, **Fitak RR**, Culver M. (2021) PumaPlex100: An expanded tool for puma SNP genotyping with low-yield DNA. *Conservation Genetics Resources*. 13:341–343.
34. Natan E, **Fitak RR**, Werber Y, Vortman Y. (2020) Symbiotic magnetic sensing: raising evidence and beyond. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*. 375:20190595.
33. Taboada C, Faivovich J, Brunetti AE, Lyra ML, **Fitak RR**, Soverna AF, Ron SR, Lagorio MG, Haddad CFB, Lopes NP, Johnsen S, Chemes LB, Bari SE. (2020) Multiple origins of green coloration in frogs mediated by a novel biliverdin-binding serpin. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences U.S.A.* 117(31): 18574–18581.
32. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Mohandesan E, Corander J, Yadamsuren A, Chuluunbat B, Abdelhadi O, Raziq A, Nagy P, Walzer C, Faye B, and Burger PA. (2020) Genomic signatures of domestication in Old World camels. *Communications Biology*. 3:316.
31. Ernst DA, **Fitak RR**, Schmidt M, Derby CD, Johnsen S, and Lohmann KJ. (2020) Pulse magnetization elicits differential gene expression in the spiny lobster central nervous system. *Journal of Comparative Physiology A*. 206(5):725–742.
30. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Wheeler BR, and Johnsen S. (2020) Effect of a magnetic pulse on orientation behavior in rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). *Behavioral Processes*. 172:104058.
29. Antonacci R, Linguiti G, Burger PA, Castelli V, Pala A, **Fitak R**, Massari S, Ciccicarese S. (2020). Comprehensive genomic analysis of the dromedary T cell receptor gamma (TRG) locus and identification of a functional TRCC5 cassette. *Developmental and Comparative Immunology*. 106:103614.
28. Granger J, Walkowicz L, **Fitak R**, and Johnsen S. (2020) Gray whales strand more often on days with increased levels of atmospheric radio-frequency noise. *Current Biology*. 30(4):R155-R156.
27. Ochoa A, Onorato DP, **Fitak RR**, Roelke-Parker ME, Culver M. (2019) *De novo* assembly and annotation from parental and F1 puma genomes of the Florida panther genetic restoration program. *G3 (Bethesda)*. 9:3531-3536.
26. Favia M, **Fitak RR**, Guerra L, Pierri CL, Faye B, Oulmouden A, Burger PA, Ciani E. (2019). Beyond the big five: investigating myostatin structure, polymorphism and expression in *Camelus dromedarius*. *Frontiers in Genetics*. 10:502.
25. Ritschard EA, **Fitak RR**, Simakov O, and Johnsen S. (2019) Genomic signatures of G-protein-coupled receptor expansions reveal functional transitions in the evolution of cephalopod signal transduction. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences*. 286(1897): 20182929.
24. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, ... Pecon-Slattery, J. (2019) The expectations and challenges of wildlife disease research in the era of genomics: forecasting with a horizon scan. *Journal of Heredity*. 110(3):261-274.
23. Schweikert LE, **Fitak RR**, Caves EM, Sutton TT, and Johnsen S. (2018) Spectral sensitivity among ray-finned fishes: ecology, diversity, and shared descent. *Journal of Experimental Biology*. 221(23): jeb189761.
22. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Caves EM, and Johnsen S. (2018) Orientation in pill bugs: an interdisciplinary activity to engage students in concepts of biology, physics, and circular statistics. *American Biology Teacher*. 80(8): 608-618.
21. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>** and Johnsen S. (2018) Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) population history indicates important demographic changes near the mid-Pleistocene transition. *Marine Biology*. 165(7): 110.
20. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Schweikert LE, Wheeler BR, Ernst DA, Lohmann KJ, and Johnsen S. (2018) Near absence of differential gene expression in the retina of rainbow trout after exposure to a magnetic pulse: Implications for magnetoreception. *Biology Letters*. 14(6): 20180209.
19. Schweikert LE, **Fitak RR**, Johnsen S. (2018) *De novo* transcriptomics reveal distinct phototransduction signaling components in the retina and skin of the color changing vertebrate, *Lachnolaimus maximus*. *Journal of Comparative Physiology A*. 204(5): 475-485.

18. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Rinkevich S, and Culver M. (2018) Genome-wide analyses of SNPs is consistent with no domestic dog ancestry in the endangered Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*). *Journal of Heredity*. 109(4): 373-383.
17. **\*\*Arniella MB, Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, and Johnsen S. (2018) Unmapped sequencing reads identify additional candidate genes linked to magnetoreception in trout. *Environmental Biology of Fishes*. 101(5): 711-721.
16. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>** and Johnsen S. (2017) Bringing the statistical analysis of animal orientation full circle: model-based approaches with maximum likelihood. *Journal of Experimental Biology* 220(21): 3878-38882.
15. Mohandesan E, **Fitak RR**, Corander J, Yadamsuren A, Chuluunbat B, Abdelhadi O, Raziq A, Nagy P, Stalder G, Walzer C, Faye B, and Burger PA. (2017) Mitogenome sequencing in the genus *Camelus* reveals evidence for purifying selection and long-term divergence between wild and domestic Bactrian camels. *Scientific Reports* 7(1): 9970.
14. Ohkura M, **Fitak RR**, Wisecaver JH, DeBlasio D, Niazi F, Egholm M, Rounsley SD, Kodira CD, and Orbach MJ. (2017) Genome sequence of *Ophidiomyces ophiodiicola*, an emerging fungal pathogen of snakes. *Genome Announcements* 5(30): e00677-17.
13. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Wheeler BR, Ernst DA, Lohmann KJ, and Johnsen S. (2017) Candidate genes mediating magnetoreception in rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). *Biology Letters* 13(4): 20170142.
12. Ochoa A, Onorato DP, **Fitak RR**, Roelke-Parker ME, and Culver M. (2017) Evolutionary and functional mitogenomics: presence of potential deleterious SNPs in Florida panthers prior to and as a consequence of the introduction of Texas pumas. *Journal of Heredity* 108(4): 449-455.
11. \*Erwin JA, **Fitak RR**, Dwyer JF, and Culver M. (2016) Molecular detection of bacteria in the families *Rickettsiaceae* and *Anaplasmataceae* in northern crested caracaras (*Caracara cheriway*). *Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases* 7(3): 470-474.
10. Plasil M, Mohandesan E, **Fitak RR**, Musilova P, Kubickova S, Burger PA, and Horin P. (2016) The major histocompatibility complex in Old World camelids and low polymorphism of its class II genes. *BMC Genomics* 17(1): 167.
9. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Mohandesan E, Corander J, and Burger PA. (2016) The *de novo* genome assembly and annotation of a female domestic dromedary of North African origin. *Molecular Ecology Resources* 16(1): 314-324.
8. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Naidu A, Thompson R, and Culver M. (2016) A new panel of SNP markers for the individual identification of North American pumas (*Puma concolor*). *Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management* 7(1): 13-27.
7. Bruford MW, ... **Fitak R**, et al. (2015) Prospects and challenges for the conservation of farm animal genomic resources, 2015-2025. *Frontiers in Genetics* 6: 314.
6. Ruiz E, Mohandesan E, **Fitak RR**, and Burger P. (2015) Diagnostic single nucleotide polymorphism markers to identify hybridization between dromedary and Bactrian camels. *Conservation Genetics Resources* 7(2): 329-332.
5. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Kelly DJ, Fuerst PA, et al. (2014) The prevalence of rickettsial and ehrlichial organisms in *Amblyomma americanum* ticks collected from Ohio and surrounding areas between 2000 and 2010. *Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases* 5(6): 797-800.
4. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Koprowski JL, and Culver M. (2013) Severe reduction in genetic variation in a montane isolate: the endangered Mount Graham red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus grahamensis*). *Conservation Genetics* 14(6): 1233-1241.
3. Andrew DR, **Fitak RR**, Munguia-Vega A, Racolta A, Martinson V, and Dontsova K. (2012) Abiotic factors shape microbial diversity in Sonoran Desert soils. *Applied Environmental Microbiology* 78(21): 7527.
2. Naidu A, **Fitak RR**, Munguia-Vega A, and Culver M. (2012) Novel PCR primers for complete mitochondrial cytochrome b gene sequencing in mammals. *Molecular Ecology Resources* 12: 191-196.

1. Loftis AD, Mixson TR, Stromdahl EY, Yabsley MJ, Garrison LE, Williamson PC, **Fitak RR**, Fuerst PA, and Blount KB. (2008) Geographic distribution and genetic diversity of the *Ehrlichia* sp. from Panola Mountain. *BMC Infectious Diseases* 8: 54.

#### **Manuscripts under review or in revision**

6. Bielke A, Ardestani SS, Sharif BM, Orozco-ter Wengel P, **Fitak RR**, Wallner BA, Wilson K, Mohandesan E. (submitted) Demographic history and management practices shape the genomic landscape of New Zealand's feral Kaimanawa Horses. *BMC Genomics*. xxxxx.
5. Clarke AW, Bozek L, Babalola AI, Wyrożemski Ł, Paynter VM, Vinther J, Donath A, Olesen J, Glenner H, McPeck MA, Farrell TM, **Fitak RR**, Martinez P, Fromm B, Peterson KJ. (in review) Genomic contingency beneath ecological convergence: the tempo and mode of gene loss in parasitic Bilaterians. *Evolution*. EVO-26-0065.
4. Andres JK, Gaither M, **Martin J\***, **Fitak R**, Devillier V, Hall E, Frankle J, Anderson D, Lewis K. (in review) In situ impacts of modified clay on *Karenia brevis* cell concentrations, water quality, and microbial communities. *Limnology and Oceanography*. LO-26-0152.
3. **\*Martin J<sup>‡</sup>**, Mansfield K, and **Fitak RR**. (in revision) DNA metabarcoding indicates the absence of magneto-microbiome in the sea turtle orbital glands. *Frontiers in Marine Science*.
2. Leibovitch M, **Fitak RR**, and Vortman Y. (2026) Phylogenetic relationship between birds and their magneto-microbiome. *bioRxiv* 2026.01.20.700517. doi: 10.64898/2026.01.20.700517
1. **\*Zaragoza G<sup>‡</sup>**, Hoffman E, **Fitak RR**. (in review) Small deer in a changing world: genomic signatures of adaptation to human-modified environments in Key deer. *Heredity*. HDY-26-A0042

#### **Manuscripts in preparation**

3. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**. (in prep.) LAGG: an R package for visualizing genomic data using chaos game representations. *Manuscript available upon request*.
2. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Brothers JR, and Johnsen S. (in prep.) The geomagnetic biogeography of navigating species. *Manuscript available upon request*.
1. **Fitak RR<sup>‡</sup>**, Meyers T, and Culver M. (in prep.) Concurrent patterns of vicariance in mussels of the genus *Anodonta* from Mexico and the western United States and implications for their conservation. *Manuscript available upon request*

#### **Book chapters**

1. Culver M, **Fitak RR**, and Herrmann H. (2010) Genetic Methods for Biodiversity Assessment. In Anne Magurran and Brian McGill (Eds.), *Biological Diversity: frontiers in measurement and assessment*. Oxford University Press: USA, 2011, p208-218.

#### **Other publications and technical reports**

10. **Fitak RR**. (2025) Untold Tails: Letter to the Editor from a concerned, captive felid. *Wild Felid Monitor* 18(2): 18-19.
9. **Fitak RR**. (2024) Untold Tails: Prehistoric pumas, poop, and their primitive playmates. *Wild Felid Monitor* 17(2): 29-30.
8. Culver M, Ochoa A, **Fitak RR**. (2021) Sequencing the puma genome: Why? And how is it beneficial for conservation and management? *Wild Felid Monitor* 14(1): 8-10.
7. **Fitak, RR**. (2016) Wild felid genomics: where are we now? *Wild Felid Monitor* 9(1): 13.
6. Erwin JA, **Fitak RR**, Meyers T, and Culver M. (2016) Genetic analysis of *Anodonta californiensis* from the Río Bavispe: a recommendation for reintroduction into the San Bernardino River subbasin. Final report for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Tucson, AZ.

5. Naidu A, **Fitak R**, and Culver M. (2014) Landscape genetics of mountain lions (*Puma concolor*) in southwestern Arizona. Final report to the Arizona Game and Fish Department Habitat Partnership Committee, Project number HPC-09-406, Tucson, AZ.
4. Naidu A, **Fitak R**, and Culver M. (2014) Data sharing for wildlife management: the puma genetic database. Final report to the Arizona Game and Fish Department Habitat Partnership Committee, Project number HPC- 10-705, Tucson, AZ.
3. **Fitak RR**, Rinkevich S, and Culver M. (2013) The effects of extirpation and reintroduction on the Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*) through genome-wide association. Final report for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM.
2. Culver M, **Fitak RR**, and Meyers T. (2011) California Floater Genetics. Final report for the Arizona Game and Fish Department Heritage Program. Tucson, AZ.
1. **Fitak RR** and Culver M. (2009) Mount Graham red squirrel genetic analysis to aid in formation of a captive breeding population. Final report for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Tucson, AZ.

## GRANTS

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**Total lifetime grant dollars: \$1,033,695 (\$369,284 credited to me; \$0 pending)**

|      |  |                              |
|------|--|------------------------------|
| 2025 | <b>Sea Turtle Conservancy License Plate Grants (Declined)</b> .....  | <b>\$11,099</b>              |
|      | <i>“Examining the sea turtle ocular microbiome and its association with fibropapillomatosis”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split); K. Mansfield, UCF (co-PI); J. Martin, UCF (co-PI)</b>  |                              |
| 2025 | <b>NSF REU Site (Declined)</b> .....   | <b>\$431,603 [\$215,802]</b> |
|      | <i>“REU Site: Conservation, Resilience, and Communication”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split); L. Walters, UCF (co-PI)</b>  |                              |
| 2025 | <b>NSF Organismal Response to Climate Change (Declined)</b> .....  | <b>\$403,557</b>             |
|      | <i>“Collaborative Research: ORCC: Exploring the evolutionary complexity of invasive species and corresponding impacts on ecosystem functioning”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 100% credit split); R. Stanbrook, Bethune-Cookman (collaborative proposal)</b>             |                              |
| 2025 | <b>Seagrass Restoration Technology Development Initiative (Awarded)</b> .....  | <b>\$84,760 [\$42,380]</b>   |
|      | <i>“Seagrass strikes back: A new hope for fighting marine heatwaves (MHWs) with thermo-priming”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split); C. Persky, UCF (co-PI); L. Walters, UCF (co-PI)</b>   |                              |
| 2025 | <b>Morris Animal Foundation: Wildlife Health (Awarded)</b> .....   | <b>\$101,485 [\$50,743]</b>  |
|      | <i>“Current and future impacts of a novel invasive parasite on Florida’s declining iconic pygmy rattlesnakes”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split); A. Savage, UCF (co-PI); J. Palmisano, UCF (co-PI)</b>   |                              |
| 2025 | <b>Florida Department of Transportation (Awarded)</b> .....  | <b>\$270,872 [\$135,436]</b> |
|      | <i>“The ecological, genetic, and disease impacts of translocations on Florida scrub-jays (Aphelocoma coerulescens) impacted by habitat loss”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split); A. Savage, UCF (co-PI); E. Hoffman, UCF (co-PI)</b>                        |                              |
| 2024 | <b>US Fish and Wildlife Service (Declined)</b> .....   | <b>\$175,184</b>             |
|      | <i>“Applying molecular tools for white-nose syndrome management: Harnessing genomics, immunogenetics, and eDNA approaches in tricolored bats (Perimyotis subflavus)”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split); E. Hoffman, UCF (co-PI); J. White, UCF (co-PI)</b> |                              |
| 2024 | <b>NSF REU Site (Declined)</b> .....   | <b>\$432,021 [\$216,011]</b> |
|      | <i>“Nature Nexus: Conservation and Resilience”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (co-PI; 50% credit split); L. Walters, UCF (PI)</b>  |                              |

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| 2024 | <b>US Fish and Wildlife Service (Declined)</b> .....   | <b>\$224,184</b>               |
|      | <i>“Conservation genomic analysis of the Sacramento Mountains checkerspot (Euphydryas anicia cloudcrofti) to estimate genetic variation, current population size, and historic demographic events”</i>           |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (PI; 75% credit split); E. Hoffman, UCF (co-PI)</b>  |                                |
| 2024 | <b>NSF DBI – BRC BIO (Declined)</b> .....  | <b>\$30,049</b>                |
|      | <i>“BRC-BIO: Linking dung beetle gut microbiomes to ecosystem services under environmental stressors found in U.S. agriculture”</i>  |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (subaward PI; 100% credit split); R. Stanbrook, B-CU (PI)</b>  |                                |
| 2024 | <b>Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Pre-proposal (Declined)</b> .....   | <b>\$52,480</b>                |
|      | <i>“Quantifying the threat of an invasive parasitic lungworm in Florida's native snake populations”</i>  |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split); A. Savage, UCF (co-PI)</b>   |                                |
| 2024 | <b>NSF IOS (Declined)</b> .....  | <b>\$1,800,000 [\$271,811]</b> |
|      | <i>“Collaborative Research: Linking Molecular Mechanisms of Geomagnetic Imprinting to Natal Homing Behavior”</i>   |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (PI; 100% credit split for UCF portion) L. Komoroske, UMass (co-PI); K. Phillips, UMass (co-PI); C. and L. Lohmann, UNC (co-PIs); B. Shamblin, UGA (co-PI).</b>                                      |                                |
| 2023 | <b>Austrian Science Fund (Awarded; not counted towards total: see <a href="#">Link</a>)</b> .....  | <b>€425,922 [€0]</b>           |
|      | <i>“Genetic diversity and origin of feral horses in New Zealand”</i>   |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (co-I; 0% credit split); E. Mohandesan, Universität Wien (UW; PI); G. Weber, UW (co-I); K. Schafer, UW (co-I); R. Pinhasi, UW (co-I); B. Wallner UW (co-I); P. Orozco-Terwengel, Cardiff (co-I).</b> |                                |
| 2023 | <b>UCF College of Medicine Research Pilot Award Program (Awarded)</b> .....  | <b>\$20,000 [\$2,500]</b>      |
|      | <i>“Engineering dermal human tissue for tick blood feeding and bite-site biology investigations”</i>   |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (co-I; 12.5% credit split); B. Willenberg, UCF (PI); M. Jewett, UCF (co-I)</b>   |                                |
| 2023 | <b>Sea Turtle Conservancy License Plate Grants (Declined)</b> .....  | <b>\$24,335</b>                |
|      | <i>“Characterizing the magneto-microbiome and symbiotic magnetic sensing in sea turtles”</i>   |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split); K. Mansfield, UCF (co-PI)</b>  |                                |
| 2023 | <b>Morris Animal Foundation: Wildlife Health Proposal (Declined)</b> .....   | <b>\$115,545</b>               |
|      | <i>“Preventing catastrophic declines in Florida’s native snakes from an invading crustacean lungworm”</i>  |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (PI; 100% credit split)</b>  |                                |
| 2023 | <b>NSF CAREER: IOS - Symbiosis Infection &amp; Immunity (Declined)</b> .....   | <b>\$704,900</b>               |
|      | <i>“Symbiotic magnetic sensing in animals”</i>   |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (PI; 100% credit split)</b>  |                                |
| 2023 | <b>NASA Space Biology Research Studies (Declined)</b> .....  | <b>\$299,999</b>               |
|      | <i>“Transgenerational physiological and epigenetic effects of exposure to lunar regolith simulant in the terrestrial isopod crustacean Armadillidium vulgare”</i>  |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split); R. Stanbrook, UCF (co-PI)</b>  |                                |
| 2022 | <b>NSF Organismal Response to Climate Change (Declined)</b> .....  | <b>\$796,366</b>               |
|      | <i>“Exploring the evolutionary complexity of multi-origin invasive species and corresponding impacts on ecosystem functioning”</i>   |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split); R. Stanbrook, UCF (co-PI)</b>  |                                |
| 2022 | <b>Sea Turtle Conservancy License Plate Grants (Declined)</b> .....  | <b>\$17,897</b>                |
|      | <i>“Characterizing the magneto-microbiome and symbiotic magnetic sensing in sea turtles”</i>   |                                |
|      | <b>RR Fitak (PI; 75% credit split); K. Mansfield, UCF (co-PI)</b>  |                                |
| 2022 | <b>Mathers Foundation (Declined)</b> .....   | <b>\$303,846</b>               |

|      |  |                                      |
|------|--|--------------------------------------|
|      | <i>“The magneto-microbiome and its symbiotic relationships with host species”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 100% credit split)</b>   |                                      |
| 2021 | <b>NSF REU Site (Awarded)</b> .....<br><i>“Conservation, Restoration, and Communication”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (co-PD; 5% credit split);</b> L. Walters (UCF PI); K. Mansfield (UCF co-PI), P. Bohlen (UCF co-PD), L. Chambers (UCF co-PD), G. Cook (UCF co-PD), M. Gaither (UCF co-PD), E. Goolsby (UCF co-PD), E. Hoffman (UCF co-PD), K. Kibler (UCF co-PD), C. Mason (UCF co-PD), A. Savage (UCF co-PD) | <b>\$441,194</b> [ <b>\$22,831</b> ] |
| 2021 | <b>UK BBSRC-US NSF/BIO Collaborative Grants (Declined)</b> .....<br><i>“Development of an open-source and high-throughput genotyping tool to elucidate genetic mechanisms underlying bird migratory phenology”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split);</b> D. Kishkinev, Keele Univ (co-PI)   | <b>\$1,161,681</b>                   |
| 2021 | <b>NSF CAREER: IOS - Symbiosis Infection &amp; Immunity (Declined)</b> .....<br><i>“Symbiotic magnetic sensing in animals”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 100% credit split)</b>  | <b>\$939,316</b>                     |
| 2021 | <b>Association of Avian Veterinarians Wild Bird Health Grant (Declined)</b> .....<br><i>“A molecular and serological survey of avian pox in three bird species from two orders”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split);</b> A. Forsman, UCF (co-PI)   | <b>\$4,917</b>                       |
| 2021 | <b>Human Frontier Science Program Early Career Award (Declined)</b> .....<br><i>“Elucidating the avian magnetic sense: from behavior to brains to genes”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 33% credit split);</b> P. Malkemper, Max Planck (co-PI); D. Kishkinev, Keele Univ (co-PI)   | <b>\$1,095,000</b>                   |
| 2021 | <b>UCF Seed Funding Program Exploratory Research Award (Awarded)</b> .....<br><i>“Do ticks go on blind dates? Disentangling the visual system of lone star ticks and its role in mate recognition”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 100% credit split)</b>  | <b>\$11,478</b>                      |
| 2020 | <b>Morris Animal Foundation: Wildlife/Exotics Pilot Proposal (Declined)</b> .....<br><i>“The origins and evolution of snake fungal disease in North America”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 100% credit split)</b>  | <b>\$10,612</b>                      |
| 2020 | <b>Association of Avian Veterinarians Wild Bird Health Grant (Declined)</b> .....<br><i>“A molecular and serological survey of avipoxvirus prevalence in burrowing owls (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>), purple martins (<i>Progne subis</i>), and Florida scrub jays (<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>)”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split);</b> A. Forsman, UCF (co-PI)                               | <b>\$4,969</b>                       |
| 2019 | <b>UCF Seed Funding Program Exploratory Research Award (Declined)</b> .....<br><i>“‘Can’t see the forest for the trees’ – how characterizing the visual system of ticks can help improve tick-borne disease prevention”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split);</b> L. Schweikert, FIU (co-PI)  | <b>\$26,153</b>                      |
| 2019 | <b>DoD Tick-Borne Disease Research Program Idea Award (Declined)</b> .....<br><i>“Improving tick-borne disease prevention by investigating the vector’s visual physiology”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 50% credit split);</b> L. Schweikert, FIU (co-PI)   | <b>≤\$400,000</b>                    |
| 2018 | <b>Duke Center for Genomic and Computational Biology Voucher Award (Awarded)</b> .....<br><i>“The American shad (<i>Alosa sapidissima</i>) genome: understanding the evolutionary novelties of the ‘fish that fed the Nation’s founders’”</i><br><b>RR Fitak (PI; 100% credit split)</b>   | <b>\$5,547</b>                       |
| 2014 | <b>European Science Foundation Exchange Grant (Awarded)</b> .....  | <b>€3,500</b>                        |

Award for an exchange research visit in the lab of Dr. Michael Bruford, Cardiff University, UK, as part of the Farm Animal Genomic Resources Program

|      |  |                 |
|------|--|-----------------|
| 2013 | <b>Arizona Game and Fish Department Heritage Fund (Awarded)</b> .....  | <b>\$50,000</b> |
|      | <i>“Historical connectivity of black-tailed prairie dog populations in the Southwest”</i>  |                 |
| 2010 | <b>Arizona Game and Fish Dept. Habitat Partnership Program (Awarded)</b> .....   | <b>\$15,000</b> |
|      | <i>“Establishment of a forensics genetic database for big game”</i>  |                 |
| 2009 | <b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Science Support Partnership (Awarded)</b> .....  | <b>\$29,869</b> |
|      | <i>“The effects of extirpation and reintroduction on the Mexican wolf (Canis lupus baileyi) through genome-wide association”</i> |                 |

**Research grants awarded to students under my supervision** \*graduate or \*\*undergraduate student

|      |  |                 |
|------|--|-----------------|
| 2025 | **Kerissa Tarpley – UCF Office of Undergraduate Research Grant .....         | <b>\$750</b>    |
| 2025 | **Zachary Montealegre – UCF Office of Undergraduate Research Grant .....     | <b>\$600</b>    |
| 2024 | **Stephanie Gaspar – Purple Martin Conservation Association.....             | <b>\$2,500</b>  |
| 2024 | **Clayton Monfils – UCF Office of Undergraduate Research Grant .....         | <b>\$750</b>    |
| 2023 | **Emily Fackler – UCF Office of Undergraduate Research Grant.....            | <b>\$750</b>    |
| 2022 | *George Zaragoza – Bass Pro Shops & Cabela’s ForEverglades Scholarship ..... | <b>\$30,000</b> |
| 2022 | **Mitchell Dyen – UCF Office of Undergraduate Research Grant .....           | <b>\$750</b>    |
| 2022 | *Taryn Gustafson – Conchologists of America.....                             | <b>\$1,800</b>  |
| 2022 | *Taryn Gustafson – American Malacological Society.....                       | <b>\$1,300</b>  |
| 2020 | **Arimar J. López Limas – Zoological Lighting Institute .....                | <b>\$500</b>    |
| 2020 | **Coral Robson – UCF Office of Undergraduate Research Grant .....            | <b>\$700</b>    |

PRESENTATIONS

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**Invited Seminars**

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 2025 | <i>“Panthers, pipelines, and pixels: HPC-enabled conservation genomics”</i> – UCF Research Computing Symposium; University of Central Florida; Orlando, FL.   |
| 2025 | <i>“Animal magnetoreception: sensory mechanisms and the metazoan magneto-microbiome”</i> – Department of Biology; University of Central Florida; Orlando, FL.                                       |
| 2025 | <i>“Tales of the Florida panther: Implications of genetic rescue on a single gene to the entire epigenome”</i> – Department of Biology; University of Central Florida; Orlando, FL.                 |
| 2025 | <i>“Animal magnetoreception: sensory mechanisms and the metazoan magneto-microbiome”</i> – Department of Biological Sciences; Florida International University; Miami, FL.                          |
| 2023 | <i>“Tales of the Florida panther: Implications of genetic rescue on a single gene to the entire epigenome”</i> – Center for Computational Biology; University of California Berkeley; Berkeley, CA. |
| 2023 | <i>“Animal magnetoreception: sensory mechanisms and the metazoan magneto-microbiome”</i> – Florida Space Institute; Orlando, FL.  |

- 2022 “*Animal magnetoreception: sensory mechanisms and the metazoan magneto-microbiome*” – Dept. of Biology and Marine Biology; University of North Carolina Wilmington; Wilmington, NC.
- 2021 “*Macrogenetics and the metazoan magneto-microbiome*” – Zoological Navigation Working Group (International working group; virtual).
- 2020 “*Magnetoreception in animals*” – Dept. of Biological Sciences, Florida International University; Miami, FL  
\*\*CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19\*\*
- 2018 “*From conservation to sensory biology: an interdisciplinary walk*” – Invited (Plenary) Speaker: Genetics IDP Annual Retreat at the University of Arizona; Tucson, AZ
- 2018 “*The expectations and challenges of wildlife disease research in the era of genomics: Forecasting with a horizon scan*” – UPE/TriCEM Symposium at Duke University; Durham, NC
- 2014 “*Conservation genomics of the endangered Mexican wolf*” – Mexican Wolf SSP Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO

**Regional, National and International Conference Presentations** \*graduate or \*\*undergraduate student

- 2025 Perscky C, **Fitak R**, Fleming C, Tye M, Furman B, Walters L. “*Species-Specific Seagrass Dynamics During Record Marine Heatwaves in the Indian River Lagoon*” — Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Conference, Richmond, VA
- 2025 \*Zaragoza G, **Fitak R**. “*Integrating Genomic and Geospatial Data to Aid the Management of a Predator-Prey System of the Greater Everglades*” — The Wildlife Society Annual Conference, Edmonton, AB, Canada
- 2025 \*Martin JK, **Fitak RR**. “*Could symbiotic bacteria play a role in magnetoreception? A case study in sea turtles*” — Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Atlanta, GA
- 2024 \*Martin JK, **Fitak RR**. “*Could symbiotic bacteria play a role in magnetoreception? A case study in sea turtles*” — ZooNav (Virtual)
- 2024 \*\*Fackler ER, Kishkinev D, Prochazka P, **Fitak RR**. “*The Influence of genes on the migratory timing of great reed warblers*” – ZooNav (Virtual)
- 2024 Onorato D, \*\*Sharkey E, Roelke-Parker ME, Ochoa A, Culver M, Cunningham M, **Fitak RR**. “*Assessing the impacts of genetic rescue on the susceptibility of an endangered carnivore to transmissible spongiform encephalopathy*” – The Wildlife Society Annual Conference, Baltimore MD
- 2024 **Fitak RR**, \*Palmisano J, \*Gustafson T. “*What are pentastomes, really? And no, they don’t have five mouths*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Seattle, WA
- 2024 \*Martin JK, **Fitak RR**. “*Turtle tears? Characterizing the magneto-microbiome of the sea turtle lacrimal gland*” — Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Seattle, WA
- 2023 \*Zaragoza GZ, **Fitak RR**. “*Beyond the bottleneck: Contributions of urban adaptation to divergence in Florida key deer*” – International Urban Wildlife Conference, Washington, DC
- 2023 \*\*Fackler ER, **Fitak RR**, Kishkinev D, Prochazka P. “*Do genes influence the migratory timing of great reed warblers?*” – Disney’s Animal Kingdom Fowl Language Group, Orlando, FL
- 2023 \*\*Fackler ER, **Fitak RR**, Kishkinev D, Prochazka P. “*Do genes influence the migratory timing of great reed warblers?*” – ZooNav (Virtual)

- 2021 **Fitak RR**. “*Symbiotic magnetic sensing in animals: evidence from metagenomics*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Virtual
- 2021 \*Zaragoza G, \*\*Robson C, **Fitak RR**. “*Assigning rural and urban origin to burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*) using traditionally omitted genomic data*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Virtual
- 2020 **Fitak RR**, Wheeler BR, Naisbett-Jones LC, Scanlan MM, Noakes DLG, Johnsen S. “*Time-dependent characterization of candidate magnetoreception genes in the brain of Chinook salmon*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Austin, TX
- 2019 **Fitak RR**. “*The molecular signatures of magnetite-based magnetoreception: evidence from transcriptomics*” – The 10<sup>th</sup> RIN (Royal Institute of Navigation) Conference on Animal Navigation, Royal Holloway College, UK
- 2019 Schweikert LE, Caves EM, **Fitak RR**, Solie SE, Sutton TT, Johnsen S. “*Patterns and predictors of spectral sensitivity variation in fishes*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Tampa, FL
- 2018 **Fitak RR**, Wheeler BR, Schweikert LE, Ernst DA, Lohmann KJ, Johnsen S. “*Candidate magnetoreception genes in the brain and retina of trout*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, San Francisco, CA
- 2018 Ritschard EA, **Fitak RR**, Johnsen S. “*Sensory insights from the molecular evolution of GPCRs in the *Octopus bimaculoides* genome*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, San Francisco, CA
- 2018 Ernst DA, **Fitak RR**, Schmidt M, Derby CD, Johnsen S, Lohmann KJ. “*A magnetic pulse induces differential gene expression in the spiny lobster central nervous system*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, San Francisco, CA
- 2018 Schweikert LE, **Fitak RR**, Grace MS, Johnsen S. “*Dermal photoreception may provide sensory feedback for dynamic coloration*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, San Francisco, CA
- 2016 **Fitak RR**. “*The effect of geomagnetic field reversals on the demographic history of navigating species: a case study in green sea turtles*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, Regional Meeting, Durham, NC
- 2016 **Fitak RR**. “*Navigating the earth using magnetic fields: Identifying genes linked to a functional magnetoreceptor*” – Duke Biology Department Retreat, Beaufort, NC
- 2016 **Fitak RR**, Mohandesan E, Burger PA. “*Genomic footprints of selection under domestication in Old World camelids*” – Plant & Animal Genome Conference XXIV, San Diego, CA
- 2015 Antonacci R, **Fitak RR**, Burger PA, Castelli V, Ciani E, Ciccarese S. “*Functional genomics and evolution of the gamma/delta T cell receptor locus in old world camels*” – 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of ISOCARD: Silk Road Camel: The Camelids, Main Stakes for Sustainable Development, Almaty, Kazakhstan
- 2015 **Fitak RR**, Mohandesan E, Burger PA. “*Complete genome re-sequencing reveals patterns of domestication in Old World camelids*” – 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of ISOCARD: Silk Road Camel: The Camelids, Main Stakes for Sustainable Development, Almaty, Kazakhstan
- 2015 Muzzachi S, Burger P, Fitak RR, Oulmouden A, Cherifi Y, Yahyaoui H, Zayed MA, Lacalandra GM, Faye B, Ciani E. “*Combined sanger and NGS sequence analysis of the myostatin gene (*mstn*) in the *Camelus**”

- dromedarius species*” – 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of ISOCARD: Silk Road Camel: The Camelids, Main Stakes for Sustainable Development, Almaty, Kazakhstan
- 2014 **Fitak RR**, Mohandesan E, Burger PA. “*Complete genome re-sequencing reveals patterns of domestication in Old World camelids*” – European Science Foundation: Livestock Genomic Resources in a Changing World, Cardiff, UK
- 2014 **Fitak RR**, Mohandesan E, Burger PA. “*Complete genome re-sequencing reveals patterns of domestication in Old World camelids*” – Society for Molecular Biology and Evolution Annual Meeting, San Juan, PR
- 2013 **Fitak RR**. “*PumaPlex: A high-throughput SNP assay for the genetic monitoring of pumas*” – 46<sup>th</sup> Joint Annual Meeting of the AZ/NM Chapters of the Wildlife Society, Albuquerque, NM
- 2012 **Fitak RR**, Rinkevich S, Culver M. “*Conservation genomics of the endangered Mexican wolf*” – The Wildlife Society Annual Conference, Portland, OR
- 2012 **Fitak RR**, Kelly DJ, Fuerst PA. “*A longitudinal study of the prevalence of rickettsial and ehrlichial endosymbionts in Ohio Amblyomma americanum ticks*” – 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the American Society for Rickettsiology, Park City, UT
- 2012 **Fitak RR**, Rinkevich S, Culver M. “*A genome scan of Mexican wolves to improve their captive breeding and reintroduction program*” – 44<sup>th</sup> Joint Annual Meeting of the AZ/NM Chapters of the Wildlife Society, Pinetop, AZ
- 2010 **Fitak RR**, Rinkevich S, Culver M. “*Conservation genomics for the analysis of Arizona's native carnivores*” – University of Arizona Genetics Core Graduate Student Research Symposium, Tucson, AZ
- 2009 **Fitak RR**. “*Genetic Variation and population structure in the endangered Mt. Graham red squirrel: evidence from microsatellite markers*” – 42<sup>nd</sup> Joint Annual Meeting of the AZ/NM Chapters of the Wildlife Society, Gallup, NM
- 2007 Kelly DJ, **Fitak RR**, Fuerst PA. “*Novel method for the quantitative detection of Ehrlichia sp. in Ohio Amblyomma americanum ticks*” – 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the American Society for Rickettsiology, Colorado Springs, CO

**Regional, National and International Poster Presentations** \*graduate or \*\*undergraduate student

- 2026 \*\*Tarpley KF, **Fitak RR**. “*Generating genomic resource for the pink sundew and its specialist herbivore moth*” – Florida Undergraduate Research Conference, Jacksonville, FL
- 2025 \*\*Tarpley KF, **Fitak RR**. “*Predator and prey: Generating genomic resources for the pink sundew and its specialized herbivore moth*” – Florida Undergraduate Research Conference, Tampa, FL
- 2025 \*\*Dyen M. “*A transcriptomic study of the lone star tick’s mating behaviors for disease mitigation*” – Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA
- 2025 \*Villella SL, Palmisano JN, **Fitak RR**. “*Genomic resources for pentastomes: a comparative study of native and invasive species*” – Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Atlanta, GA
- 2024 \*\*Dyen M, **Fitak RR**. “*A transcriptomic study of the lone star tick's eyes and mating behaviors for disease mitigation*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Seattle, WA
- 2024 \*\*Fackler ER, **Fitak RR**, Kishkinev D, Prochazka P. “*Do Genes Influence the Migratory Timing of Great Reed Warblers?*” – Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Seattle, WA

- 2024 \*Gustafson TM, **Fitak RR**. “*Characterizing the SLC17 gene family expansion in Cephalopoda: Neurogenomic insights into the evolution of complex cognition in octopuses*” – Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Seattle, WA
- 2023 \*Gustafson TM, **Fitak RR**. “*Characterizing the SLC17 gene family expansion in Cephalopoda: Neurogenomic insights into the evolution of complex cognition in octopuses*” – Comparative Cognition Conference (CO3), Melbourne, FL
- 2023 \*Palmisano JN, Farrell TM, **Fitak RR**, Savage AE. “*Recent advances in invasive pentastome research to further characterize the threat to native snake populations*” – Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, Norfolk, VA.
- 2022 \*Gustafson T, **Fitak RR**. “*Characterizing the sialin gene family expansion in Cephalopoda: Neurogenomic insights into invertebrate intelligence*” – Cephalopod International Advisory Council, Sesimbra, Portugal
- 2021 \*\*López Limas AJ, **Fitak RR**. “*Phototransduction components involved in the visual system of hard bodied ticks*” – Florida Undergraduate Research Conference, State Meeting, Virtual
- 2021 \*Gustafson T, **Fitak RR**. “*Characterizing the sialin gene family expansion in Cephalopoda: Neurogenomic insights into invertebrate intelligence*” – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Virtual
- 2012 **Fitak RR**, Rinkevich S, Culver M. “*Inbreeding and haplotype structure in the endangered Mexican wolf*” – American Genetic Association Annual Symposium: Recombination, Durham, NC
- 2011 **Fitak RR**, Rinkevich S, Culver M. “*Conservation genomics of the endangered Mexican wolf*” – American Genetic Association Annual Symposium: Genomics and Biodiversity, Guanajuato, Mexico
- 2010 **Fitak RR**, Rinkevich S, Culver M. “*Conservation genomics of Arizona's large carnivores*” – American Genetic Association Annual Symposium: Conservation Genomics, Hilo, HI
- 2007 Kelly DJ, **Fitak RR**, Fuerst PA. “*Sequencing and analysis of Orientia tsutsugamushi DNA in a Leptotrombidium pallidum mite colony originating in a scrub typhus endemic region in Saitama Prefecture, Japan*” – 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the American Society for Rickettsiology, Colorado Springs, CO
- 2007 **Fitak RR**, Kelly DJ, Fuerst PA. “*Rickettsial prevalence and antigenic variation in Ohio-collected Amblyomma americanum ticks*” – 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the American Society for Rickettsiology, Colorado Springs, CO
- 2006 Carmichael J, Kelly DJ, **Fitak RR**, Fuerst PA. “*Phylogeographic variation of potential virulence genes from Rickettsia amblyommii isolates from the northeast United States*” – 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the American Society for Rickettsiology, Pacific Grove, CA
- 2006 Kelly DJ, **Fitak RR**, Fuerst PA. “*A multigene analysis of the prevalence and diversity of rickettsial forms in Amblyomma americanum ticks from Ohio and the north central United States*” – 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the American Society for Rickettsiology, Pacific Grove, CA

### UCF Conference Posters & Presentations

- 2026 \*\*Montealegre Z. “*The use of non-invasive techniques to monitor carnivores in the UCF Arboretum*” — UCF Student Scholar Symposium, Orlando, FL
- 2026 \*\*Tarpley KF, **Fitak RR**. “*Generating genomic resources for the pink sundew and its specialist herbivore moth*” — UCF Student Scholar Symposium, Orlando, FL

- 2025 \*\*Montealegre ZB, **Fitak RR**. “*Species, sex, and diet of carnivores in the UCF arboretum*” — UCF Undergraduate Research Poster Showcase, Orlando, FL
- 2025 \*\*Dyen M. “*The effect of mating pheromone 2,6-dichlorophenol on gene expression in male lone star ticks (Amblyomma americanum)*” — UCF Student Scholar Symposium, Orlando, FL
- 2025 \*\*Tarpley KF, **Fitak RR**. “*Predator and prey: Generating genomic resources for the pink sundew and its specialized herbivore moth*” – UCF Student Scholar Symposium, Orlando, FL
- 2024 \*\*Fackler ER, **Fitak RR**, Kishkinev D, Prochazka P. “*The influence of genes on the migratory timing of great reed warblers*” – UCF Student Scholar Symposium, Orlando, FL
- 2024 \*\*Dyen M, **Fitak RR**. “*A transcriptomic study of the lone star tick’s eyes and mating behaviors for disease mitigation*” – UCF Student Scholar Symposium, Orlando, FL
- 2023 \*Zaragoza G, **Fitak RR**. “*Why did the puma cross the road? Unfortunately, it didn’t*” – UCF Spring Student Scholar Symposium, Orlando, FL
- 2023 \*\*Fackler ER, **Fitak RR**, Kishkinev D, Prochazka P. “*Do genes influence the migratory timing of great reed warblers?*” – UCF Spring Student Scholar Symposium, Orlando, FL
- 2023 \*\*Dyen M, **Fitak RR**. “*How to off ticks without ticking them off: Establishing a tick euthanasia protocol for ethical and accurate transcriptomics*” – UCF Spring Student Scholar Symposium, Orlando, FL
- 2023 \*Gustafson TM, **Fitak RR**. “*Characterizing the SLC17 gene family expansion in Cephalopoda: Neurogenomic insights into the evolution of complex cognition in octopuses*” – UCF Spring Student Scholar Symposium, Orlando, FL
- 2023 \*\*Fackler ER, **Fitak RR**, Kishkinev D, Prochazka P. “*Do genes influence the migratory timing of great reed warblers?*” – GBC Open House, Orlando, FL
- 2023 \*Brosnan E, \*Palmisano J, \*Martin J, **Fitak RR**. “*Novel genome sequences of Ophidiomyces ophidiicola, the causative agent of snake fungal disease*” – GBC Open House, Orlando, FL
- 2023 \*Gustafson TM, **Fitak RR**. “*Characterizing the SLC17 gene family expansion in Cephalopoda: Neurogenomic insights into the evolution of complex cognition in octopuses*” – GBC Open House, Orlando, FL
- 2021 \*\*Levin A, **Fitak RR**. “*Linking magnetoreception to CACNAID homolog protein insertions in vertebrates*” – UCF Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence (SURE), Orlando, FL
- 2021 \*\*López Limas AJ, **Fitak RR**. “*Phototransduction components involved in the visual system of hard bodied ticks*” – UCF Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence (SURE), Orlando, FL
- 2021 \*Gustafson T, **Fitak RR**. “*Characterizing the sialin gene family expansion in Cephalopoda: Neurogenomic insights into invertebrate intelligence*” – UCF Student Scholar Symposium, Orlando, FL
- 2020 \*\*Boggs E, \*\*Hevia A, **Fitak RR**. “*Sensing symbiosis: investigating a link between magnetotactic bacteria and cartilaginous fishes using genomics*” – UCF Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence (SURE), Orlando, FL
- 2020 \*\*Robson C, **Fitak RR**. “*Prospecting for pathogens: de novo pathogen discovery in burrowing owls*” – UCF Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence (SURE), Orlando, FL
- 2020 \*\*Scales J, **Fitak RR**. “*De Novo discovery of pathogens in American alligators*” – UCF Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence (SURE), Orlando, FL

## TEACHING

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**Courses Taught** (FA = fall; SP = spring; SU = summer; GTA = graduate teaching assistant; UTA = undergraduate teaching assistant)

- 2026 SP: Instructor – Wildlife Genomics (PCB 4575/5688); University of Central Florida
- 2025 FA: Instructor – Population genetics (PCB 4684/5935); University of Central Florida
- 2025 SP: Instructor – Advanced Inferences in Conservation (PCB 5937-ST); University of Central Florida
- 2024 FA: Instructor – Wildlife Genomics (PCB 4575/5688); University of Central Florida
- 2024 FA: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (13 sections, 7 GTAs)
- 2024 SU: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (10 sections, 5 GTAs)
- 2024 SP: Instructor – Genetics (PCB 3063); University of Central Florida (enrollment = 446; 2 UTAs)
- 2024 SP: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (12 sections, 6 GTAs)
- 2023 FA: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (13 sections, 7 GTAs)
- 2023 SU: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (8 sections, 4 GTAs)
- 2023 SP: Instructor – Advanced Inferences in Conservation (PCB 5937-ST); University of Central Florida
- 2023 SP: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (11 sections, 6 GTAs)
- 2022 FA: Instructor – Wildlife Genomics (PCB 4575/5688); University of Central Florida
- 2022 FA: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (13 sections, 7 GTAs)
- 2022 SU: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (8 sections, 4 GTAs)
- 2022 SP: Instructor – Genetics (PCB 3063); University of Central Florida (enrollment = 460; 2 UTAs)
- 2022 SP: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (8 sections, 4 GTAs)
- 2021 FA: Instructor – Genetics (PCB 3063); University of Central Florida (enrollment = 450; 1 UTA)
- 2021 FA: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (10 sections, 5 GTAs)
- 2021 SU: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (1 section, 1 GTA)
- 2021 SP: Instructor – Advanced Inferences in Conservation (PCB 5937-ST); University of Central Florida
- 2021 SP: Coordinator – Genetics Laboratory (PCB 3063L); University of Central Florida (8 sections, 4 GTAs)
- 2021 SP: Instructor – Seminar in Biology (BSC 6935); University of Central Florida
- 2020 FA: Instructor – Wildlife Genomics (PCB 4575/5688); University of Central Florida
- 2019 FA: Instructor – Wildlife Genomics (PCB 4575/5688); University of Central Florida
- 2012 FA: Graduate Teaching Assistant – Biology Laboratory (BIO 181L), University of Arizona

## **Advising**

### **1. Postdoctoral Scientists**

2020 – 2022 Dr. Alexander Ochoa; **Preeminent Postdoctoral Program Scholar; Currently a research associate at Yale University**

### **2. Committee Chair** (*\*graduated with degree*)

2025 – present Gustavo Ortiz Vega (PhD: UCF Biology)

2022 – present Julianna Martin (PhD: UCF Biology)  
 2022 – present Andrew Alba (PhD: UCF Biology)  
 2020 – 2026 \*George Zaragoza (PhD: UCF Biology); \*2020 UCF Summer Mentoring Fellow  
 2024 – 2026 \*Stephanie Villella (MS: UCF Biology)  
 2024 – 2026 \*Stephanie Gaspar (MS: UCF Biology)  
 2020 – 2024 \*Taryn Gustafson (MS: UCF Biology); \*2020 UCF Summer Mentoring Fellow

### 3. Undergraduate Honors in the Major Thesis (*\*completed thesis program*)

2025 – 2026 \*Kerissa Tarpley (UCF '26) [chair]  
 2025 – 2026 \*Zachary Montealegre (UCF '26) [chair]  
 2024 – 2025 \*Sachitaa Senthilkumar (UCF '25) [member]  
 2024 Clayton Monfils [chair]; *left HUT program for personal circumstances*  
 2023 – 2024 \*Mitchell Dyen (UCF '25) [chair]  
 2023 – 2024 \*Emily Fackler (UCF '24) [chair]  
 2020 – 2021 \*Annabelle Levin (UCF '21) [chair]  
 2020 – 2021 \*Arimar J. López Limas (UCF '21) [chair]  
 2019 – 2020 \*Elizabeth Boggs (UCF '20) [chair]

### 4. Graduate Student Committee Memberships (*\*graduated with degree*)

2026 – present Elana Burchfield, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2026 – present María Paz García, PhD – Department of Biomedical Sciences, University of Central Florida  
 2025 – present Isabella Davis, MS – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2025 – present Jennifer White, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2024 – present Carla Persky, MS – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2024 – present Nozomu Hiram, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2024 – present Lauren Currier, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2023 – present Kathryn Greiner-Ferris, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2023 – present Jenna Palmisano, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2022 – present Veronica Urgiles, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2021 – present Rachel Behm, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2021 – present Matthew Larsen, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2020 – 2026 \*Lok Poon, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2019 – 2026 \*Samuel Greaves, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2019 – 2025 \*Pavithiran Amirthalingam, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2023 – 2025 \*David Roach, MS – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2020 – 2025 \*Maryam Ghoojaei, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2019 – 2024 \*Katherine Martin, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida  
 2021 – 2023 \*Sambadi Majumder, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida

- 2019 – 2023 \*Johnny Konvalina, PhD – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida
- 2019 – 2023 \*Jesse Granger, PhD – Department of Biology, Duke University
- 2021 – 2023 \*Jessica Folsom, MS – Department of Biology, University of Central Florida
- 2021 – 2023 \*Heather Lenk, MS – Genetics Interdisciplinary Program, University of Arizona
- 2021 – 2022 \*Julia Webb, MS – Department of Biomedical Sciences, University of Central Florida
- 2016 – 2018 \*June Ordoñez, MS – Molecular Ecology and Evolution Laboratory, University of the Philippines

## 5. Undergraduate Researchers Supervised

- 2025 – present Zachary Montealegre (UCF '26)
- **2025 UCF Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow (SURF; \$2,000 scholarship)**
- 2024 – present Kerissa Tarpley (REU participant, summer 2024)
- 2023 – 2025 Salma Slaoui-Andaloussi (UCF '25)
- **2024 UCF Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow (SURF; \$2,000 scholarship)**
- 2024 Anna Wazny (UCF '24)
- 2022 – 2024 Emily Fackler (UCF '25; **Honors in the Major**)
- **2024 UCF Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow (SURF; \$2,000 scholarship)**
  - **2024 UCF Student Scholar Symposium Award winner (\$500 scholarship)**
  - **2023 UCF Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow (SURF; \$2,000 scholarship)**
  - **2023 UCF Student Scholar Symposium Award winner (\$500 scholarship)**
- 2022 – 2025 Mitchell Dyen (UCF '25; **Honors in the Major**)
- **2024 NSF IRES: Summer Biology Research Program in Japan (Fellowship)**
  - **2023 UCF Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow (SURF; \$2,000 scholarship)**
- 2023 Kenicia Johnson (REU participant, summer 2023)
- 2022 Elizabeth Sharkey (REU participant, summer 2022)
- 2021 – 2022 Shyra Shung (UCF '22)
- 2021 Tyler Wright (UCF '21)
- 2020 – 2021 Annabelle Levin (UCF '21; **GEMS; Honors in the Major**)
- **Awarded a \$1,000 HUT Scholarship in Spring 2021**
  - **2023 NSF GRFP Awardee**
- 2020 – 2021 Arimar J. López Limas (UCF '21; **Honors in the Major**)
- 2020 – 2021 Ankita Tripathi (UCF '21)
- 2020 Jessica Scales (UCF '20)
- 2020 Emma Niven (UCF '20)
- 2019 – 2020 Coral Robson (UCF '20)
- 2019 – 2020 Elizabeth Boggs (UCF '20; **Honors in the Major**)
- 2019 – 2020 Anthony Hevia (UCF '20)
- 2018 Victoria Hsiung (Duke University '19)
- 2017 D'Amy Steward (Duke University '19)
- 2016 – 2017 Monica Arniella (Duke University '18)
- 2012 Sergio Redondo (University of Arizona '12; **McNair Scholar**)

## **6. High School Students Supervised**

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 2021 – 2023 | Naina Aggarwal (Lake Highland Preparatory School ASPIRE Program) |
| 2017 – 2018 | Pranav Charvu (High school intern; Duke University)              |
| 2011 – 2012 | Bianca Judy (City High Intern; University of Arizona)            |
| 2011        | Conor Davey (KEYS Intern; University of Arizona)                 |

## **Guest Instructor**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 2021        | Animal Behavior (undergraduate); University of Pittsburg (Dr. Jessica Stephenson) |
| 2020        | Animal Behavior (ZOO 4513); University of Central Florida                         |
| 2017        | Current Topics in Sensory Biology (BIO 427S); Duke University                     |
| 2017        | Sensory Biology (BIO 180S); Duke University                                       |
| 2009 – 2012 | Wildlife Management – Mammals (WFSC 444); University of Arizona                   |
| 2009 – 2012 | Conservation Genetics (GENE 570); University of Arizona                           |
| 2011        | Molecular Genetics (MCB 304); University of Arizona                               |

## SERVICE

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### **Department**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 2025 – 2026    | Steering Committee, Department of Biology (University of Central Florida)   |
| 2025 – 2026    | Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Department of Biology (University of Central Florida)                             |
| 2024 – 2025    | Graduate Curriculum Committee, Department of Biology (University of Central Florida)                                  |
| 2023 – 2025    | New Chair Search Committee, Genomics & Bioinformatics Cluster (University of Central Florida)                         |
| 2022 – 2025    | Instructor/Lecturer Promotion Committee, Department of Biology (University of Central Florida)                        |
| 2021 – present | Genomics and Bioinformatics Minor Degree Committee (University of Central Florida)                                    |
| 2022 – 2024    | Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Department of Biology (University of Central Florida)                             |
| 2019 – 2025    | National Save the Sea Turtle Scholarship Fund Review Committee, Department of Biology (University of Central Florida) |
| 2022 – 2024    | Graduate Student Awards Committee, Department of Biology (University of Central Florida)                              |
| 2020 – 2022    | Graduate Curriculum Committee, Department of Biology (University of Central Florida)                                  |
| 2019 – 2022    | My Biology Day participant, Department of Biology (University of Central Florida)                                     |
| 2019 – 2020    | Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Department of Biology (University of Central Florida)                             |
| 2011           | Academic Program Review student representative, Genetics IDP (University of Arizona)                                  |

### **College**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 2022 – present | College of Sciences Dean's Advisory Council (University of Central Florida)   |
| 2022           | College of Sciences Bylaws Revision Committee (University of Central Florida) |

## University

- 2023 – present Faculty Advisor for the Knighthawks (Student chapter of the Audubon Society) at UCF  
2021 Honors Pre-med Research Opportunities Panel (Burnett Medical Scholars Program)

## Profession

- 2024 NSF GRFP Reviewer; “Genetics, Genomics, and Proteomics” Panel  
2017 – present Instructor/Organizer: Genomics of Diseases in Wildlife Workshop, Colorado State University (Ft. Collins, CO)  
2013 – present Newsletter Committee member for the Wild Felid Association  
2019 – 2023 Morris Animal Foundation: Wildlife Scientific Advisory Board Member  
2021 Session Chair (Development) – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Virtual  
2020 – 2021 Topic Editor: Genomics of Disease in Wildlife – *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*  
2020 Session Chair (Sensory Biology – Navigation and Sensing) – Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology, National Meeting, Austin, TX  
2014 Mexican wolf Species Survival Plan contributor  
2014 – present **Invited referee for the following journals:** *Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases; Journal of Threatened Taxa; Journal of Heredity; Environmental Biology of Fishes; International Journal of Animal Biosciences; The Pegasus Review; Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases; Conservation Genetics; Mammalian Biology; Marine Mammal Science; American Biology Teacher; Frontiers in Genetics; Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology; PeerJ; Environmental Health Insights; Communications Biology; Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology - Part D: Genomics and Proteomics; Tropical Animal Health and Production; Conservation Genetics Resources; Cell; Scientific Data; Integrative and Comparative Biology; Gene; Animals; iScience; International Journal for Parasitology: Parasites and Wildlife; Frontiers in Conservation Science, Molecular Biology and Evolution*  
2016 – present **Invited referee for the following funding organizations:** *NSF GRFP; Graduate Women in Science, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Polish Academy of Science, UCF SEED Program Awards*

## Community

- 2020 – 2025 Judge: Seminole County Regional Science, Math, and Engineering Fair (Sanford, FL)  
2024 Panelist: *Path of the Panther* Showcase (Orlando, FL)  
2017 SciREN Triangle networking event held at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences (Raleigh, NC)  
2008 – 2013 Competition Judge: Southern Arizona Regional Science and Engineering Fair (Tucson, AZ)  
2008 – 2013 Field Assistant/Volunteer (reptile surveys) for Matt Goode (Oro Valley, AZ)  
2011 BioBlitz Educator: Sonoran Desert wildlife, conservation genetics, and herpetology (Tucson, AZ)  
2010 Invited Speaker: 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Biology (Mrs. Ishraq Alfatesh), Flowing Wells HS (Tucson, AZ)  
2009 – 2012 Earth Day Speaker at Borton Primary Magnet School (Tucson, AZ)  
2009 Field Assistant/Volunteer at Agumbe Rainforest Research Station (Agumbe, India)

## Professional Development

- 2020; 2025 NSF Pitch Circle – Office of Research, University of Central Florida (Orlando, FL)

- 2019 Best-Kept Secrets: UCF Resources That Support Active Learning Across Modalities (FCTL) – University of Central Florida (Orlando, FL)
- 2018 Deep Learning, Machine Learning, and Artificial Intelligence Symposium, SAS Institute (Cary, NC)
- 2018 "*Supervised Methods for Statistical Machine Learning*" – Summer Institute in Statistics for Big Data; University of Washington (Seattle, WA)
- 2010 "*MCMC for Genetics, Coalescent Theory, and Inferences of Relatedness and Relationships*" – Summer Institute in Statistical Genetics; University of Washington (Seattle, WA)
- 2007 Research Associate (PI: Dr. Krishnaveni Mishra); University of Hyderabad, (Hyderabad, India)

## SELECT MEDIA COVERAGE

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- 2025 Research Featured in **UCF Today** (Hidalgo, Ana) [Link](#)
- 2025 Research featured in **UCF Today** (Hidalgo, Ana) [Link](#)
- 2025 Research featured in **Vox** (Jones, Benji) [Link](#)
- 2024 Research featured in **Fort Myers News-Press** (Gillis, Chad) [Link](#)
- 2024 Research featured in **UCF Today** (Duryea, Eddy) [Link](#)
- 2024 Research featured in **UCF Today** (Duryea, Eddy) [Link](#)
- 2024 Research featured in **Interesting Engineering** (Gupta, Srishti) [Link](#)
- 2024 Research featured in **The Microbiologist** (Stewart, Linda) [Link](#)
- 2024 Research featured in **La Brújula Verde** (Carvajal, Guillermo) [Link](#)
- 2024 Research featured in **Moletik** (Dunat, Cenk) [Link](#)
- 2022 Research featured in **UCF Today** (Wells, Robert) [Link](#)
- 2022 Research featured in **Orlando Sentinel** (Speak, Kevin) [Link](#)
- 2022 Research featured in **Earth.com** (Sexton, Chrissy) [Link](#)
- 2022 Research featured in **NPR** (Green, Amy) [Link](#)
- 2020 Poem inspired by my research "[Symbiotic Senses](#)" by [Sam Illingworth](#) (University of Western Australia)
- 2020 Interview with **Vida en el Planeta Podcast** (Dánae Rivadeneyra): [Magnetoreception in animals](#). In Spanish
- 2020 Research featured in **UCF Today** (Wells, Robert) [Link](#)
- 2020 Research featured in **Science News** (Pennisi, Elizabeth) [Link](#)
- 2020 Research featured in **National Geographic** (Main, Douglas) [Link](#)
- 2020 Research featured in **The New York Times** (Sokol, Joshua) [Link](#)
- 2019 Video Interview with **WUCF NewsNight** (PBS) [Link](#)
- 2019 Research featured in **UCF Today** (Wells, Robert) [Link](#)
- 2019 Research featured by **WFME 90.7 Orlando NPR** (Green, Amy) [Link](#)
- 2019 Research featured by **The Wildlife Society** (Kobilinsky, Dana) [Link](#)
- 2018 Research featured in **Science Daily** [Link](#)

- 2018            Research featured by **The Wildlife Society** (Frey, David) [Link](#)
- 2018            Interview with **NPR: KJZZ**, Phoenix (Gerbis, Nicholas): [Mexican wolves did not interbreed with dogs](#).
- 2017            Research featured in **Nature** in the *Research Highlights* section (*Nature* 545:7652) [Link](#)

#### HONORS, AWARDS, & FELLOWSHIPS

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- 2024            Teaching Incentive Program (TIP) Award (University of Central Florida)
- 2018            Postdoctoral Professional Development Award (Duke University)
- 2008            Mathematical Biosciences Institute Summer Graduate Fellow (The Ohio State University)