



PRESS RELEASE

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SCIENCE MUSEUM LECTURE FOCUSES ON SCIENCE & EXPLORATION IN THE CONGO

Buffalo Native, Dr. Eli Greenbaum, presents 2010 Hayes Lecture

What: 2010 Hayes Lecture at the Buffalo Museum of Science
Mambas, Malaria and Militias: 21st Century Exploration and Science in the Jungles of Democratic Republic of Congo
This lecture is open and FREE to the public

Who: Eli Greenbaum, Ph.D.

When: Thursday, March 25 at 7:30pm

Where: Buffalo Museum of Science, 1020 Humboldt Parkway, Buffalo

Why: The Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences began the Hayes Lectures series in 1907 and has since carried the tradition to present day.



Photo courtesy of Dr. Eli Greenbaum

BUFFALO, NY (March 5, 2010) – Former Western New Yorker and herpetologist, Dr. Eli Greenbaum, will be presenting the Buffalo Museum of Science’s 2010 Hayes Lecture, *Mambas, Malaria and Militias: 21st Century Exploration and Science in the Jungles of Democratic Republic of Congo*, in the museum auditorium on **Thursday, March 25 at 7:30pm**. The lecture is open and **FREE** to the public.

Many scientists have avoided working in Democratic Republic of Congo for good reason—the list of blinding, crippling and deadly diseases endemic to Central Africa is long. Congo still suffers from a crushing history of slavery, cruel dictatorships, colonialism, and the aftermath of “Africa’s World War” from 1998–2003, in which over 5 million Congolese lost their lives.

Despite a relatively small amount of modern scientific exploration, Congo contains more biodiversity than any other country in continental Africa. Congo’s 900,000 square miles of under-explored mountains, forests, savannahs, swamps, rivers and lakes are likely to harbor hundreds of new species of vertebrates alone.

Deforestation, a ballooning human population and climate change create unprecedented urgency to discover, document and conserve African biodiversity. The outlook is especially bleak for frogs because a poorly understood “chytrid” fungus is spreading globally and causing the extinction of species in many parts of the world, even in pristine habitats.

Greenbaum has been working in Eastern Congo since 2007 in an urgent effort to bolster Congo’s own conservation efforts and unlock the evolutionary history of Central African amphibians and reptiles with state-of-the-art DNA analyses.

His multimedia presentation will illustrate the myriad challenges of working in Congo, including close encounters with rebel militia, gorillas, disease, and venomous animals ranging from poisonous frogs and ants to vipers. Preliminary research

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-HAYES LECTURE, cont'd-

results will be presented, including examples of new species of frogs and lizards, evolutionary genetics of several amphibian and reptile groups, and the conservation outlook for Congo's fragile fauna.

ABOUT DR. ELI GREENBAUM

Eli Greenbaum, Ph.D grew up in Buffalo, New York where his passion for amphibians and reptiles was fostered at the Reptile House of the Buffalo Zoological Gardens while he was a student at City Honors. In 1996 he received his Bachelors degree in Biological Sciences from Binghamton University (Binghamton, NY) and then completed a Master's degree in 1998 at Northeast Louisiana State University.

Eli briefly volunteered in Australia to study the ecology of shingleback skinks before returning to the United States to complete his Ph.D at the University of Kansas.

Eli completed a postdoctoral Research Fellowship at Villanova University where he worked on the molecular systematics of geckos in 2008. He joined the faculty in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Texas at El Paso as an Assistant Professor.

He now works on molecular systematics to test biogeographic hypotheses as well as morphological and behavioral character evolution, species boundaries, and the identification of ancient, unique lineages that are in need of conservation. His research interests are divided among examination of specimens in collections, laboratory investigations, and fieldwork.

HISTORY OF THE HAYES LECTURE

The Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences began the Hayes Lectures series in 1907 and has since carried the tradition to present day. Prior to the development of other mass media alternatives, Hayes and other lectures offered by the Society were originally offered multiple times throughout the year and served as the principal method of communicating science to the community. Specifically, Hayes Lectures may encompass any aspect of science with emphasis on providing the public with the opportunity to meet people who are exploring their fields of interest. The lectures are supported in part by the 1882 George E. Hayes educational endowment.

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The Buffalo Museum of Science is the non-profit educational institution dedicated to the study and interpretation of the natural and physical sciences. Its extensive collections of over 600,000 specimens and artifacts represent all facets of the natural world with an emphasis on Western New York as well as man-made objects spanning the globe. Based at 1020 Humboldt Parkway and anchoring Buffalo's East Side in Olmsted-designed Martin Luther King, Jr. Park since 1929, the Museum presents a wide variety of programs and services for children, teachers, families, adults, and community organizations throughout each year. The Museum also operates Tiffit Nature Preserve in South Buffalo, a 264-acre urban wetland preserve on reclaimed former industrial land and seasonally sponsors archaeological exploration at the Hiscock Site in nearby Genesee County, NY, one of North America's richest Ice Age sites.

For further information on the Museum and its upcoming activities, call 716-896-5200 or visit www.sciencebuff.org.