



NORTH AMERICAN SECTION

2011 Nutting Research Grant Announcement

The winner of the 2011 William L. and Ruth D. Nutting Research Grant for termite research is **Timothy K. O'Connor**. Tim was chosen from among 7 applicants, and will receive a \$2500 grant to support his proposed research project. Tim is a member of the NAS-IUSSI and graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2009. He is currently applying to graduate programs while working as a technician at the University of Oregon. During his spare time, Tim has been working under the guidance of Corrie S. Moreau (Field Museum of Natural History) on a project of his own devising which examines the relationship between aggression, relatedness and the formation of supercolonies in the neotropical termite *Nasutitermes corniger*. His proposed project promises to clarify some of the proximate and ultimate factors at work in shaping termite population ecology. Using a combination of microsatellite genotyping, behavioral assays and field monitoring of colony distribution, Tim has proposed answering two basic questions:

1. Does polygyny facilitate the formation of genetically heterogeneous supercolonies, and if so, how frequently?
2. Are such supercolonies competitively superior to simple-family colonies?

Although the other candidates for the grant had very strong proposals, Tim's discrete, highly feasible and well articulated research plan was the unanimous choice for the selection committee (Michael Haverty, Colin Brent, Ruth Nutting, Kenna MacKenzie).