



2015 Tschinkel Ant Natural History Research Grant Announcement

The winner of the 2015 Tschinkel Ant Natural History Research Grant is Brendon Boudinot. He will receive a \$2,000 grant to support his proposed research. Brendon is a member of the IUSSI and holds a Bachelor's degree from Evergreen College in Olympia, Washington, awarded in 2012. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Entomology at the University of California, Davis, under the direction of Philip Ward. Brendon's Tschinkel Grant proposal is entitled "Uncovering the natural history of the Martian ant, **Martialis heureka* *(Martialinae), an enigmatic Amazonian endemic." In it he proposes a thorough analysis of the basic natural history of this recently discovered ant, whose distinct morphology and basal phylogenetic position within the ants give it special interest. The awards committee evaluated ten strong applications for this award. The choice of a winner was not easy, but the committee agreed that Brendon's proposal best exemplified the scientific study of the basic natural history and biology of ants, an often neglected field that the Tschinkel Fund was set up to foster. His project has an element of risk, but Brendon has ameliorated this through careful planning and the enlisting of a strong team of local collaborators at his Brazilian field site. There he plans a thorough collection effort and an extensive series of observations on a range of natural history attributes, including diet and foraging behavior, colony demography, nest architecture, and the functional significance of this species' unusual morphology. The awards committee agreed that this proposal was the most worthy recipient of the inaugural Tschinkel Research Grant.