



2016 George C. Eickwort Student Research Award

The George C. Eickwort Student Research Award recognizes a graduate student for distinguished research and scholarly activity in the field of social insect biology. The award consists of a certificate, an honorarium, and a one-year subscription to *Insectes Sociaux*. This year, the Awards Committee received many very strong nominees, any of whom would have been a deserving winner. However, the committee reached consensus that one of these stood out as the most deserving of the honor. The North American Section of the International Union for the Study of Social Insects is proud to announce that **Marek Borowiec, PhD (2016), University of California, Davis** is the recipient of the 2016 George C. Eickwort Student Research Award.

Although he has just received his PhD, Marek's work has already had a significant impact on the field of social insect evolutionary biology. His dissertation, completed under the supervision of Phil Ward at UC Davis, included a landmark revision of the genera in the diverse army ant subfamily Dorylinae. Marek produced a classification of the army ants in which morphological and molecular genetic data are fully congruent with each other, an unprecedented feat in ant taxonomy. His work showed decisively that the "army ant syndrome" evolved independently in the New World and Old World tropics, settling a century-old controversy. Besides his army ant work, Marek also contributed to phylogenomic research demonstrating that ants are the sister group of the bees and spheciform wasps, and he was first author of an important paper showing that Ctenophora, the comb jellies, is the sister group to all other metazoans, thus resolving one of the earliest phylogenetic bifurcations in the animal kingdom. Marek's strengths in taxonomy and phylogenetics are supported by his accomplishments in bioinformatics, which include developing and publishing a novel tool to manipulate DNA sequence alignments of genomic datasets. Marek's recommenders praise him as a well-rounded biologist with a deep appreciation of natural history. "He doesn't *just* excel in ant taxonomy, or phylogenetics, or bioinformatics. He excels in all of these disciplines. It is his love for ants and his curiosity about the natural world that motivates his studies." Marek is also a good scientific citizen, actively serving the systematics community as a subject editor for *ZooKeys* and *Biodiversity Data Journal* and as a frequent contributor to online systematics resources and databases. His research and scholarly achievements make Marek Borowiec a very deserving winner of this year's George C. Eickwort Student Research Award.

IUSI-NAS Awards Committee

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