



The Tschinkel Ant Natural History Research Grant supports graduate student research on the basic natural history and biology of ants. It is given annually to a student whose proposed research promises the best contribution to this often-neglected field of study. The winner of the 2019 Tschinkel Grant is **Kip Lacy**, who will receive a \$2,500 grant to support his research. Kip is a member of the IUSSI who holds a Bachelor's degree in Ecology and Master's in Entomology from the University of Georgia. He is currently a Ph. D. student at The Rockefeller University in New York, under the direction of Daniel Kronauer. His Tschinkel Grant proposal, entitled "Linking ontogenesis to sociogenesis in the fire ant *Solenopsis invicta*" consists of a series of detailed experiments to disentangle the mechanisms that shape individual caste development and colony-level caste distributions. Kip's proposal was selected from a large field of highly competitive applications, making the Awards Committee's work quite challenging. Altogether, the Committee felt that Kip's research would effectively extend Walter Tschinkel's own descriptive work to characterize the sociogenesis of fire ant colonies, by testing just how this is accomplished at the colony level. Specifically, Kip proposed to test whether *Solenopsis invicta* larvae follow a deterministic developmental pattern referred to as "Dyar's rule," and to test the hypothesis that queens assess colony size and adjust the allocation of developmental factors to eggs based on a set of specific larval cues. While *Solenopsis*-focused, this work has broad relevance to many topics in ant natural history and biology across taxa.

#### **IUSSI-NAS Awards Committee**

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