



Michelle René Gibson

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Human impacts on natural ecosystems, invasion biology, novel ecosystems, plant-animal interactions, conservation planning

EDUCATION

2013– Durham University, PhD

Climate impacts on terrestrial nomadic birds of the Australian interior

2012 Stellenbosch University, MSc Zoology *cum laude*

Invasive Australian acacias: reproductive biology and effects on native plant-pollinator communities in Cape fynbos

2007 University of California, Davis, BSc Entomology *Honors*

2005 University of California, San Diego, Major: Biology

Undergraduate GPA

Cumulative 3.47 UCDavis 3.70

PUBLICATIONS

Gibson, M.R., Pauw, A. & Richardson, D.M. (2013) Decreased insect visitation to a native species caused by an invasive tree in the Cape Floristic Region. *Biological Conservation*, 157: 196–203.

Gibson, M.R., Richardson, D.M. & Pauw, A. (2012) Can floral traits predict an invasive plant's impact on native plant-pollinator communities? *Journal of Ecology*, 100: 1216–1223.

Gibson, M.R., Richardson, D.M., Marchante, E., Marchante, H., Rodger, J.G., Stone, G.S., Byrne, M., Fuentes-Ramirez, A., George, N., Harris, C., Johnson, S.D., Le Roux, J.J., Miller, J.T., Murphy, D.J., Pauw, A., Prescott, M.N., Wandrag, E.M. & Wilson, J.R.U. (2011) Reproductive biology of Australian acacias: important mediator of invasiveness? *Diversity and Distributions*, 17: 911–933.

Wilson, J.R.U., Gairifo, C., **Gibson, M.R.**, Arianoutsou, M., Bakar, B.B., Baret, S., Celesti-Gradow, L., DiTomaso, J.M., Dufour-Dror, J.-M., Kueffer, C., Kull, C.A., Hoffmann, J.H., Impson, F.A.C., Loope, L.L., Marchante, E., Marchante, H., Moore, J.L., Murphy, D.J., Tassin, J., Witt, A., Zenni, R.D. & Richardson, D.M. (2011) Risk assessment, eradication, and biological control: global efforts to limit Australian acacia invasions. *Diversity and Distributions*, 17: 1030–1046.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

March 2013–June 2013

EDM International, Inc., El Centro, CA

Position: Avian field technician

- Conducted avian mortality surveys beneath power lines in the desert to quantify impacts on migratory bird species
- Surveyed avian carcass scavenge events using camera traps

March 2009–March 2012

Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Position: Master's student

- Designed and executed independent research project: conducted literature review, developed research questions, planned logistics, project budgeting, conducted fieldwork, hired, trained and managed field assistants, and collected, analyzed and published scientific data in international journals
- Collaborated with coauthors, presented thesis project and results, presented research at international workshop

February–March 2012

Centre ValBio, Ranomafana National Park, Madagascar

Position: Project manager/lead field ecologist

- Organized logistics and permits for independent research project in conjunction with Prof. Patricia Wright of the Institute for the Conservation of Tropical Environments, Madagascar National Parks, and the Madagascar Ministry of the Environment, Forests and Tourism
- Mapped distribution and assessed dispersal pattern and recruitment method of the invasive strawberry guava tree, *Psidium cattleianum*, within Ranomafana National Park

March 2011–February 2012

Cape Bird Club, Somerset West, Western Cape, South Africa

Position: Volunteer mist-netter

- Handled and removed small passerines from mist-nets
- Received bird ringing training

July–September 2008

Irvine Ranch Conservancy, Irvine, CA

Position: Science & Stewardship intern

- Performed baseline assessment survey of alien invasive plant species in private, remote reserves of Santa Ana Mountains
- Assisted in various restoration projects

March–June 2008

Point Reyes Bird Observatory Conservation Science

Position: Nest searcher intern

- Took part in a study of the impact of off-highway vehicles on the breeding success of migrant and resident songbirds in xeric riparian woodlands in the Sonoran Desert of California
- Observed songbird species nesting behavior in order to locate and monitor nests
- Spot mapped bird territories by recording defensive and territorial behavior
- Conducted vegetation surveys and some point counting

October–December 2007

Carruthers Lab, United States Department of Agriculture, Albany, CA

Position: Biological science aide

- Took part in a study investigating aquatic invertebrate community responses to invasive aquatic plants
- Collected, processed, sorted and identified macro-invertebrate samples to family

March–June 2006

Wildlife Care Association, Sacramento, CA

Position: Volunteer

- Assisted with intake and registration of injured and rescued wildlife
- Cleaned cages, prepared food, and tube- and hand-fed infant, juvenile, and adult wild birds

October 2005–May 2006

Lawler Lab, Department of Entomology, University of California, Davis

Position: Lab assistant

- Sorted and identified aquatic insects to family

July–August 2004

Sanibel-Captive Conservation Foundation, Sanibel, Florida

Position: Marine biology intern

- Took part in a project investigating habitat preference of juvenile red-drum, *Sciaenops ocellatus*, in the Caloosahatchee River estuary
- Conducted fieldwork deploying 70-ft center-bag seine to capture and identify fish to species
- Quantified bottom, shoreline, and water quality characteristics
- Extracted, cut, and mounted fish otoliths

Short courses

2011 'Introduction to Geographic Information Systems' presented by Bernard Coetzee, Stellenbosch University

2011 'Snake Handling Course' presented by Dr. Tony Phelps of the Cape Reptile Institute, South Africa

2011 'MAPA Google Earth & Maps Workshop' presented by Alta De Vos, Stellenbosch University

2010 '4 x 4 Basic Off-road Driving Course' presented by Trevor Knutsen of All Terrain 4x4, Franschhoek, South Africa

2009 'Introduction to R' presented by Dr. John R. Wilson, Stellenbosch University

2009 'Scientific Writing Skills Workshop' presented by The Language Centre, Stellenbosch University

2007 'Conservation of Wild Birds Lab', University of California, Davis (12-week course)

Field skills

Skilled at detecting birds by sight and sound

Experience handling birds and reptiles

Experience collecting and identifying insects

GPS and compass navigation

Able to operate automatic and manual 4x4 vehicle in off-road conditions

Office skills

Proficient using R statistical program
Proficient using Statistica package
Experience using PRIMER statistical package
Experience using DISTANCE package
Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access

Awards & distinctions

2013 Durham Doctoral Scholarship, Durham University
2010 Merit Bursary, Stellenbosch University
2010 Travel Award for first prize MSc poster, Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology Annual Research Meeting, Stellenbosch University
2010 Best MSc talk, Department of Botany & Zoology Annual General Meeting, Stellenbosch University
2006 Dean's List, University of California, Davis
2003 Salutatorian, Granite Hills High School Graduating Class

Peer reviewer for:

Biological Invasions, International Journal of Plant Sciences, PLoS ONE, Oikos, South African Journal of Botany, Plant Ecology

CONFERENCES

2010 A Comparative Approach Concerning Introduced Acacias: A Global Experiment in Biogeography, international workshop, Stellenbosch, South Africa. *Reproductive biology of Australian acacias: important mediators of invasiveness?* (podium)
2009 10th International Conference, Ecology and Management of Alien Plant Invasions, Stellenbosch, South Africa (attended)
2009 Fynbos Forum, Bredasdorp, South Africa (attended)

PERSONAL

Interests

Traveling, birding, hiking, cooking, wildlife photography, camera trapping, animal and plant identification

Miscellaneous

Valid USA Class C driver's license (since 2002)

Basic conversational Spanish

U.S. citizens

REFERENCES

Prof. David M. Richardson

Position: Director, Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology, Stellenbosch University

Association: MSc supervisor

Contact details: rich@sun.ac.za, (+27) 21 808-3711

Prof. Peter S. Cranston

Position: Adjunct Professor, Department of Evolution, Ecology and Genetics, Australian National University; Emeritus Professor of Entomology, University of California, Davis

Association: Supervisor during 2007 UC Davis Quarter Abroad Program to Stellenbosch University

Contact details: peter.cranston@anu.edu.au, (+02) 612-52873

Christopher McCreedy

Position: Desert Program Director, Point Reyes Bird Observatory

Association: Supervisor during 2008 Sonoran Desert Nest Searcher internship

Contact details: cmccreedy@prbo.org, (+001) 415 717-7426