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FULBRIGHT U.S. STUDENT '15

*The Impact of Hurricane Maria on
Eleutherodactylus and Anolis Assemblages at El
Verde Field Station, El Yunque National Forest*

3 MAY 2018 | 1:30 PM | MAKATI CITY
FULBRIGHT PHILIPPINES
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Abstract



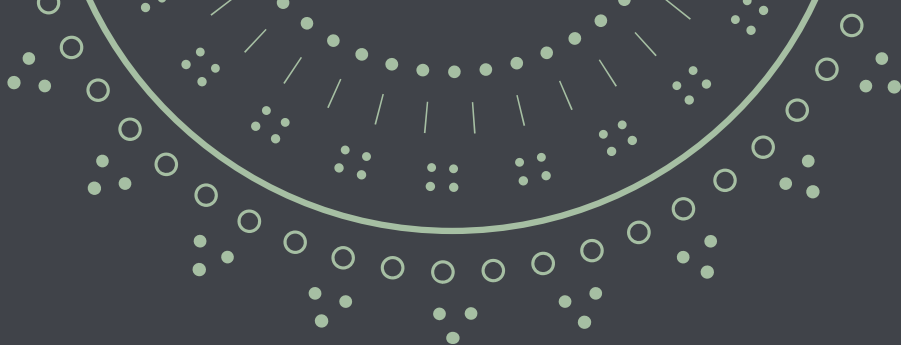
Eleutherodactylus frogs and Anolis lizards are the most abundant vertebrates in Puerto Rican forests, and hold an important place in the food web as both predator and prey. In this study, we are measuring the impact of Hurricane Maria on populations of Eleutherodactylus and Anolis at El Verde Field Station, El Yunque National Forest. We surveyed six 20m² plots for Eleutherodactylus frogs and Anolis lizards in December of 2017 to obtain a baseline population three months post-Maria. This data was compared to previous surveys conducted in 2015 and 2016.

Preliminary results show that adults of *Eleutherodactylus coqui* were not as severely impacted by Hurricane Maria as juveniles. *Anolis* communities were laterally compressed, with canopy-dwelling species such as *A. stratulus* and *A. evermanni* occupying tree trunks and perches approximately 3.5 meters and below. *Anolis gundlachi*, a shade-loving understory species that is usually the most abundant anole at ground-level, was greatly reduced in abundance. These findings are similar to the impacts that Hurricane Hugo (1989) and Hurricane Georges (1998) had on the herpetofaunal assemblages of the forests in EL Verde. Surveys conducted in March 2018 show that *E. coqui* is less abundant than in December of 2017, possibly due to a period of prolonged dryness that occurred at El Verde several months after Maria. Plots will be surveyed again in June 2018 (nine months post-hurricane) as we continue to monitor short-term recovery of *Eleutherodactylus* and *Anolis* populations.



Bio

After earning his undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies in 2003 from Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland, Norman moved to Puerto Rico in 2008 to work as a Herpetologist and Volunteer Coordinator at Las Casas de la Selva, a 1,000 acre sustainable forestry project located in the mountains of Patillas, Puerto Rico. 2015 marked his first visit to the Philippines, when he spent nearly a year in-country as a Fulbright scholar. During his stay he worked with professors, researchers, and personnel from the University of the Philippines, Los Baños, School of Wildlife Studies, the UPLB Museum of Natural History, Ailon Zoo, and the National Museum to develop "Project Palaka", a pilot ex-situ conservation program for endemic Philippine amphibians, the first of its kind in the country. Norman is currently enrolled as a student in the Master's Program in Environmental Science at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, and is a current PR-LSAMP Bridge to the Doctorate Fellow.



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