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Presents



Cave Biodiversity of Runaway Creek Nature Reserve: A Case Study in the New Maya Forest Corridor, Belize."



By

Jut Wynne

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UNM Dept. of Physics, Astronomy, & Interdisciplinary Science, 210 Yale Blvd NE

And ZOOM

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Free and open to the public

Dr. Jut Wynne is an assistant research professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, Northern Arizona University (NAU). He holds a Ph.D. in ecology and an M.S. in environmental science and policy from NAU, and a UNESCO/ Cousteau graduate certificate in Ecotechnie from the Free University of Brussels, Belgium. Wynne has studied caves throughout the southwestern U.S., Belize, Spain, Chile, China, Hawaii, and Easter Island. He and colleagues have identified nearly 60 new species of cave-dwelling insects from the American Southwest, Easter Island, Belize, and China. He has authored or co-authored 42 peer-reviewed science papers and over 50 other publications. Wynne is also editor of the upcoming book, *Diversity and Speciation of Subterranean Fauna* (John Hopkins University Press) and has served as a guest writer for *Scientific American* and *Mongabay*. A fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Royal Canadian Geographical Society, and The Explorers Club, his work has been featured on the Discovery Channel, NASA-TV, and in elementary school science books, National Geographic, Discover Magazine, USA Today, South China Morning Post, and other media outlets around the world.

Abstract: In Central Belize, there are two government projects, in the same area, with conflicting goals. Paving the 37 mile Coastal Road will result in more development, wildlife poaching, timber extraction, and vehicle-wildlife collisions. The newly established Maya Forest Corridor project aims to protect a vast swath of land providing genetic connectivity for jaguar, tapir, and other charismatic tropical animals, concomitantly providing sustainable opportunities for rural communities. Join Dr. Wynne as he examines this complex issue through the lens of bat and cave conservation. Bats are vitally important pollinators and seed dispersers of tropical forests with many requiring caves as roosts, while the subterranean realm often supports a treasure trove of highly specialized cave-restricted species. Jut will unveil discoveries of the recently unexplored caves of Runaway Creek Nature Reserve with jaguar, puma, crocodiles, bats, and a bizarre bevy of cave-adapted invertebrates taking center stage.