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## Recipients of the 2011 Ecological Society of America Awards

## ESA Awards

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### *E. Lucy Braun Award*

Lucy Braun was an eminent plant ecologist and the first woman president of the Ecological Society of America. Besides describing and mapping the deciduous forest regions of eastern North America, she served as a dedicated teacher and role model to her students. To honor her, this award is presented to a student for the outstanding poster presentation at the Society's Annual Meeting.



The recipient of the 2011 Braun Award was Joseph Fader for his poster entitled, *An empirical test of the aggregation model of coexistence and consequences for coexistence of container-dwelling Aedes mosquitoes*, at the 2010 ESA meeting in Pittsburgh.

This work is based on Fader's masters research at Illinois State University under the supervision of Steve Juliano. He received his Bachelor's degrees in biology and psychology from St. Louis University in 2007. The goal of Fader's project was to test the often invoked, but less commonly tested, hypothesis that aggregation of a superior competitor might enable coexistence of a poorer competitor. In this case, the inferior competitor was a native mosquito, *Aedes aegyptii*, and the superior competitor was an invasive congener, *A. albopictus*. The invasive *A. albopictus* has displaced *A. aegyptii* in many areas in southern Florida, although in certain locations the species coexist. Fader first documented that both species were more aggregated intraspecifically than

interspecifically. Then, he conducted a lab experiment on how the outcome of competition changed with aggregation and found that the fitness of the native did indeed increase with increasing aggregation by the superior competitor, the invader. These results are consistent with a significant role for aggregation in coexistence.

The judges enjoyed Fader's mix of observations and manipulative experiments, and were greatly enthusiastic about his ability to speak and engage his audience with confidence and clarity.

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Joseph Fader  
Culture Technician  
Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute

“Learn from others. Find someone with your dream job (or as close as possible). Learn everything you can about how they got there and use that as an inspiration and guide in finding your own path.”

My mother is an artist/designer and my father an accountant. Although I am the first scientist in my family, I am very fortunate that I am always supported no matter what I do. Overall I have been very fortunate, but I did struggle mightily to figure out what I wanted to do with my life. Like many biology majors I entered college as a pre-med student. Although never truly passionate about this path, it seemed like the best option and I stuck it out for a long time. Thankfully, I eventually discovered that there were many possible careers for someone with an interest and background in biology, and I determined that I was most passionate about ecology and conservation issues, not medicine.

I had my first taste of research at SLU conducting behavioral studies with African brown house snakes. I did my master’s thesis at Illinois State University where I studied the invasive mosquito *Aedes albopictus* and mechanisms of coexistence with the resident *Aedes aegypti* in the southeast US. After completing my master’s, I moved to southern California and volunteered for several organizations to get involved with conservation work and some public education/outreach. I get to be outside and near or on the ocean every day, taking care of animals in beautiful southern California. What’s not to love?!? It’s also rewarding knowing that the fish we raise will contribute to a healthier ocean by enhancing wild populations of a heavily fished species.

My undergraduate evolution professor, Rob Wood, at Saint Louis University, inspired me to consider, and ultimately pursue, graduate school and a career in research. Although his research interests (phylogenetics) were much different than my own, Dr. Wood’s passion for his work and enthusiasm for teaching and mentoring inspired me to discover and pursue what I was truly passionate about. Whether or not they remember me for it, I hope I can inspire others to care a little bit more about each other and about our planet, and to live life accordingly.

