

E. LUCY BRAUN AWARD

E. 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 2012 winner of the E. Lucy Braun Award is Tony Kovach, for his poster entitled “Determinants of avian density across a fragmented landscape.” This work was based on Tony’s M.S. research at the University of Hawai’i - Hilo under the supervision of Patrick Hart.

Tony received his bachelor’s degree in environmental studies from McGill University in 2009. He is currently working on his Ph.D. at UC-Santa Cruz.

Tony investigated whether habitat quality and size affected bird density among 32 forest fragments in Hawai’i. He found that specialist species were less likely to use smaller patches and that fruit availability was the major determinant of frugivore density. His work emphasized the importance of determining patch quality when conducting landscape-level analyses.

The judges were particularly impressed with Tony’s poster design and clarity of methods. In particular, they enjoyed Tony’s focus on a few focal species in his study, which allowed him to express his main points without overwhelming the visitors.