SOCIETY OF AVIAN PALEONTOLOGY AND EVOLUTION

- Newsletter -

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

What is the future of SAPE?

That question has been circulating among the Executive Council members for some weeks now, but answers are not quick in coming. From the few who have responded there is a recognition that we should broaden our base. That is, we should expand the "evolution" portion of our name to be more inclusive. In reality, at our meetings there have never been any restrictions on anyone wishing to present papers on, for example, molecular systematics, functional morphology, or even the evolution of song. I, for one, would be very interested in hearing more papers on functional morphology because I think it represents a poorly researched area in avian biology, and it is one that is certainly overlooked at major ornithological meetings. Others, surely, have their own preferences. We have a year before our meeting in Australia. Let us actively work to interest our colleagues who do not think of themselves as paleontologists, but rather as students of the more general, all inclusive topic of avian evolution, to join us in participating in that meeting. I think we would all benefit.

This will be my last note to you as President of SAPE as I will yield the gavel to our next President in Australia. Indeed, several of our elected posts will be vacated according to our Bylaws (which are to be found on our website), and it will be necessary to elect new officers of the Society. Do you know of a fellow member that you think could serve the Society well? Would you, perhaps, like to participate in giving new strength and a renewed sense of direction to the Society? Please let me know. Or, tell a colleague and have them tell me so we can be sure your name is put into consideration by the members of the Society.

Cordially,
KEN CAMPBELL
(kcampbell@nhm.org)

SAPE MEETING 2008

Planning for the SAPE conference in 2008 is well underway and a circular will be sent in the next few weeks. The meeting will be held on the week of 08 September 2008 at the Australian Museum, Sydney. We are making good progress at keeping expenses for the meeting and associated activities low. Because there are no fossil sites close enough for day trips, local excursions will be made to show people some of the special living Australian birds (megapodes, lyrebirds, frogmouths, magpie geese, etc). A choice of post-meeting trips is planned: the Naracoorte World Heritage Fossil Site, South Australia (Pleistocene); Alcoota, Northern Territory (Late Miocene); and a shorter trip to several localities in central and northern New South Wales.

WALTER BOLES

TREASURER'S REPORT

The balance in the U.S. SAPE bank account was $4772.17 in September 2006. The current (31 August 2007) balance is $4908.38, reflecting $136.21 in deposits (from dues) and no withdrawals. Many members are not current in their dues, an issue that does not need to be resolved until the meeting in Australia in 2008, at which time the next four year's dues (a total of U.S.$24.00 per year) will be collected as part of the meeting registration fee, then turned over to the Treasurer by the local committee. This will eliminate the current difficulty of paying dues in multiple foreign currencies.

DAVID STEADMAN

ANNOUNCEMENT: INDEX TO BRODKORB'S "CATALOGUE OF FOSSIL BIRDS"

A limited number of copies of Brodkorb's Index, carefully compiled by Storrs L. Olson in 1993 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the publication of part 1 of Brodkorb's "Catalogue of Fossil Birds", is still available. Cécile Mourer-Chauviré will be happy to send a free copy to all SAPE members who would be interested in. The requests are to be sent to Cécile Mourer-Chauviré (email: Cecile.Mourer@univ-lyon1.fr).

CÉCILE MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ

NEWS FROM THE MEMBERS AND RECENT PUBLICATIONS

ARGENTINA

CAROLINA ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE is still working on marine fossil avifaunas, especially on penguins. Her last works include the morphometric and systematic analysis of Spheniscidae. Together with three Argentinean colleagues, she has found a new Miocene species from Patagonia (Argentina). Also, a new articulated albeit incomplete skeleton will be published soon. Another important new remain currently under study is an isolated penguin skull from the Atlantic coast of Argentina (Miocene strata). She began to work with two new phD projects. One of the student, Lucía Ibáñez is analyzing the cranial anatomy and its relationships with the salt gland, while the other one, Delfina Comesaña, is working on taphonomic processes involved in penguin preservation. In addition, Carolina collaborates with Uruguayan researchers who are describing the two first fossil Psittacidae from this country. Also, a new anseriform is being morphometrically analyzed, together with Claudia Tambussi.

Currently, FEDERICO AGNOLIN is working on several topics of fossil birds from Argentina. Among other investigations and in collaboration with Lucas Pomi, he has recently concluded a review of the Pleistocene record of the stork genus *Ciconia* in South America. In addition and together with Fernando Novas and Agustin Scanferla, he is describing a new genus and species of an avisaurid enantiornithine bird from Latest Cretaceous beds of NW Argentina. He is also describing a new genus and species of tinamou from the Miocene of Patagonia, and several new records of minute Rheidae from the Paleogene of Patagonia.

ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE, C. (2006): Taxonomic longevity in penguins (Aves, Spheniscidae). – Neues Jahrbuch für Geologie und Paläontologie. Abh., 241(3): 383-403.

ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE, C. (in press): Revisión sistemática del género y especie *Palaeospheniscus biloculata* nov. comb. (Aves, Spheniscidae) de la Formación Gaiman. – Ameghiniana.

ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE, C. & CANTO, J. (2007): Comentarios acerca de "Observaciones sobre la presencia de *Paraptenodytes* y *Palaeospheniscus* (Aves: Sphenisciformes) en la Formación Bahía Inglesa, Chile". – Revista Chilena de Historia Natural, 80: 261-264.

ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE, C. & GASPARINI, G. (2007): Evaluación de los caracteres del tarsometatarso de los Spheniscidae con fines sistemáticos. – Ornitología Neotropical, 18: 277-284.

ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE, C., TAMBUSSI, C., DONATO, M. & COZZUOL, M. (2007): A new Miocene penguin from Patagonia and its phylogenetic relationships. – Acta Paleontologica Polonica, 52 (2): 299-314.

ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE, C., TAMBUSSI, C. & DOZO, M.T. (2007): *Dendrocygna* (Anseriformes) en el Mioceno tardío de la Formación Puerto Madryn (Argentina): anatomía de la pelvis. – XXII Jornadas Argentinas de Paleontología Vertebrados, Trelew.

AGNOLIN, F.L. (in press): Un nuevo Emberizidae del Pleistoceno Inferior-Medio de la provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina. – Studia Geologica Salmanticensia.

AGNOLIN, F.L. (in press): *Argyrodyptes microtarsus* Ameghino, 1901, un Procellariidae del Terciaro de Patagonia. – Studia Geologica Salmanticensia.

AGNOLIN, F.L. (in press): *Brontornis burmeisteri* Moreno y Mercerat, 1891. Un Anseriformes gigante del Mioceno de Patagonia. – Revista del Museo Arrgentino de Ciencias Naturales "Bernardino Rivadavia".

ARETA, J.I., NORIEGA, J.I., & AGNOLIN, F.L. (2007): A giant darter (Pelecaniformes: Anhingidae) from the Upper Miocene of Argentina and weight calculation of fossil Anhingidae. – Neues Jahrbuch fur Geologie und Paläontologie Abhandlungen, 243: 343-350.

CENIZO, M. & AGNOLIN, F.L. (in press): La presencia del género *Belonopterus* en el Pleistoceno de argentina, con la descripción de *B. lilloi* nueva especie. – Revista del Museo Arrgentino de Ciencias Naturales "Bernardino Rivadavia".

CIONE, A. L., MENNUCCI, J., SANTALUCITA, F. & ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE, C. (2007): Local extinction of genus *Carcharias* (Elasmobranchii, Odontaspididae) in the eastern Pacific Ocean. – Revista Geológica de Chile, 34 (1): 139-145.

CLARKE, J.A., TAMBUSSI, C.P., NORIEGA, J.I., ERICKSON, G.M. & KETCHAM, R.A. (2006): Corrigendum. Definitive fossil evidence for the extant avian radiation in the Cretaceous. – Nature, 444: 780.

NORIEGA, J.I. & TONNI, E.P. (2007): *Geronogyps reliquus* Campbell (Ciconiiformes: Vulturidae) en el Pleistoceno tardío de la provincia de Entre Ríos y su significado paleoambiental. – Ameghiniana, 44(1): 245-250.

AUSTRALIA

WALTER BOLES' fossil-related work has been minimal in the past year, owing to involvement with other writing activities. Hopefully, now that these have been completed, he can get back to looking at bird bones. His honors student, JACKIE NGUYEN (University of New South Wales) completed her study of new specimens of the

small dromornithid, *Barawertornis tedfordi*. This involved the description of previously unrepresented skeletal elements and their incorporation in the phylogenetic reconstruction of the family.

AUSTRIA

In 2007, URSULA GÖHLICH started her new position as curator for vertebrate palaeontology at the Natural History Museum of Vienna, Austria. Thus, please note her new address and email. She is still a lecturer at the University of Munich (Dept. for Geological and Environmental Sciences) and aspires to finish her habilitation within this year. Current publications are devoted more to proboscideans and a theropod dinosaur, and only secondarily to birds. Together with G. Rössner (Munich), Ursula is editing a special volume on the fauna from the Miocene vertebrate site Sandelzhausen (Germany), which will be published in 2008 in the "Paläontologische Zeitschrift". Her current scientific projects deal with the proboscidean fauna from Sandelzhausen and, in cooperation with G. Merceron (Hamburg) and I. Calandra (Lyon), with dental microwear analyses on different proboscidean taxa from German localities. Together with L. Chiappe (Los Angeles) she is finishing the monography on the theropod dinosaur *Juravenator*. In August, Ursula will participate at Luis Chiappe's *Triceratops* digging in Montana, USA. Concerning her project on the Neogene penguin fauna from the Pisco Formation in Peru, a first publication with the description of the new penguin species *Spheniscus muizoni* appeared. A second publication on the entire penguin fauna and a third one on the oxygen isotope composition of phosphates of the marine vertebrate fauna, which are both collaborations with several colleagues from the Université Claude Bernard – Lyon 1 (i.e. C. Mourer-Chauviré, R. Amiot, C. Lecuyer, and S. Legendre) and the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle Paris (C. de Muizon), have been submitted.

GÖHLICH, U.B., CHIAPPE, L.M. & TISCHLINGER, H. (2006): *Juravenator starki* (Reptilia, Theropoda), ein neuer Raubdinosaurier aus dem Oberjura der Südlichen Frankenalb (Süddeutschland): Skelettanatomie und Weichteilbefunde. – Archaeopteryx, 24: 1-26.

GÖHLICH, U.B. (2007): The earliest record of the extant genus *Spheniscus* (Aves: Spheniscidae) – a new species from the Miocene of the Pisco Formation, Peru. – Acta Palaeontologica Polonica, 52(2): 285-298.

GÖHLICH, U.B. & PAVIA, M. (in press, 2007): A new species of the Phasianid *Palaeortyx* from the Mio-Pliocene of Gargano – Oryctos.

HARZHAUSER, M., KROH, A., MANDIC, O., PILLER, W.E., GÖHLICH, U.B., REUTER, M. & BERNING, B. (2007): Biogeographic responses to geodynamics: A key study all around the Oligo-Miocene Tethyan Seaway. – Journal of Comparative Zoology. (doi:10.1016/j.jcz2007.05.001)

TISCHLINGER, H. & GÖHLICH, U.B. (2007): Dinosaurier im Altmühltal. – Globulus.

BULGARIA

ZLATOZAR BOEV obtained a grant to work in the bird collections of the Natural History Museum in Tring (U.K.). His project is about Late Pleistocene birds from two caves in Northern Vietnam, and the studies in Tring were conducted from March 3rd-31th 2007. Part of the bird bone material (mainly non-Passeriformes) from two Paleolithic caves in Northern Vietnam has already been examined in 2002 in Tring. A considerable part of the material (mainly small passerines) remained, however, unstudied. A total of 82 avian fossils were identified. The following 18 new taxa have been added to the previously (2002) established 45 bird taxa: Changeable Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus cirrhatus*), Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), Goshawk (cf. *Accipiter* sp.), Bamboo-Partridge (*Bambusicola* aff. *flytchii*), Brown-backed Needletail (aff. *Hirundapus* sp.), Darjeeling Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus darjellensis*), Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*), Black-naped Oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*), Drongo (*Dicrurus* sp.), Brown Dipper (*Cinclus* aff. *pallasii*), Asian Fairy-bluebird (*Irena puella*), Coppersmith Barbet (*Megalaima haemacephala*), Golden-crested Myna (*Acridotheres cristatellus*), Eurasian Blackbird (*Turdus* aff. *merula*), Orange-bellied Leafbird (*Chloropsis hardwickii*), heron (?*Ardea* sp.), Red-tailed Laughingthrush (*Garrulax* cf. *milnei*), White-rumped Falconet (*Polihierax* aff. *insignis*). The complete list of the Late Pleistocene birds of both sites reached a total of 76 taxa (63 of them confined to species/genus level) of 18 families and 9 orders. As the recent bird fauna of Vietnam is extremely diverse, consisting of 815 species, at least 8.8 percent of them were established in only these two caves through their fossil remains. A manuscript on the results of the examination of this material is in an advanced stage of preparation. Zlatozar expresses his most sincere thanks to Dr. Robert Prys-Jones and all the staff of the Bird Group for their help and hospitality and help. He further has two phD students working on "The Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca* Savigni, 1809) (Accipitridae - Aves) in Bulgaria in 2000-2009 – distribution, biology, ecology, population number and measures of conservation" and the "Comparative trophology of Owls (Order Strigiformes – Aves) of the Eastern Rhodopes (Bulgaria)" respectively.

MILCHEV, B., BOEV, Z. & GEORGIEV, V. (2006): Birds in the Diet of the Barn Owl *Tyto alba* in SE Bulgaria. – Acrocephalus, 27(127-128): 271-275.

BOEV, Z. (2006): 120th anniversary of the birth of the academician Ivan Buresh. – Bulletin of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 4(98): 17-18.

BOEV, Z. (2006): First finds of ancient ground-hornbills of Europe discovered in Bulgaria. – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences News, 12(40): 2-3.

Boev, Z. 2006. First finds of ancient ground-hornbills of Europe discovered in Bulgaria. – In: POPOV, A. & SLAVOVA, S. (eds.): 2006. Новости – News 2006, БАН - BAS, 108-111.

BOEV, Z. (2006): Middle Pleistocene birds from the Morovitsa Cave (Lovech District, NC Bulgaria). – In: ZHALOV, A. & DAALIEV, T. (eds.): Proceed. of Jubilee Scientific Conference "75 years of organized speleology in Bulgaria", Bulgarian Federation of Speleology, Sofia, 4-5 April, 2004: 103-110.

BOEV, Z. (2007): Bulgarian contribution to the exploration of the fossil avifauna of Indochina. – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences News, 5(45): 3-4.
BOEV, Z. (2007): First finds of megantereon discovered in Bulgaria. – Novosti, BAS. 3(43): 3-4.
BOEV, Z. & BEECH, M. (2006): The Bird Bones. – In: POULTER, A.G. (ed.): Nicopolis ad Istrum III: A Late Roman and Early Byzantine City - The Finds and the Biological Remains. Oxbow Books. London.
BOEV, Z. & KOUFOS, G. (2006): The late Miocene vertebrate locality of Perivolaki, Thessaly, Greece. 2. Aves. – In: KOUFOS, G. (ed.): The late Miocene vertebrate locality of Perivolaki, Thessaly, Greece. - Palaeontographica, 276: 11-22.
BOEV, Z. & KOVACHEV, D. (2007): *Euroceros bulgaricus* gen. nov., sp. nov. from Hadzhidimovo (SW Bulgaria) (Late Miocene) – the first European record of Hornbills (Aves: Coraciiformes). – Geobios, 40: 39-49.

FRANCE

ESTELLE BOURDON continues her postdoc at the Collège de France (Paris) for one more year. This project deals with phylogeny and comparative bone histology of ratites. She is also preparing publications concerning the Paleocene-Eocene avifauna from the Ouled Abdoun Basin (Morocco).

CÉCILE MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ continues to work on fossil birds but a large part of her activity is used to make reviews of manuscripts concerning avian paleontology. She has completed the study of the birds from the Early Miocene localities of Elisabethfeld, Fiskus, Grillental (age ca. 20 Ma), and Langental (age ca. 19 Ma), in Namibia, gathered by Brigitte Senut and Martin Pickford. The locality of Elisabethfeld was already known for having yielded the remains of a small ostrich, *Struthio coppensi*. The locality of Grillental has yielded a humerus of *Megapaloelodus*. Although the sediments have been carefully washed and sorted, in order to find micromammal teeth, no Passerine remains were found, as it was also the case for the more recent locality of Arrisdrift (ca. 17 Ma), in Namibia. There is a general agreement that Passerines originated very early in the Southern Hemisphere. Considering their absence, so far, in the Early Miocene of Africa, it seems that they first reached Eurasia and arrived lately in Africa.

LEGENDRE, S., MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ, C., HUGUENEY, M., MAITRE, E., SIGÉ, B. & ESCARGUEL, G. (2006): Dynamique de la diversité des mammifères et des oiseaux paléogènes du Massif Central (Quercy et Limagnes, France). Journées Bernard Gèze. – Strata, série 1, 13: 275-282.
LOUCHART, A., TOURMENT, N., CARRIER, J., ROUX, T., & MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ, C. (in press): Hummingbird with modern feathering: an exceptionally well-preserved Oligocene fossil from southern France. – Naturwissenschaften.
MAITRE, E., HUGUENEY, M., ASTRUC, J.G., CROCHET, J.-Y., ESCARGUEL, G., GODINOT, M., LEGENDRE, S., MARANDAT, B., MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ, C., RAGE, J.-C., RÉMY, J. A., SIMON-COINCON, R., SUDRE, J., VALETTE, P. & SIGÉ, B. (2006): Huit nouvelles faunes éocènes et oligocènes des Phosphorites du Quercy. Journées Bernard Gèze. – Strata, série 1, 13: 113-127.
MAYR, G. & MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ, C. (2006): An unusual avian coracoid from the Paleogene Quercy fissure fillings in France. Journées Bernard Gèze. – Strata, série 1, 13: 129-133.
MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ, C. (2006): Oiseaux. – In: HUME, J. P., MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ, C. & RIBES S. (eds.): Les animaux disparus. Biodiversité de la Réunion. – Département de la Réunion, Muséum d'Histoire naturelle (éd.): 32 p.
MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ, C. (2006): The avifauna of the Eocene and Oligocene Phosphorites du Quercy (France): An updated list. Journées Bernard Gèze. – Strata, série 1, 13: 135-149.
MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ, C., PHILIPPE, M., GUILLARD, S. & MEYSONNIER, M. (2006): Presence of the Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* (L.) during the Holocene in the Ardèche Valley, southern France. – The Ibis, 148: 820-823.
MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ, C. & SIGÉ, B. (2006): Une nouvelle espèce de *Jungornis* (Aves, Apodiformes) et de nouvelles formes de Coraciiformes s.s. dans l'Eocène supérieur du Quercy. Journées Bernard Gèze. – Strata, série 1, 13: 151-159.
PEREIRA, E., OTTAVIANI-SPELLA, M. M., SALOTTI, M., LOUCHART, A., & QUINIF, Y. (2006): Tentative de reconstitution paléoenvironnementale de deux dépôts quaternaires corses. – Geologica Belgica, 9 (3-4): 267-273.
SALOTTI, M., HERVET, S., LOUCHART, A., OTTAVIANI-SPELLA, M. M., & PEREIRA, E. (2007): Reconstitution paléoenvironnementale du point fossilifère Cast. 3CG, Oletta, Haute-Corse (Pléistocène moyen), à partir d'une approche pluridisciplinaire. - In: D'ANNA, A., CESARI, J., OGEL, L., & VAQUER, J. (Coord.): Corse et Sardaigne Préhistoriques, Relations et Echanges dans le Contexte Méditerranéen. – Editions du CTHS, Bastia: 37-41. (ISBN 2-7355-0608-8).

GERMANY

ALBRECHT MANEGOLD continues his studies of Oligocene and Miocene passerines of Germany and France at the Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg. He submitted papers on fossil tree-creeping birds, on the description of suboscine and oscine passerines from the Oligocene of Germany, on the phylogenetic relationships of vangas based on morphological characters, and the evolution of nest building in passeriform birds. Hopefully at least one of these papers will be published within this year.

GERALD MAYR has described various new Paleogene taxa, including a complete skeleton of a new species of *Zygodactylus* from the early Oligocene of France and a skeleton of a small cormorant-like bird from the early Oligocene of Germany. Together with C. Hazevoet he studied a well-preserved sternum of *Pelagornis*.
Gerald is trying to increase the Senckenberg skeleton collection and is greatly interested in an exchange of specimens. Among the greatest desiderata are

skeletons of Anhingidae, Aramidae, and New World Suboscines.

BALLMANN, P. (2004): Fossil Calidridinae (Aves: Charadriiformes) from the Middle Miocene of the Nördlinger Ries. – Bonner Zoologische Beiträge, 52: 101-114.

ERICSON, P. G. P., ANDERSON, C. L. & MAYR, G. (2007): Hangin' on to our rocks 'n clocks – a reply to Brown et al. – Biology letters, 3: 260-261.

MAYR, G. (2006): First fossil skull of a Paleogene representative of the Pici (woodpeckers and allies) and its evolutionary implications. – Ibis, 148: 824-827.

MAYR, G. (2006): A specimen of *Eocuculus* Chandler, 1999 (Aves, ?Cuculidae) from the early Oligocene of France. - Geobios, 39(6): 865-872.

MAYR, G. & MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ, C. (2006): An unusual avian coracoid from the Paleogene Quercy fissure fillings in France. – Strata, ser. 1, 13: 129-133.

MAYR, G. (2006): New specimens of the Eocene Messelirrisoridae (Aves: Bucerotes), with comments on the preservation of uropygial gland waxes in fossil birds from Messel and the phylogenetic affinities of Bucerotes. – Paläontologische Zeitschrift, 80(4): 390-405.

MAYR, G. (2007): New specimens of the early Oligocene Old World hummingbird *Eurotrochilus inexpectatus*. – Journal of Ornithology, 148(1): 105-111.

MAYR, G., POHL, B., HARTMAN, S. & PETERS, D. S. (2007): The tenth skeletal specimen of Archaeopteryx. – Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society, 149(1): 97-116.

MAYR, G. (2007): Ein „monströser" Gänseschädel aus dem frühen Barock in der ornithologischen Sammlung des Senckenbergmuseums. – Natur und Museum, 137 (3/4): 86-87. ["A 'monstrous' goose skull from the early baroque in the ornithological collection of the Senckenberg museum"].

MAYR, G. (2007): The birds from the Paleocene fissure filling of Walbeck (Germany). – Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology, 27(2): 394-408.

MAYR, G. (2007): Bizarre tubercles on the vertebrae of Eocene fossil birds indicate an avian disease without modern counterpart. – Naturwissenschaften, 94: 681-685.

MAYR, G. (2007): New specimens of Eocene stem-group psittaciform birds may shed light on the affinities of the first named fossil bird, *Halcyornis toliapicus* Koenig, 1825. Neues Jahrbuch für Geologie und Paläontologie, Abhandlungen 244 (2): 207-213.

MAYR, G. (in press): The renaissance of avian paleontology and its bearing on the higher-level phylogeny of birds. – Journal of Ornithology. DOI 10.1007/s10336-007-0159-8.

MAYR, G., POSCHMANN, M. & WUTTKE, M. (2006): A nearly complete skeleton of the fossil galliform bird *Palaeortyx* from the late Oligocene of Germany. – Acta Ornithologica, 41(2): 129-135.

MAYR, G., RANA, R.S., SAHNI, A. & SMITH, T. (2007): Oldest fossil avian remains from the Indian subcontinental plate. – Current Science, 92(9): 1266-1269.

GREAT BRITAIN

JULIAN P. HUME continues to work at the Mare aux Songes fossil locality Mauritius and Rodrigues cave sites. Over 4000 subfossil remains were collected at the Mare aux Songes (2006) and 500+ from 2 new hitherto undisturbed caves on Rodrigues (2006 & 2007). This material includes many small passerine and reptile bones. In July 2007, JPH excavated with context, the first in situ articulated and associated dodo from a montane cave on Mauritius. This is also a first record for an inland montane habitat indicating that dodos were all over Mauritius, and not confined to the lowlands. Work will recommence at the Mare aux Songes, July-August 2007.

CHEKE, A. & HUME, J.P. (2007): Lost land of the Dodo: the ecological history of the Mauritius, Reunion and Rodrigues. – A. & C. Black publishers (Poyser imprint), 540pp.

HUME, J.P. (2007): Reappraisal of the parrots (Aves: Psittacidae) from the Mascarene islands, with comments on their ecology, morphology and affinities. – Zootaxa, 1513: 1-76.

HUNGARY

ERIKA GÁL works in archaeozoology as the holder of an academic fellowship. She is involved in several archaeological projects in Hungary and abroad.

EUGEN KESSLER continues the study of Neogene bird remains in Hungary. He also works on the hypothesis concerning the evolution of birds. He teaches at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest.

GÁL, E. (2007): Fowling in lowlands. Neolithic and Copper Age bird bone remains from the Great Hungarian Plain and South-East Romania. – Archaeolingua (Series Minor), Budapest., vol. 24. Pp. 149.

GÁL, E. & KESSLER, E. (2006): Songbird remains from the Miocene (Middle Sarmatian) site Credinţa (Dobrugea, South-east Romania). – In: CSIKI, Z. (ed.): Mesozoic and Cenozoic Vertebrates and Paleoenvironmentds. Tributes to the carrier of Prof. Dan Grigorescu, pp. 117-125. Ars Docendi, Bucureşti.

ITALY

In the last year, MARCO PAVIA was primarily involved in the study of the Early Pleistocene early Homo site of Pirro Nord. In fact, together with other colleagues, he organized the field activities, 2 weeks in march and 5 weeks in July-August for the systematic excavation of this locality. In addition his studies on fossil birds are going on, in particular the analysis of the Neogene birds of the Gargano and the fossil remains from Sardinia and Sicily. He obtained a SYNTHESYS grant to go to Leiden (The Nederland) to finish the study of the material of the Naturalis collections and thanks to the hospitality of L. Van Der Hoek Oostende and J. De Vos he spent three nice weeks there studying the fossils and now he is

working on the preparation of the papers on that material.

ARZARELLO, M., MARCOLINI, F., PAVIA, G., PAVIA, M., PETRONIO, C., PETRUCCI, M., ROOK, L. & SARDELLA, R. (2007): Evidence of earliest human occurrence in Europe: the site of Pirro Nord (Southern Italy). – Naturwissenschaften, 94: 107-112

NEW ZEALAND

MIKE DICKISON defended his PhD in May at Duke University, North Carolina, with a dissertation entitled "The Allometry of Giant Flightless Birds". He wrote about comparative body size distributions of flying and flightless birds and mammals, estimating the body mass of the largest extinct birds, the scaling of egg and clutch mass in kiwi, and the Tertiary dispersal and radiation of the ratites: more information at his website, www.giantflightlessbirds.com. He is currently based in Christchurch, New Zealand, looking for funding to continue working on flightless birds.

RICHARD N. HOLDAWAY was awarded $825,000 over 3 years in a 2006 Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Fund contract for the first section of a multi-disciplinary project which is aimed at greater understanding of the immediate pre-human environment in New Zealand, and especially the biology, evolution, and extinction of the unique avian megafaunas. The first part of the project is called “Relative neighbours” and will investigate the genetics, ecology, and environment of four species of moa in North Canterbury, South Island. The project focuses on the collections of material of four species of moa preserved in two sites. It includes an intensive AMS ^{14}C dating program (250+ ages), aimed at providing a relative chronology for the individual moa. In conjunction with analysis of mitochondrial and nuclear DNA, this chronology will support an investigation of the relationships within each moa species populations and the level of variation in each taxon. As an adjunct to the Marsden Fund project, a new “high tech” excavation will be carried out at Pyramid Valley early in 2008. The excavation will be very small in area in comparison to the 2000 + square metres excavated between 1949 and 1965, but it should yield many times the information. The excavation will be done within a purpose-designed building erected on the lake bed, which will not penetrate the sediments, but which will provide a controlled, quasi-aseptic excavation environment. Before the excavation, the location of previous excavations and the possibility of locating concentrations of large bones and other inclusions in the deposit will be explored using laser-guided Ground-Penetrating Radar and EM. The spatial distribution of all material removed, and of all features within the sediments will be recorded using a laser total station. The matrix will be largely removed *en bloc* and “dis-assembled” in a separate lab with a computer link to the excavation building so that all positional and other data can be entered in real time into the same database. The “data clouds” resulting, which will include the contents of the site, and the associated information (biochemical, etc.) as well as the stratigraphy, will provide the basis for both the analyses of the deposition and the fauna, and for a 3D-virtual reconstruction of the site and its environs: the excavation will be a virtual “CAT-scan” of the deposit and its contents. Associated moa skeletons will be sampled *in situ* and scanned with 3D-laser topographic technology, to assist the computer reconstruction of the excavated volume. All the sediments will be subjected to multiproxy palaeo-environmental analysis.

A multi-disciplinary project has also begun, on the genetic relationships of a suite of Southwest Pacific seabirds, including sulids and petrels and focusing on the present and past faunas of the Norfolk Island and Kermadec Island groups. Fiona Wilson has begun her MSc on these issues, with Marie Hale at the University of Canterbury and Mike Bunce at Murdoch. Dr Tammy Steeves, a post-doc in the School of Biological Sciences at Canterbury, is also involved, bringing her expertise on *Sula dactylatra* in particular an boobies in general to this project.

JOSEPH MCKEE has only collected a few bird bones in the past year. The Pliocene has produced only two partial pseudodontorn bones and several small bones from another marine bird. Joseph’s Pleistocene localities have produced only a few isolated, fragmentary bird bones.

TREVOR WORTHY moved to Adelaide University, South Australia in August 2005 and has continued to work on fossil birds there, notably phylogenetic relationships of Australasian Tertiary waterfowl. He continues to work on the rich early-mid Miocene St Bathans Fauna of Otago in New Zealand and to this end has established a joint research project between Adelaide University, South Australian Museum (M. Lee, M. Hutchinson), University of New South Wales (S. Hand, M. Archer), and New Zealand museums, Te Papa in Wellington (Alan Tennyson), and Canterbury Museum (Paul Scofield). A first paper describing this fauna appeared in Journal of Systematic Palaeontology online in late 2006. We had a major excavation in February 2007 and expect another this summer. Among hundreds of new avian fossils were some exquisite charadriiform fossils, the first fossil heron from Australasia, and new passerines. The team recently reported New Zealand’s first land mammal, albeit a stem taxon, but it shows NZ was not solely the land of birds during much of the Tertiary.

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SWEDEN

PER ERICSON continues to work on the higher-level systematics of birds using molecular data. Together with Johan Dalsätt he also collaborates with Zhonghe Zhou and Fucheng Zhang on Mesozoic birds from China.

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UNITED STATES

Florida

DAVID STEADMAN, along with volunteers and Florida Museum of Natural History colleagues Arthur Poyer, Richard Hulbert, Erika Simons, Jonathan Bloch, Douglas Jones, and Natalie Wright, continues to excavate the Early Miocene (Hemingfordian land mammal age) Thomas Farm site in northern Florida. New taxa of birds, all represented by unassociated elements, continue to be discovered. A summary of the Thomas Farm avifauna, most species of which are undescribed, is in the works. Dave's other main continental project focuses on waterfowl-dominated avifaunas from the Pliocene and Pleistocene (Blancan through Rancholabrean land mammal ages) of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. Dave also is collaborating with molecular systematists on a higher-level phylogeny of living birds as part of NSF's Assembling the Tree of Life Program.
On islands, Dave is studying reptile, bird, and mammal fossils from late Quaternary sites (cultural and non-cultural) in the West Indies (especially the Bahamas, Turks & Caicos Islands, Anguilla, Trinidad, and Tobago) and the tropical Pacific. Graduate student Natalie Wright is studying morphological and molecular differentiation between conspecific populations of landbirds on the continental islands of Trinidad and Tobago.

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Los Angeles

KEN CAMPBELL traveled to Paris, France in July to participate in two international conferences. The first was the 1st International Palaeobiogeography Symposium, where he presented a paper entitled "Late Miocene Dynamics of the Great American Faunal Interchange." This paper was the result of extensive field work in the Amazon Basin of South America and presented arguments for a much older end to the geographic isolation of South America as an island continent than currently recognized. The second conference the following week was the 8th International Congress of Vertebrate Morphology, where he presented a paper co-authored with Fritz Hertel entitled "The Automated Balance System of Birds," a topic of current research seeking to explain why all birds waddle. Each conference extended over four days and both were held at the Université Pierre et Marie Curie (Paris 6) and Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris.

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