



News

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Evolution of Animal Flight is Focus of Wednesday Talk at SWOSU

Dr. David Alexander, professor of entomology in the University of Kansas Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, will be the guest speaker at the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Department of Biological Sciences J.D. Maness Seminar Series on Wednesday, March 28.

Alexander will present "The Evolution of Animal Flight: A Biomechanics Perspective" in a presentation open to the public at 4 p.m. in Room 212 of the Old Science Building on the Weatherford campus. Admission is free.

The ability to fly offers an organism many advantages, according to Alexander. Animals that are capable of flight move faster and with greater efficiency, have expanded search areas, and can colonize new habitats. Alexander is particularly interested in how different animals employ varied biomechanical mechanisms to achieve flight. His research focuses on the aerodynamic effects of wing architecture and stabilizing mechanism on flying insects.

In his book "On the Wing," Alexander compares and contrasts the flight biomechanics of four groups of flying animals: insects, pterosaurs, birds and bats by tracking the development of animal flight since its first appearance in the fossil record 350 million years ago. Using this approach, Alexander was able to construct a "big picture" view of the evolution of all flying animals.

For more information about the upcoming SWOSU program, contact SWOSU Assistant Professor Dr. Regina McGrane at 580-774-3046.

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