PhD Top-up Scholarships in Freshwater Fish Ecology in Northern Australia

As part of a new Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage project investigating the resilience of freshwater fish in northern Australia to environmental change, Charles Darwin University (CDU) and the University of Western Australia (UWA) are offering two PhD stipend top-ups ($10,000 per year, plus operating funds).

**Background:** Northern Australian rivers are among the most pristine and productive on earth; however, they face profound change due to human activity. Previous research and monitoring of fish in these rivers have demonstrated the diversity of habitat preferences and annual population variability, but little is known about their key life history and ecological requirements. This makes it difficult to confidently assess and manage for the risks that flow and habitat modification, and climate change will pose to fish populations and fisheries in the future. Emerging evidence suggests that flexibility in functional traits (e.g. life history, physiology, behaviour, diet) may result in resilience to environmental change.

We are seeking candidates for two PhD projects as part of an ARC Linkage project “*Forecasting fish resilience to environmental change in northern Australia*”. The project is a partnership between the Northern Territory Government and four Universities: CDU, UWA, Griffith University and the University of Washington (USA).

**Projects:**

1. **Fish Recruitment Ecology (offered at CDU).** The aim of this research will be to investigate the influence of flow on the habitat use, growth and movement of the early life stages of freshwater fish in tropical river systems. [Lead Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Alison King (CDU)].

2. **Trophic Ecology of Fish (offered at UWA).** The aim of this project is to examine the influence of flow regime on intraspecific and interspecific variability in the diets of freshwater fish in tropical river systems. [Lead Supervisor: Prof. Michael Douglas (UWA)].

Flexibility exists for expanding on and developing new research areas in this general theme.

**Positions:** Candidates will apply for an Australian Postgraduate Award (AU$25,849 p.a. tax free) and will also receive an additional top-up stipend (AU$10,000 p.a.). Project operating funds will also be available. The successful applicants will be jointly supervised by a team of Internationally recognised, highly experienced researchers including: Assoc. Prof Alison King (CDU), Prof. Michael Douglas (UWA), Assoc Prof. David Crook (CDU), Assoc. Prof. Mark Kennard (GU) and Prof. Julian Olden (UW).

**Eligibility:** Applicants should have an MSc or Honours Degree (or equivalent) in an appropriate discipline, be prepared to start full-time candidature in 2016, and meet the requirements of an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA).

**Requirements:** The projects will involve a significant amount of fieldwork in remote locations and will develop close working relationships with Indigenous Traditional Owners of the region. The applicant will need a high academic record to be competitive. Previous relevant field and laboratory experience is desirable.

**To Apply:** Enquiries should be directed to Assoc. Prof. Alison King (Alison.King@cdu.edu.au, Ph. 08 8946 6754) or Prof. Michael Douglas (Michael.Douglas@uwa.edu.au, Ph. 0408 467 000). Applicants will be required to apply for an APA and submit, by 31 October 2016:

(i) a full curriculum vitae, including a short statement of your research interests and aspirations
(ii) a copy of your academic record,
(iii) the names and contact details of three referees, and
(iv) an indication of your potential start date.