

2011 Seminar Series

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Advances in Animal Behaviour: Characterising Behavioural Traits, Personalities and Syndromes

Organismal phenotypes (and genotypes) are best characterised as a nested hierarchy of quasi-independent functional units. This modular structure has obvious relevance for the characterisation of behaviours in light of recent interest in individual consistency and plasticity in the same behaviour across contexts, and for the study of covariance between different behaviours. In an attempt to unify the diversity of approaches taken when studying what might be termed behavioural 'traits', 'personalities' and 'syndromes', we propose a semantic-free statistical framework based around the concept of behavioural reaction norms (BRNs). The objective hierarchical characterisation of behavioural phenotypes should allow researchers to statistically identify measurements of what, for the sake of expediency, can be treated as the 'same' versus 'different' behaviours. This approach and extensions of it will better facilitate the integration of behavioural studies with investigations of associated morphological and physiological characters, and with underlying developmental and genetic processes.

Thursday 27 October 2011 | Nathan Campus
11:00am - 12:30pm
Bray Centre, N54_2.02

Light refreshments will be served.