

'The evolutionary ecology of cognition across a heterogeneous landscape'
(EVOECOCOG: ERC funded project)

Why do individuals vary in their cognitive abilities? EVOECOCOG takes the disciplines of cognition and evolutionary biology into a natural setting to answer this question. It aims to do this by investigating a variety of proximate causes and population-level consequences of individual cognitive variation using a great tit *Parus major* population.

The project represents one of the first large-scale integrative studies of cognitive performance on any wild population.

Three objectives capture the project's broad scope: 1) To characterise proximate causes of variation in cognitive and other associated traits, including personality, all of which can influence similar ecologically important behaviour. Quantitative genetic, social, parasite-mediated, and physiological causes will be explored. 2) To examine links between these traits, key functional behaviours and trade-offs, e.g., space use, niche specialization, predation, parental care and promiscuity; and 3) To examine the consequences of this variation for life histories, fitness, natural and sexual selection.

Dates: **Application deadline is 1 June 2015.** Interviews will be held initially by Skype within 2 weeks. Start dates are mid-July or as soon thereafter as possible.

For further information, please contact Prof. John L. Quinn at j.quinn@ucc.ie

University College Cork is one of Ireland's largest and most successful universities. The research would be conducted in the School of BEES which consists of 20 faculty (including 3 holders of current ERC grants), ca. 20 postdocs and 50 PhD students across Zoology, Ecology, Plant Sciences and Geology. Cork is situated on the south coast of Ireland, 2.5 hours from Dublin, is served by an international airport, has a population of about 200,000, and is on the doorstep of some of the most beautiful coastline in Europe.

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