UNSW THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES | Evolution & Ecology Research Centre

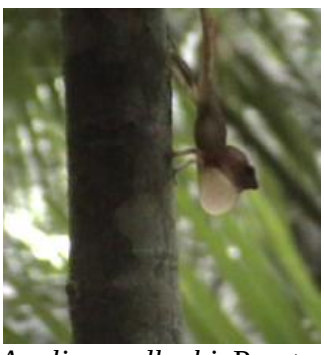
Seminar

The evolutionary ecology of communication in challenging environments

Speaker:	**Dr Terry Ord** (Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, Harvard University, USA)
Venue:	Biomed Lecture Theatre C (Building E27) The University of New South Wales Kensington (map)
Date:	24 February, 2009
Time:	11:15 am to 12:15 pm

Abstract

Communication theory predicts animals should produce signals that are conspicuous within the habitats in which they live. The idea that signals need to 'stand out' in the environment predicts that evolutionary divergence in communication will occur when closely related species invade different environments, and evolutionary convergence when distantly related species live in similar environments. However, the contingent nature of evolution is well known: the way a species adapts to changes in the environment will also depend on its ancestral condition and evolutionary history. At this point, it is unclear how the environment and evolutionary history interact to create the diversity of signal forms that are observed in lineages that currently live in a wide array of different habitats. In this talk, I will illustrate how my work begins to address this gap in our knowledge and how the study of behaviour can provide unique insights into the processes underlying the evolution of phenotypic diversity more generally.



Anolis gundlachi, Puerto Rico

Anolis lineatopus, Jamaica