

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Ecology Center Awarded \$16.8 Million From NSF

The National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS), based at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and located in downtown Santa Barbara, recently received notice of renewed and increased funding of \$16.8 million over six years from the National Science Foundation, up from \$2 million to \$2.8 million per year.

The center, which recently attracted national media attention for work leading to a consensus statement by ecologists regarding marine reserves, is also receiving \$500,000 annually from the state and \$180,000 from UC Santa Barbara. In research that spans the spectrum from genes to the biosphere, the center has been particularly successful with bringing together researchers from a variety of disciplines to focus on novel questions and approaches, and with intensive sustained investigations into core areas of ecology.

NCEAS began operation in 1995, the winner of a competition established by the National Science Foundation. "Recognizing the potential value of existing complex data sets and the need for new approaches to assembling, accessing and synthesizing this information, the ecological community rallied around the notion of creating a synthesis center -- a unique facility to promote access to ecological information, analytical tools, and collaborations among ecological scientists," according to NCEAS documents.

So far, more than 2,000 scientists from all states and 39 countries have participated in NCEAS research activities and the center itself is beginning to influence the way that ecological research is conducted -- promoting a culture of synthesis and collaboration, according to its director Jim Reichman.

The mission of NCEAS includes a commitment to "advance the state of ecological knowledge through the search for general patterns and principles, and to organize and synthesize ecological information in a manner useful to researchers, resource managers, and policy makers addressing important environmental issues."

NCEAS supports small working groups that meet for a few days to weeks several times a year, conducting research at the center. It also supports sabbatical fellows, postdoctoral associates and several graduate interns every year.

The center has supported more than 120 research projects, many of which have become well known. For example, well-known studies completed by an NCEAS postdoctoral associate are those of Camille Parmesan. Parmesan analyzed the shifts in butterfly populations (by latitude and altitude) in North America, documenting the effects of global warming. She then analyzed European butterfly populations with similar results in one of the few tests of the effects of global warming that have been replicated.

Many other significant and influential projects have been completed at NCEAS in areas as diverse as ecological economics and conservation and resource management. Activities also include outreach to young ecologists in a project called "Kids Do Ecology." For more information, see the Center's website at .

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.