

Scientists develop new tools for conservation and wildlife management

June 11 2012



Sandhill Rustic moth.

(Phys.org) -- A University of Exeter team has developed new software tools for helping prioritise efforts in species conservation. As well as determining which species need our help, it will also be useful in pest control and sustainable harvesting.

The researchers from the University's Environment and Sustainability Institute (ESI) and Centre for [Ecology](#) and Conservation on the Cornwall Campus have launched their new software, called 'popdemo' with the publication of two articles in the British Ecological Society journal *Methods in Ecology & Evolution*. The software is free to anyone and, although it is based on complex mathematical models, it is easy to use.

Popdemo adds to the established ‘R’ project, which provides free and powerful software, for statistics and modelling, to scientists and environmental groups worldwide.

Main researcher University of Exeter PhD student Iain Stott says: “Open source software is the future for scientific methods and tools: it allows anyone to engage with scientific research for free. I am proud to be able to contribute to this global [software](#) philosophy.”

Stuart Townley, Professor of Applied Mathematics in the ESI, says: “This is the culmination of eight years interdisciplinary research involving biologists and mathematicians. Popdemo makes sophisticated mathematical tools accessible to applied ecologists”.

Dave Hodgson, Senior Lecturer in Ecology at the Centre for Ecology and Conservation, says: “There is a pressing need for the sustainable use of biological resources. Our package allows ecologists to make the right decisions when conserving or managing wildlife populations”.

More information: Popdemo is available online and is free to use. cran.r-project.org

Provided by University of Exeter

Citation: Scientists develop new tools for conservation and wildlife management (2012, June 11) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-06-scientists-tools-wildlife.html>

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