

James Costa

Professor and Executive Director of Highlands Biological Station at Western Carolina University

Cullowhee, NC, US

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Biography

Jim Costa is executive deirector of the Highlands Biological Station and professor of evolutionary biology at Western Carolina University, where he has taught courses in genetics, entomology, evolution and biogeography since 1996. Costa's many interests include insect behavior and ecology, environmental history and philosophy, conservation biology and the history of science. His research has focused in recent years on Charles Darwin, Alfred Russel Wallace and the history of evolutionary thought. He has authored numerous research papers, reviews, magazine articles and seven books, most recently "Darwin's Backyard: How Small Experiments Led to a Big Theory" (W. W. Norton, 2017) ? a finalist for the American Association for the Advancement of Science/Subaru Prize ? and the co-edited volume "An Alfred Russel Wallace Companion" (Chicago, 2019). Costa has held fellowships at Harvard?s Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, the Berlin Institute for Advanced Study and the New York Botanical Garden's LuEsther T. Mertz Library. He lectures widely in the U.S. and Europe, is a regular travel program leader/lecturer for the Harvard Museums of Science and Culture, and for many years co-instructed Harvard?s Darwin summer program at the University of Oxford. Costa's recent honors include 2017-2019 Sigma Xi Distinguished Lecturer, the Alfred Russel Wallace Medal (2017) and his book Darwin's Backyard was a Finalist for the AAAS/Subaru Prize for Excellence in Science Books.

Industry Expertise

Research, Education/Learning, Writing and Editing

Areas of Expertise

Charles Darwin, Conservation, Ecology, Insect Behavior, Evolutionary Biology

Affiliations

American Association for the Advancement of Science, Linnean Society of London : Fellow, Sigma Xi Scientific Research Honor Society, Society for the History of Natural History

Event Appearances

An unnatural naturalness? On the nature of humanity and perspectives on the Anthropocene
Humanities in the Age of Globalization conference

Charles Darwin's 'Fool's Experiments' ? Lessons from an Inveterate 'Experimentiser'
40th Darwin Festival Lecture

(R)evolutionary War: Darwin's Origin & Descent, Scientific & Literary Influence
Dahlonga Science and Literary Festival

A 'Central and Controlling Incident': Celebrating The Malay Archipelago and the Intellectual Legacy of Alfred Russel Wallace
Linnean Society of London

Darwinian Revelation: A Primer to Charles Darwin's 'One Long Argument'
Darwin Day Lecture

Education

University of Georgia
Ph.D. Entomology

University of Georgia
M.S. Entomology

SUNY Buffalo
B.S. Biological Sciences

Accomplishments

AAAS/Subaru Prize for Excellence in Science Books
2018 Finalist, for Darwin's Backyard: How Small Experiments Led to a Big Theory

Wallace Medal
2017 Alfred Russel Wallace Memorial Fund, London

Million Dollar Circle Award
2016 Sponsored Programs, Western Carolina University

25th Joseph LeConte Scholar
2015 Georgia Southern University

Distinguished Lecturer Program
2017-2019 Sigma Xi Scientific Research Honor Society

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