



Genomics of rapid adaptation: the expansion and evolution of the invasive common myna and common starling in New Zealand

University of Auckland

School of Biological Sciences

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New Zealand

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- [Dr Anna Santure](#)
- Friday, December 06, 2019
- Funded PhD Project (Students Worldwide)

About This PhD Project

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Project Description

A PhD scholarship, funded by a New Zealand Royal Society Marsden Fund Grant, is available with Dr Anna Santure and Dr Annabel Whibley in the School of Biological Sciences, University of Auckland, New Zealand. This project is an exciting opportunity to use genomics and evolutionary genetics approaches to understand the evolution of two globally invasive species, the common myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) and common starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). There is evidence that both species have adapted rapidly in the invasive ranges, despite what we assume to be very low founding genetic diversity. Common myna and

common starling are two of only three bird species on the global 'top 100' invasive species list, and offer unique replicated systems to identify genomic differences between invasive and native source populations. Changes to morphology and gene expression will be correlated with identified genomic changes in genes and regulatory elements to infer the genomic basis of rapid adaptation.

We are looking for a candidate with a strong background in genetics and bioinformatics, statistics, computer science or similar, as well as a passion for evolutionary biology and ecology.

The PhD position requires the applicant to be eligible for admission to the PhD programme at the University of Auckland (see <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/for/future-postgraduates/how-to-apply-pg/apply-for-a-doctorate/phd-entry-requirements.html>; please note the English language proficiency requirements). Candidates should have a GPA of 7 or above (see <https://www.gpecalculator.auckland.ac.nz/#/> for a grade conversion calculator); international students are welcome to apply.

This project is a collaboration with Prof Rebecca Johnson and Dr Richard Major at Australian Museum and Dr Lee Ann Rollins at the University of New South Wales. To apply for this position, please email Dr Anna Santure (a.santure@auckland.ac.nz) with your cv, names and details of two referees, your academic transcript, and a short statement of interest. I welcome informal enquiries.

The PhD scholarship is available from 1 April 2020 and covers tuition fees and provides an annual tax free allowance of NZD\$27,500 for three years. The closing date is 6 December 2019.

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