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PRESERVING THE WILD

Cameron Siler, a doctoral student in ecology and evolutionary biology at KU, has a promising career as a conservation biologist and scientist. Recently, he spent nine months on islands in the Philippines, where he catalogued, studied and promoted that nation's biodiversity.

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NEWS

Preserving the wild

- Collected works
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- Inauguration 2010
- KU on your iPhone

[Graduate student works to safeguard Philippine wildlife](#)

[KU ScholarWorks jumps to top 100 in worldwide ranking of online repositories](#)

[Doctoral student wins Sias Graduate Fellowship](#)

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WHAT TO DO AT KU

Today - All Day:
 Certified Public Manager program

Today at 8:00 am:
 The Kansas Relays

Today - All Day:
 Basic Supervisory Training

Today at 9:00 am:
 Introductin to Positive Psychology

Today at 9:00 am:
 Runners Clinic

Today at 10:30 am:
 University Support Staff Senate

Today at 12:00 pm:
 Interdisciplinary Graduate Research Workshop - Kyle Anthony, History

Today at 12:00 pm:
 University-Community Forum. Health Care Access Clinic: Serving the Uninsured in Douglas County

Today at 12:00 pm:
 EndNote X3: Libraries and Databases

Today at 1:00 pm:
 KU Web Template - Hands-on

Today at 2:00 pm:
 Osher Institute: Encountering Islam: Two Autobiographies of Muslim Women

Today at 3:30 pm:
 Employment Topic Workshop for International Students: H-1b and Employment-Based Permanent Residence


Today at 4:00 pm:
 Surviving in 2010: Blue Incumbents in Red Districts

Today at 4:00 pm:
 Continuous Flow Organic Synthesis under High-Temperature Conditions

Today at 4:00 pm:
 Communication Studies Spring 2010 Colloquium

Today at 4:30 pm:
 KU School of Music presents the Phi Mu Alpha Fraternity concert

KU's Lied Center presents:



Kronos Quartet
 April 13 >>

Gene Bernofsky
 Co-founder of Drop City, the first hippie commune
 April 13 >>



Dole Institute of Politics presents:



Lew Perkins
 KU Athletics Director
 April 13 >>

Kansas Relays
 April 14-17 >>

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April 13, 2010

Contact: [Brendan M. Lynch](#), University Relations, (785) 864-8855

Graduate student works to safeguard Philippine wildlife

LAWRENCE — As a teenager, Cameron Siler was a self-admitted amphibian nerd. He crammed his room with aquariums and passed countless hours nurturing and studying frogs and lizards.

More Information

[Natural History Museum and Biodiversity Institute](#)

"The rule in our house was ... no snakes," said Siler, today a doctoral student in ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Kansas. "But at one point I had 10 10-gallon aquariums and there were 25 different animals — mostly frogs, newts and salamanders."

Some adolescent obsessions fade, but not Siler's. "I just assumed that once I came to college, my passion would be over," he said. "I'm very grateful that I haven't had to give it up."

Siler has built his youthful infatuation into a promising career as a conservation biologist and scientist. In 2009, he spent nine months hopscotching islands in the Philippines, where he catalogued, studied and promoted that nation's astounding biodiversity.

Siler led a field team that collected 6,000 photographs, 100 frog-mating call recordings, 4,000 genetic samples and notes on more than 20 ecological factors for every specimen encountered. His research took him to sites on the islands of Lubang, Marinduque, Luzon, Catanduanes, Lipinig, Bohol, Negros, Mindanao, Camiguin Sur, Cebu and Siquijor.

"We would take boats, vans, busses — and occasionally we'd fly on little propeller planes or small jets — packing on 25 of our team members and countless bags for personal gear and camping gear," said Siler. "It's a pretty exhausting process getting between these areas."

With data collected from the field, Siler wrote reports for the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources, including information on species encountered, population sizes and relative abundance of existing species, habitat requirements for each species, general habitat quality and community support for conservation.

Further, Siler deposited his data at KU's Natural



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History Museum and Biodiversity Institute and the Philippine National Museum, where it is available to the global scientific community.

Because habitat destruction threatens many of the species that Siler worked to catalogue in the Philippines, another aspect of his work involved making Filipinos more aware of the richness and value of biodiversity in their country.

"Students really don't get to learn too much about biodiversity and how important it is to protect the forest and animals that live in it," said the KU researcher. "So part of my effort is trying to bridge this gap by creating education tools using biodiversity information, photographs and illustrations of frogs, lizards and snakes, and putting together publicly available tools for students from high school level to college level."

Siler also is interested in providing younger Filipino students with coloring books and photo guides. He said that there are more than 320 dialects in the Philippines that make public education more challenging.

"You can go through just one island and encounter five or six different dialects," he said. "Having a language that everyone can read is difficult at times. We're beginning our educational projects by translating material into some of the most-commonly spoken dialects and eventually into some of the less-commonly spoken dialects."

Siler's most recent work in the Philippines was supported by a Fulbright-Hays grant from the U.S. Department of Education.



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The University of Kansas is a major comprehensive research and teaching university. University Relations is the central public relations office for KU's Lawrence campus.

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A GREAT PLACE TO BE
A CHAMPION