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UBC Reports | Vol. 53 | No. 4 | [Apr. 5, 2007](#)**In the News****Highlights of UBC Media Coverage in March 2007****Compiled by Basil Waugh****Researchers Debunk Belief Species Evolve Faster in Tropics**

Scores of international news media, including the *Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported on a UBC study that says, contrary to common belief, species do not evolve faster in warmer climates.

Jason Weir, a Zoology PhD candidate in the Faculty of Science, and his mentor Prof. **Dolph Schluter**, director of the UBC Biodiversity Research Centre, found that speciation – the process in which one species splits into two – takes place faster in temperate zones than in the tropics. Their findings were published in the journal *Science*.

Study Urges Hong Kong to Reel in Fishing Industry

Reuters and **Agence France Presse** reported on a UBC study that says Hong Kong would reap economic and environmental benefits if it pared down its fishing fleet and introduced no fishing zones.

The report, prepared for the World Wildlife Fund by UBC's Fisheries Centre, says fish stocks in Hong Kong have been depleted by poor management and pollution and urges its government to use a budget surplus to take action.

"The gains are big enough to cover the loss and costs we see in the few sectors," said UBC Prof. Rashid Sumaila.

Prof Named Poet Laureate of Vancouver

The *Globe and Mail* and *Vancouver Sun* reported on the naming of UBC Professor Emeritus **George McWhirter** as Vancouver's first poet laureate.

During his honorary two-year term, McWhirter will work to raise the status of poetry, language and the arts in the everyday consciousness of Vancouverites.

A former head of UBC's creative writing program, McWhirter is a recipient of the Commonwealth Poetry Prize, the Killam Prize for Teaching and the Sam Black Award for Education through Art.

In an interview with the *Globe and Mail*, the sixty-eight-year-old said he is planning a series of readings, a civic web page for poetry and a "poetry map of the city" -- an anthology of local poetry about Vancouver's streets, alleys and other geographic features.

Can Animals Predict Natural Disasters?

Australia's *The Age* and the U.K.'s *New Scientist* reported on research by UBC Psychology Prof. **Stanley Coren** that suggests some animals have the ability to provide advance warning of natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis.

In a 2001 study of 200 Vancouver dogs, Coren found that roughly 50 per cent of the canines exhibited increased anxiety the day prior to a Washington State earthquake about 240 kilometres south of Vancouver.

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