

## **Professor of Evolutionary Biology and Genetics**

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### **Summary**

I am an evolutionary biologist and geneticist based in the School of Life Sciences at the University of Nottingham where I have established a group working on the evolutionary biology, ecology and genetics of spiders and other invertebrates. We have a particular interest in spider dispersal and the implications for maintenance of variation within species. Our work also includes the production of synthetic biomaterials that are inspired by genomic characterisation of natural proteins such as spider silk, in order to produce sustainable alternatives for use in medical and engineering applications.

In addition to laboratory-based genomic techniques, I also have an interest in the use of citizen science approaches to studying the natural environment and was the lead at Nottingham for the *Open Air Laboratories* project. This was a decade-long, UK-wide initiative that engaged with more than 1 million participants to make surveys of their local environment in order to obtain comparable measures of biodiversity, soil, water and air quality. Public engagement remains a central part of our research efforts, for example through championing the sequencing of a spider genome by the Wellcome-Sanger centre through engagement with the public.

### **CURRENT ESA ROLE**

I been a council member of the European Society for Arachnology since 2014. I previously co-authored the newsletter that typically follows the annual congress and I organised and hosted the congress here at Nottingham, together with my group, in the Summer of 2017. I currently act as vice-President.