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UNH Professor Named Co-director of Hubbard Center for Genome Studies

By Sharon Keeler
UNH News Bureau
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DURHAM, N.H. -- University of New Hampshire zoologist Thomas Kocher has been named co-director of the University of New Hampshire's Hubbard Center for Genome Studies.

He will share leadership duties with Kelley Thomas, associate professor of molecular biology and biochemistry at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, who has been named Hubbard Chair in the Biological Sciences and co-director of the center.

Kocher, UNH's Hortense Cavis Shepherd Professor of Zoology and Genetics, has been teaching at UNH since 1989. His research focuses on the evolution and genetics of several fish species. He studies the cichlid fishes of Lake Malawi (East Africa), a group which has rapidly evolved at least 500 species in the past million years. He also works on the genetics of tilapia and flounder, fish important to aquaculture around the world.

"Tom is a premier researcher in genomics," says Andrew Rosenberg, dean of UNH's College of Life Sciences and Agriculture. "His energy, vision and ability as a teacher and researcher will lead the new center toward major contributions to UNH, New Hampshire and the science of genomics."

Kocher's lab moved to the new center in June, with seven Ph.D students, two post-doctoral researchers and two professors making up the fourth floor of UNH's new Environmental Technology Building.

"Genomics is a new and fascinating area of biology
which takes a holistic approach to molecular biology and evolution by studying the complete genome and its protein expression patterns," says Kocher. "The Hubbard Center for Genome Studies will be an invaluable resource in advancing the research of faculty in the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture, and will provide an opportunity for students to learn genomic techniques using state-of-the-art technology. It will allow UNH to develop world-class programs in comparative and environmental genomics to improve our understanding of evolutionary processes, human disease and environmental health."

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