2014 Darwin Day Seminar

Speaker: Walter Salzburger

Title: Evolution in Darwin's dream ponds: The cichlid fishes of the East African big lakes.
Monday, Feb. 10, 7:00 p.m., Webber Music Hall.

Abstract:
Cichlid fishes are the most fascinating model organisms to me. These
tropical freshwater-fishes show a Gondwanian distribution, with extant
representatives in India, Madagascar, South- and Central America, and
Africa. With more than 2'000 species that evolved in the last few
million years only the species flocks of cichlids in the East African
Great Lakes Tanganyika, Malawi and Victoria represent the most
astounding examples of adaptive radiation and explosive speciation. I
am interested in the evolution of the cichlids' unique biodiversity,
in the intrinsic factors that underlie the cichlids' propensity for
explosive speciation, and in the external (environmental) events that
trigger their radiations. In particular, I am interested in the
molecular genetic and genomic bases of the evolutionary success of
cichlids.