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## **Eldredge Bermingham Is Named Acting Director of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute**

Eldredge Bermingham has been named as the acting director of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute a unit of the Smithsonian Institution headquartered in Panama City, Panama, effective March 29. He joined the institute's scientific staff in 1989 and has served as deputy director since 2003.

As STRI's acting director, Bermingham oversees the world's premier tropical biology research institute, dedicated to increasing the understanding of the past, present and future of tropical biodiversity and its relevance to human welfare. The institute furthers the understanding of tropical nature and its importance to human welfare, trains students to conduct research in the tropics and promotes conservation by increasing public awareness of the beauty and importance of tropical ecosystems.

In an announcement to STRI staff, Acting Under Secretary for Science Ira Rubinoff said of Bermingham, "He is eminently qualified to lead STRI and to insure that the institute moves forward with its goals in education, research and conservation." Rubinoff is on leave from his position as STRI's director while he serves as the Smithsonian's acting Under Secretary for Science.

Bermingham's research has advanced knowledge of the movement of organisms across the land bridge formed as the Isthmus of Panama rose to connect North and South America 3 million years ago and sheds light on processes of contemporary biological invasions. His analyses of bird populations on the islands of the Lesser Antilles contribute to the understanding of extinction. He has been a strong proponent of cross-unit collaborations at the Smithsonian, encouraging the development of projects through the Smithsonian Marine Science Network and the Smithsonian Barcode of Life Initiative.

Bermingham earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Cornell University in 1977 and a doctorate degree in genetics from the University of Georgia in 1986.

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