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

Eldredge “Biff” Bermingham has been named the director of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama City, Panama, effective Sept. 28. Bermingham has been STRI’s acting director since March 2007. He joined the institute’s scientific staff in 1989 and has served as deputy director since 2003.

“Biff is a great choice as the director of STRI,” said Charles Alcock, acting Under Secretary for Science at the Smithsonian. “He is an accomplished scientist and leader who, I am sure, will make great strides in helping the institute further its goals in research, education and conservation.”

As STRI’s director, Bermingham, 55, 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.

Bermingham joined STRI’s scientific staff in 1989 where he established a new program in DNA-based molecular systematics and evolution and introduced a generation of young U.S. and Latin American scientists to molecular tools used to study tropical biodiversity. His laboratory has made principal contributions to the study of birds of the Lesser Antilles and freshwater fish of the Americas as model systems for understanding the evolutionary diversification of Neotropical flora and fauna.

Bermingham has published more than 135 peer-reviewed articles and edited the book “Tropical Rainforests: Past, Present and Future.” He earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Cornell University in 1977 and a doctoral degree in genetics from the University of Georgia in 1986.

Bermingham replaces STRI’s previous director, Ira Rubinoff, who is now STRI’s director emeritus and senior scientist.

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