

Media Release:

11.09.2007

Territory Entomologist Flies to Japan To Receive Award

Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA) entomologist Dr Michael Braby flies to Japan tomorrow to receive a prestigious award this week.

Each year the Entomological Society of Japan selects two papers published in its internationally peer reviewed journal *Entomological Science* as the "Best Paper Award of the Year", with Dr Braby being one such recipient in 2007.

"I had no idea journals even gave out awards for submitted papers so to have won this award came as a complete surprise," Dr Braby said.

"I submitted the paper more than a year ago, which explains why the Lepidoptera, the group to which butterflies and moths belong, are the second largest plant-feeding insect group after the beetles.

"There are two schools of thought and that is plants and Lepidoptera co-evolved together, or that the evolution of Lepidoptera followed that of plants.

"What I found was that butterflies in the family Pieridae (whites and yellows) evolved well after the evolution of their host plants and by successfully exploiting these plants through development of novel biochemical mechanisms as larvae, they have been able to diversify and expand in number over time in different environments.

"The reason why I submitted the paper was to document my findings and share my knowledge with other scientists through a reputable publication, so that knowledge can be advanced."

As part of Dr Braby's achievement, he will receive 50,000 Yen (AUD \$534) and give a 30-minute presentation concerning the contents of the paper at this week's annual general meeting of the Entomological Society of Japan, at Kobe University.

Dr Braby is currently involved in a number of projects within the Northern Territory, including the development of a national recovery plan to save the Gove Crow Butterfly, which involves working with the Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation and the Yirralka Laynhapuy Rangers on the Gove Peninsula in north-eastern Arnhem Land.

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Media Note – For more information contact Dr Michael Braby on 8995 5012

Issued: 11.30am Tuesday, 11 September 2007