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The role of dispersal constraints in the assembly of salt-marsh communities

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The role of dispersal constraints in the assembly of salt-marsh communities

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Esther Chang

1. Asserting that “most seeds travel short distances [for long-distance vectors]. . . is analogous to declaring that keys or contact lenses [in the dark] are typically lost near streetlights” (Greene & Calogeropoulos (2001) in *Dispersal Ecology* (eds. Bullock *et al.*) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
2. While most studies on seed dispersal focus on factors that make seeds move, the distribution of plant species may be more easily predicted by factors that make seeds stop (Levine & Murrell (2003) *Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 34: 549-574).
3. Extreme and/or stochastic events may have an influence on community structure even in environments under strong regulation by predictable gradients *e.g.* tidal inundation (Chapter four).
4. The effectiveness of dispersal agents should be considered in relation to other available vectors in order to be accurately evaluated (Chapter three).
5. The process of dispersal is composed of different stages: pick-up, transportation, deposition and retention. Failure of retention at a site means lack of successful dispersal to that site although many seeds may pass through (Chapters two, four and five).
6. One must consider the semantic implications of language used in describing dispersal of plants, animals and people. The terms exotic (or *allochtoon*) and native (or *autochtoon*) depend on the scale of perception.
7. Time and energy spent worrying about problems regarding residence permits posed by the IND (Department of Immigration and Naturalisation) amount to a significant loss of productive hours by non-EU international students at the University of Groningen.
8. Motherhood permanently alters the brain of female mammals in ways which are potentially beneficial to women in the workplace (*e.g.* enhanced spatial learning and memory, mitigation of fear and stress symptoms, better multi-tasking, mitigation of the effects of aging on cognition) (Kinsley & Lambert (2006) *Scientific American* 294: 72-79).
9. Popular opinion states that the relatively poor success of female researchers to their male counterparts is due to the pressures of family and children. However, studies show that female researchers with children are more productive than their childless female colleagues in the U.S., Finland and Norway (Wennerås & Wold (2000) *Nature* 408: 647). Another possible culprit is systematic discrimination (Wennerås & Wold (1997) *Nature* 387: 341-343, Olsson, G. (1999) *Nordisk Psykologi* 51: 59-76).
10. In accordance with stereotype, dogs bite postal delivery workers more often than predicted by chance alone *e.g.* 71.4 % of postal delivery workers in Taiwan bitten over a three-year period (Chen *et al.* (2000) *Chang Gung Medical Journal* 23: 277-283).