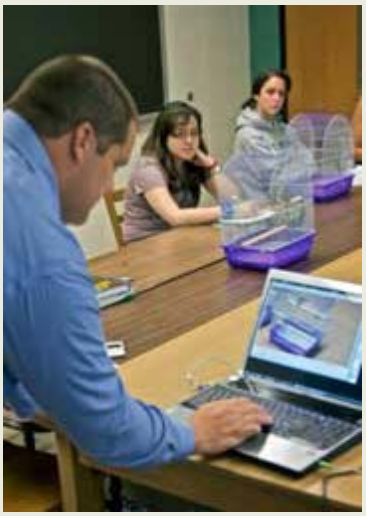
QUICK LINKS:
- Home - GO

- @St. Norbert July
- Education Power
- Last-Minute Transfer
- Deciphering Earth's Past
- **Animal Behavior**
- On-campus Weddings
- Issue Archive
- How to Subscribe

News for the online community of @ST. NORBERT



David Bailey and his Animal Behavior class studying communication and behaviors among zebra finches.

July 2009

Summer biology course tackles animal behavior

A five-week summer course currently making its debut offers hands-on wildlife research for biology majors – and it's the perfect time of year for students to observe the behavior of a variety of wildlife.

The summer session works well for piloting new courses like Animal Behavior, designed to give students in the organismal biology and biomedical sciences concentrations the opportunity to better understand the links between animal communication and behavior.

A small class size enables students to receive a higher level of individualized attention, and the research work is more hands-on than typically is possible. "I want them to employ the techniques that we've learned, and use them in transmitting that to their classmates," says course instructor **Dave Bailey** (Biology).

"I teach in biology, but my Ph.D. is in psychology," Bailey explains. "I did coursework that was neuroscience in nature, so this is going back to what I do. We're using behavior and biology, and exploring that particular interface."

Students are conducting field research on a range of species that literally includes the birds and the bees, and the specific behaviors and communications related to their mating patterns. Outside and in film study, students are able to observe predator behavior and avoidance behavior by potential prey, and learn how communication plays a role in both.

They will design their own study, heading out with video cameras and notebooks to collect data and present their findings to the class.

"An animal behavior course sounded very interesting to me because it will give me an insight into how animals react to and adapt in their environment," says **Tony Dionne '10**. "I was really attracted to this course because this is where I want my concentration to be: animal behavior and the ecological effects that populations can have."

An aviary filled with zebra finches in the John Minahan Science Building, partitioned off to separate the males from their female counterparts, offers a relatively controlled environment for study. Students are able to record

Office of Communications

Phone: (920) 403-3557
Fax: (920) 403-4010
E-mail:
communications@snc.edu

and digitize the male's courting song, and compare the communication and behaviors of different birds.

"We tend to toss it off as just birds singing, but it's really a complicated vocal communication system," Bailey says. "We're mainly looking at behavior and the development of it, and how it's transmitted from one to another."

24.208.59.11