

# Felisha (Faye) Romero

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## EDUCATION

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- 2021-Present **PhD Biology—Evolution, Ecology, Genetics, and Genomics**  
University of Rochester. *Rochester, NY*  
Supervisor: Dr. Nancy Chen
- 2016-2020 **BS Molecular Environmental Biology**  
University of California, Berkeley. *Berkeley, CA*  
Supervisor: Dr. Noah Whiteman

## PUBLICATIONS

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- 2025 Alexandre N.M.\*, **Romero, F.G.\***, English, S.G.\*, E. Grames, F. Garzón-Agudelo, K. Epperly, T. Barnes, D.R. Powers, A.E. Smith, Z. Migicovsky, L. Stein, S. Akalu, H. Sridhar, G. Montross, E. Collins, A. Rico-Guevara. Supplemental Feeding as a Driver of Population Expansion and Morphological Change in Anna's Hummingbirds. *Global Change Biology*, 31(5):e70237. DOI: 10.1111/gcb.70237. \*Equal contribution
- 2024 **Romero, F.G.**, F.E.G. Beaudry, E. Hovmand Warner, T.N. Nguyen, J.W. Fitzpatrick, N. Chen. A new high quality genome assembly for the threatened Florida Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*). *G3: Genes, Genomes, Genetics*, jkae232. DOI: 10.1093/g3journal/jkae232.
- 2023 Porter, C.K., **F.G. Romero**, D. Adams, R.C.K. Bowie, E. Riddell. Adaptive and non-adaptive convergent evolution in feather reflectance of Channel Islands songbirds. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 290:20231914. DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2023.1914.
- 2023 Mason, N.M., E.A. Riddell, **F.G. Romero**, C. Cicero, R.C.K. Bowie. Plumage balances camouflage and thermoregulation in horned larks (*Eremophila alpestris*). *The American Naturalist*, 201:2, E23-E40. DOI: 10.1086/722560.

## HONORS and AWARDS

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- 2025 \$3,500 Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund. *American Museum of Natural History*
- 2025 \$300 Open Scholarship Award. *University of Rochester*
- 2025 \$6,000 Robert K. Wayne Award in Evolutionary, Ecological, or Conservation Genomics. *American Genetics Association*
- 2024 \$2,500 Student Research Award. *American Ornithological Society*
- 2023 Presidential Membership Award. *Genetics Society of America*
- 2023 \$2,500 R. C. Lewontin Early Award. *Society for the Study of Evolution*
- 2023-2028 \$147,000 NSF Graduate Research Fellowship. *National Science Foundation*
- 2021-2024 \$6,000 Ernst Caspari Fellowship in Evolutionary, Developmental and Molecular Genetics. *University of Rochester*

- 2022 \$500 Graduate Student Travel Award. *University of Rochester*
- 2022 Student Membership Award. *American Ornithological Society*

## **PRESENTATIONS**

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### Invited seminars

- Dec 2025 **Romero, F.G.** "Dynamics of inbreeding depression and gene flow in a wild population of Florida Scrub-Jays." *Student Research Grant Seminar Series. American Ornithological Society* (oral, virtual)
- Dec 2023 **Romero, F.G.** "The genetic architecture of inbreeding depression in a wild population of Florida Scrub-Jays." *Graduate Research Excellence Grants Seminar Series. Society for the Study of Evolution* (oral, virtual)

### Contributed Conference Presentations

- June 2025 **Romero, F.G.**, J. Summers, J. Schmidt, D.N. Seidman, S. Barve, J.W. Fitzpatrick, N. Chen. "Dynamics of inbreeding depression and gene flow in a pedigreed wild population of Florida Scrub-Jays." *Evolution 2025. Athens, GA* (poster)
- April 2025 **Romero, F.G.**, J. Summers, D.N. Seidman, J. Schmidt, J.W. Fitzpatrick, S. Barve, N. Chen. "The genetics of inbreeding and immigration in a wild population of Florida Scrub-Jays." *Department of Biology E2G2 Seminar Series. University of Rochester, NY* (oral)
- Oct 2024 **Romero, F.G.**, J. Summers, D.N. Seidman, J. Schmidt, J.W. Fitzpatrick, N. Chen. "The genetic architecture of inbreeding depression in a wild population of Florida Scrub-Jays." \*Abstract-selected talk. *American Genetics Association 2024. Granlibakken, Tahoe, CA* (oral)
- April 2024 **Romero, F.G.**, E. Hovmand Warner, F.E.G. Beaudry, T.N. Nguyen, E.J. Cosgrove, A.G. Clark, R. Bowman, J.W. Fitzpatrick, N. Chen. "Comparative genomic analyses reveal variation in avian microchromosomes." *Department of Biology E2G2 Seminar Series. University of Rochester, NY* (oral)
- Aug 2023 **Romero, F.G.**, E. Hovmand Warner, F.E.G. Beaudry, T.N. Nguyen, E.J. Cosgrove, A.G. Clark, R. Bowman, J.W. Fitzpatrick, N. Chen. "Comparative genomic analyses reveal variation in avian microchromosomes." *Great Lakes Annual Meeting of Evolutionary Genomics 2023. Cornell University, NY* (poster)
- Aug 2023 **Romero, F.G.**, E. Hovmand Warner, F.E.G. Beaudry, T.N. Nguyen, E.J. Cosgrove, A.G. Clark, R. Bowman, J.W. Fitzpatrick, N. Chen. "Comparative genomic analyses reveal variation in avian microchromosomes." *American Ornithological Society & Society of Canadian Ornithologists 2023. London, Ontario, CA* (poster)
- Sept 2022 **Romero, F.G.**, S. Boutin, D.W. Coltman, B. Dantzer, J.E. Lane, A.G. McAdam, N. Chen. "Food supplementation and lifetime reproductive success in a wild population of squirrels." *Arts, Sciences, & Engineering Graduate Research Day. University of Rochester, NY* (oral)
- Aug 2022 **Romero, F.G.**, S. Boutin, D.W. Coltman, B. Dantzer, J.E. Lane, A.G. McAdam, N. Chen. "Food supplementation and lifetime reproductive success in a wild population of squirrels." *Great Lakes Annual Meeting of Evolutionary Genomics. Buffalo, NY* (oral)

- June 2022 **Romero, F.G.**, S. Boutin, D.W. Coltman, B. Dantzer, J.E. Lane, A.G. McAdam, N. Chen. "Food supplementation and lifetime reproductive success in a wild population of squirrels." *Evolution 2022. Cleveland, OH* (oral)
- May 2022 **Romero, F.G.** "Modeling the demographic history of two Solomon Island endemics." *Dept of Biology PhD Student Research Symposium. University of Rochester, NY* (oral)
- Feb 2022 **Romero, F.G.**, S. Boutin, D.W. Coltman, B. Dantzer, J.E. Lane, A.G. McAdam, N. Chen. "Food supplementation and lifetime reproductive success in a wild population of squirrels." *Dept of Biology PhD Student Research Symposium. University of Rochester, NY* (oral)
- Dec 2021 **Romero, F.G.**, S. Hamazaki, T. Zhou, K. Yehle, N. Samanta. "Comparison of thermoregulatory-associated genomic regions across six geographically unique populations of *D. melanogaster*." *Applied Genomics Poster Symposium. University of Rochester, NY* (poster)
- Nov 2021 **Romero, F.G.** "Comparison of *de novo* genome assembly methods using *D. melanogaster*." *Dept of Biology PhD Student Research Symposium. University of Rochester, NY* (oral)

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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- 2021-present **PhD Candidate. Supervisor: Dr. Nancy Chen. University of Rochester, NY**  
Investigating the genetic architecture and fitness consequences of inbreeding depression in the Florida Scrub-Jay using long-term pedigree and genetic data
- 2022 **Rotating PhD Student. Supervisor: Dr. Al Uy. University of Rochester, NY**  
Modeled the demographic history of two bird species endemic to the Solomon Islands in order to examine the dynamics of reproductive isolation and secondary contact
- 2021 **Rotating PhD Student. Supervisor: Dr. Amanda Larracuenta. University of Rochester, NY**  
Compared *de novo* genome assemblers to streamline a heterochromatin-enriched pipeline for repeat-rich region assembly of *Drosophila melanogaster* genomes
- 2018-2020 **Undergraduate Researcher. Supervisor: Dr. Noah Whiteman. University of California, Berkeley, CA**  
Explored the phenotypic consequences of the Anna's Hummingbird's range expansion into urban environments by measuring museum specimens and conducting statistical analyses
- 2017-2018 **Research & Preparation. Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. University of California, Berkeley, CA**
  - Compared thermal reflectance in bird feathers across island and mainland Californian populations
  - Responsible for dissecting and preparing specimens for the collections through the MVZ prep lab

## TEACHING

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- 2022 **Teaching Assistant. "Applied Population Biology", University of Rochester, NY**  
**Instructor: Dr. Nancy Chen**  
Assisted with laboratory exercises in landscape ecology and population genetics, supervised independent research projects

- 2022 **Teaching Assistant. “Computational Biology”, University of Rochester, NY**  
**Instructor: Dr. Justin Fay**  
 Led laboratory sections on computational analysis of genomes, gave lectures on the genetics of pedigrees, graded labs and exams
- 2020-2021 **Tutor. Wyzant Tutoring Company. Pleasanton, CA**
- Tutored high school and college students in biology and programming
  - Composed and executed high-quality individualized lessons, both for virtual and in-person instruction.

## MENTORSHIP

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- 2023-present **Undergraduates**  
*University of Rochester, NY*
- Conall Spaur (population genomic data analyses in Weddell seals, independent research)
  - Jenna Savino (comparative genomic data analyses in birds, DNA extraction and quantification, independent research)
  - Alexandra Gaston (comparative genomic data analyses in birds, independent research)
  - Eyvind Hovmand Warner (genomic data analyses in birds, independent research)

## LEADERSHIP and SERVICE

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- 2023-present **Founder & Graduate Student Representative. Office of Student Relations, Department of Biology. University of Rochester, NY**  
 Develop and execute resources, events, and lines of communication to increase undergraduate participation in biological research and department events
- 2024-2025 **Member. Multimedia Subcommittee, Early Career Leadership Program, Genetics Society of America.**  
 Research, interview, and produce episodes for the podcast “Genetics in Your World” to communicate current genetics research to a broad scientific audience
- 2022-2024 **Field Assistant. Braddock Bay Bird Observatory. Rochester, NY**
- Assist with mist-netting, handling live birds, and bird banding
  - Educate visitors to the banding station on research goals and the trapping process
- 2022-2023 **Founder & Member. Graduate Student Recruitment Committee. University of Rochester, NY**  
 Planned and executed events surrounding new graduate student recruitment, including interview week and orientation

## OUTREACH

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- 2023-present **Press Release Writer. American Society of Naturalists.**  
 Write press releases for forthcoming papers in the academic journal *The American Naturalist*
- 2022-2024 **STEM Professional. Letters to a Pre-Scientist.**  
 Exchange letters with middle and high school students from low-income schools in order to demystify STEM career pathways and inspire students to pursue a future in STEM
- 2023-2024 **Co-instructor. Upward Bound. University of Rochester, NY**

Created and co-led a hands-on workshop introducing the genetics of evolution to low-income/first-generation high school students from Rochester City School District.

## **POPULAR SCIENCE PUBLICATIONS & MEDIA**

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- 2026 *How humans have “shaped” the Anna’s Hummingbird*. **Public seminar** for the Los Angeles Birder’s Club Webinar series. ([link](#))
- 2026 *Bridging Disciplines: How a Theory Meant to Aid in Saving Plant and Animal Species is Helping Scientists Reconsider an Evolutionary Approach to Cancer Treatment — A Conversation with Srishti Patil and Dr. Robert Noble*. **Podcast episode** for GSA’s “Genetics in Your World” podcast (researcher). ([link](#))
- 2025 *Age Is Just A Number: Mapping Longevity in Diversity Outbred Mice - A Conversation with Dr. Gary Churchill*. **Podcast episode** for GSA’s “Genetics in Your World” podcast (interviewer, researcher, graphic editor). ([link](#))
- 2025 *Creating a personal website*. **Newsletter article** for the GSA’s Early Career Leadership Program weekly newsletter.
- 2025 *Keep Learning in Your Downtime: Media Recommendations for Scientists*. **Newsletter article** for the GSA’s Early Career Leadership Program weekly newsletter.
- 2025 *To breed or not to breed: explaining partial migration in shorebirds*. **Press release** for the American Society of Naturalists’ “Forthcoming papers” blog. ([link](#))
- 2025 *Breeding Better Berries: Inbreeding and Hybrid Vigor in Strawberries – A Conversation with Dr. Steven J. Knapp*. **Podcast episode** for GSA’s “Genetics in Your World” podcast (interviewer, researcher, graphic editor). ([link](#))
- 2024 *Parasite party: how inbreeding begets a complex life cycle*. **Press release** for the American Society of Naturalists’ “Forthcoming papers” blog. ([link](#))
- 2024 *Social Familiarity and Spatially Variable Environments Independently Determine Reproductive Fitness in a Wild Bird*. **Press release** for the American Society of Naturalists’ “Forthcoming papers” blog. ([link](#))

## **MEDIA COVERAGE**

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- 2025 Coverage of Alexandre, Romero, & English et al., *Global Change Biology*, 2025:
- “Backyard Feeders Are Reshaping Hummingbirds”. **The Wildlife Society**.
  - “The rise of the Anthropocene can be tracked in hummingbirds’ beaks”. **Anthropocene Magazine**.
  - “Hummingbirds Rapidly Evolved Longer Beaks to Slurp More Nectar from Yard Feeders, New Study Suggests”. **Audubon**.
  - “Hummingbirds Are Evolving to Adapt to Life With Humans”. **Wired**.
  - “California’s Hummingbirds Have Changed Their Beaks in Response to Backyard Feeders, Study Finds”. **Smithsonian Magazine**.
  - “Berkeley research finds feeders literally reshaped Calif. hummingbirds”. **SFGATE**.
  - “Backyard feeders changed the shape of hummingbird beaks, scientists say”. **National Public Radio (NPR)**.
  - “California hummingbird beaks transformed by feeders: ‘more tapered and longer’”. **The Guardian**.
  - “Bird feeders have caused a dramatic evolution of California hummingbirds”. **News from Science**.

2025 **“Faye Romero”**. Featured scientist on *The Scientist Spotlights Initiative* website.

2023 **“Filipinas in STEM: Faye Romero.”** Written interview by Swastika Issar through the Science Corps Education & Research Fellowship and the Central Visayan Institute Foundation, Bohol, Philippines.

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

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Genetics Society of America  
American Genetic Association  
American Society of Naturalists  
Society for the Study of Evolution  
American Ornithological Society

## **SKILLS**

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### **Programming languages, software**

R, Bash, cloud computing (AWS), Git, ImageJ, Adobe Photoshop/Illustrator, Microsoft Office Suite

### **Technical**

Variant calling from next-generation sequencing (NGS) data, genotype imputation, population genomic analysis (incl. with pedigree data and large-scale population data), inter/intraspecies comparative genomic analysis, *de novo* genome assembly

### **Laboratory**

DNA extraction (tube and plate using Qiagen DNeasy), DNA quantification (Qubit, NanoDrop), RNA purification, spectroradiometer, museum specimen preparation and database usage, database management