



FISC

FOREST INVASION  
SYNTHESIS CENTRE, PRAGUE

# NEWSLETTER

Launch Issue | May 2026



*Invasions cross borders, so does science*

**Forest Invasion Synthesis Centre, Prague (FISC)**, based at the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague | Applying the synthesis centre concept to the ecology and socioeconomics of biological invasions in forests | Bringing together international researchers studying biological invasions | Working through collaborative synthesis and Working Groups

- **Andrew Liebhold**  
*Chief Scientist*

“I am excited about the potential for FISC to provide a venue for assembling interdisciplinary groups of scientists and stakeholders to collaborate on the problem of biological invasions, as there are no simple solutions to it.”



- **Tomáš Hlásny**  
*Principal Investigator*

“Future risks will be higher and more complex, and disturbance dynamics will change. Resilience, grounded in diversity, remains key to facing the unknown.”



## ● 13 Core Team Members

FISC brings together a diverse core team of researchers spanning multiple nationalities, career stages, and areas of expertise in biological invasions.



## ● 4 Current Working Groups

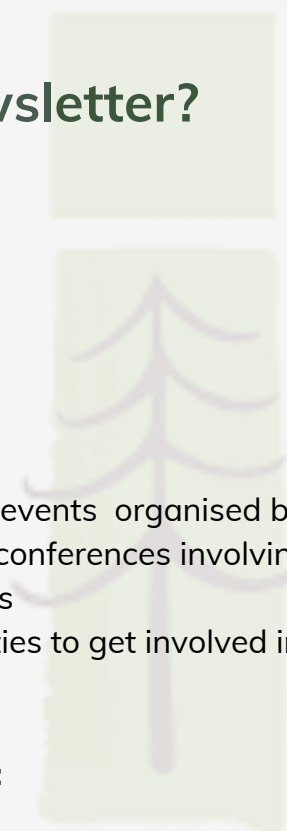
1. Transient impacts of non-native species (led by D. Pureswaran)
2. Tree growth across native and non-native ranges (led by M. Nuñez).
3. Insects on Trees (led by M. J. Klapwijk)
4. The Dual Role of Hybridization in Biological Invasions (led by J. Andersen, K. Berchová, L. Meyerson)

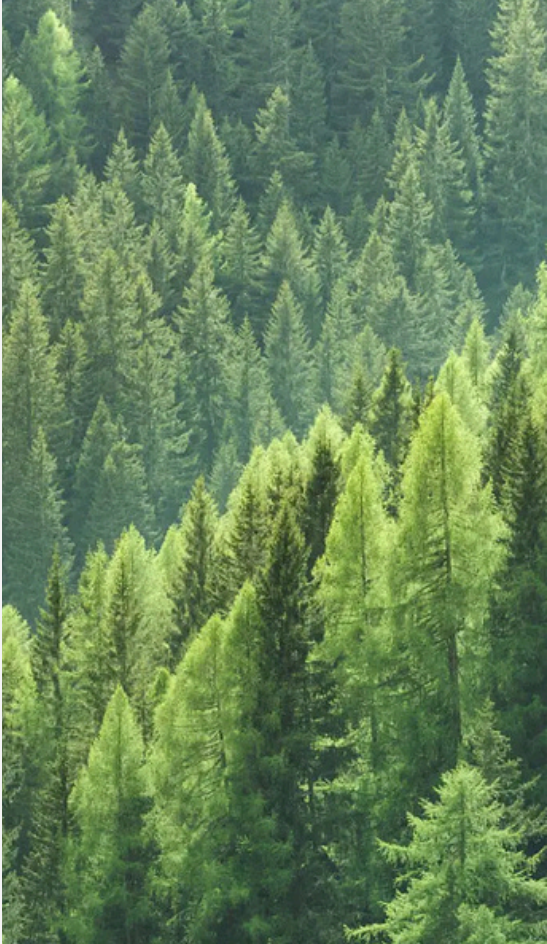
## What to expect from our newsletter?

- Selected research highlights
- Working Group outputs
- Insights into ongoing work and developments within FISC
- Key findings and emerging directions in biological invasions

- Upcoming events organised by FISC
- Talks and conferences involving FISC researchers
- Opportunities to get involved in FISC activities

**Frequency:**  
Quarterly





## ● Research Highlights

A new study by Aditya Ganesh (FISC): “Risk of co-evolved pest damage to non-native Douglas-fir plantations” has been published in Forest Ecology and Management.

Co-authored with Deepa Pureswaran and Andrew Liebhold. The study shows that although suitable conditions for pest establishment exist, the risk of large-scale damage remains low under current climates.

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## ● Other Research Outputs

Optimal strategies for using host plant distributions to slow the spread of plant pests: **A new study by A. Liebhold and A. Lampert in Journal of Applied Ecology.**

When efforts to prevent the establishment of invasive species fail and eradication is not possible, containment becomes necessary to slow or stop the spread of established invaders.

A key question, therefore, is how to allocate treatments across space and time in a cost-effective way. **What are the optimal strategies?**

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Aditya Ganesh

 [OTHER OUTPUTS](#)



## ● Inside FISC

The Working Group “Transient Impacts of Non-native Species” (led by Deepa Pureswaran) held its first in-person meeting.

The WG explores why some non-native species remain quiescent for long periods before becoming damaging, and why other species initially cause impacts before transitioning to quiescence.



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## Who Is Involved:

- **Deepa Pureswaran** (Canadian Forest Service, Canada)
- **Peter Biedermann** (University of Freiburg, Germany)
- **Ana Novoa** (Interdisciplinary Research in Invasion Science, Spain)
- **Iva Franic** (WSL, Switzerland)
- **Jan Pergl** (IBOT, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic)
- **Alberto Santini** (National Research Council of Italy, Italy)
- **Michelle Cleary** (SLU, Sweden)
- **Laura Meyerson** (FISC, Czech Republic)
- **Andrew Liebhold** (FISC, Czech Republic)
- **Edward Whitney** (FISC, Czech Republic)





## ● FISC at Conferences and Events: Highlights

EPPO Conference 21–23 April: “Safeguarding Forests in Europe: Emerging Risks of *Agrilus* Wood Borer”. The meeting addressed the growing threats posed by tree-killing *Agrilus* species, including the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), as well as other high-risk pests affecting European forests. **Andrew Liebhold** delivered the keynote lecture “European trees on the precipice of their demise?”

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## ● Other Activities

### Workshop “Alien Species in Iceland”

The workshop was organised by Laura A. Meyerson, a member of the FISC core team.

More than 80 participants from Iceland and abroad gathered on 16–17 March in Hafnarfjörður.

While focused on Iceland, the discussions reflect broader challenges in invasion science, particularly the need to better understand long-term and delayed impacts of non-native species and to prevent introductions before they occur.

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### FISC Talks Launch

We have launched FISC Talks, an occasional lecture series featuring invited speakers, with recordings made available online.

We were pleased to welcome **Peter Biedermann** (University of Freiburg) as our first speaker, presenting “Fungal Symbioses in Bark and Ambrosia Beetles.”

 [WATCH](#)



## ● Get Involved: New Call for Proposals Is Open

FISC hosts working groups that collaborate on synthesis-based scientific or policy projects, utilizing existing results, data, or models.

Proposals can be submitted by any individual (or team) that wishes to organize and lead a working group focusing on a specific topic.

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## Deadlines

- Deadline for submitting pre-proposals: 1 July 2026
- Preliminary approval of pre-proposals by FISC: 1 August 2026
- Final approval of proposals: 1 September 2026



## ● Potential Research Topics

FISC's possible focus areas for new working groups cover many aspects of forest invasions.

- Ecological and Biological Dimensions
- Data, Synthesis and Knowledge Gaps
- Socio-economic and Policy Dimensions
- Management, Technology and Innovation

 [EXPLORE](#)

# FISC Upcoming

## ● May

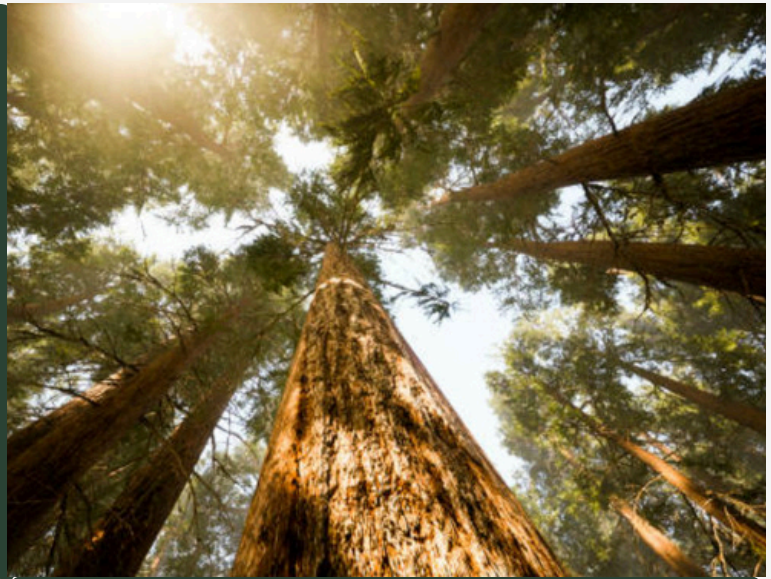
**12 & 14:** May A. Liebhold will give a series of lectures, “How Insects and Diseases Shape the Forests Around Us,” at the Academy for Lifelong Learning in Bellingham, Washington.

**15 May:** FISC Talks: Sigrid Netherer on bark beetles, fungi, and stressed trees. Recording will be available online.

**22 May:** Swiss-Czech Cooperation Launch. Projects on biodiversity, invasive species, and sustainable forest management.

**25-28 May:** The Working Group “Determinants of Tree Growth in Native and Non-native Ranges: Global Patterns and Mechanisms,” led by Martin Nuñez, will hold its first in-person meeting.

**29 May:** FISC Talks: Martin Nuñez



## ● June

FISC Advisory Board meeting

**Invasion species week:** Public outreach event in the Czech Republic, linked to the [Alien CSI Bioblitz](#) and focused on raising awareness of biological invasions.

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