INVASIVE ARGENTINE ANTS TENDING SCALE INSECTS ON CITRUS TREES IN CALIFORNIA

By applying an ecological niche modeling approach, our study examines the role of niche similarities and differences in predicting the geographic potential of a highly successful invasive species. Native to South America, Argentine ants (*Linepithema humile*) are now established worldwide, causing severe ecological and economic impacts (as seen on the photographs, where Argentine ants tend scale insects on citrus trees in California). In spite of some geographic variations between regions, our model results suggest that ecological niche characteristics of the Argentine ant do not differ markedly between native and invaded ranges at the spatial and temporal scale of our analysis. Photographs by Alexander L. Wild.

The photographs are associated with the article by Núria Roura-Pascual, Andrew V. Suarez, Kristina McNyset, Crisanto Gómez, Pere Pons, Yoshifumi Touyama, Alexander L. Wild, Ferran Gascon, and A. Townsend Peterson, “Niche differentiation and fine-scale projections for Argentine ants based on remotely sensed data,” tentatively scheduled to appear in *Ecological Applications* 16(5), October 2006.