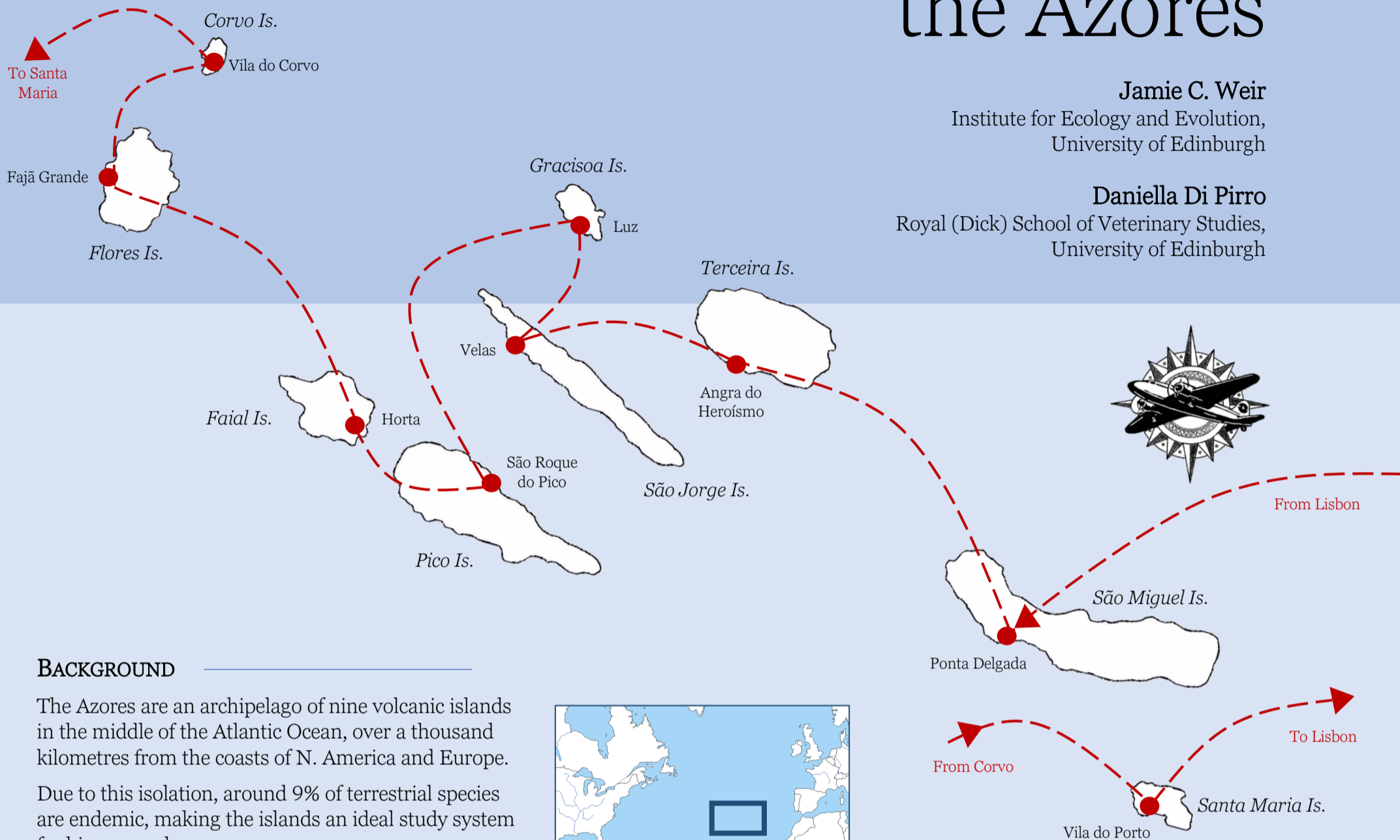


A Survey of the Lepidoptera of the Azores



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BACKGROUND

The Azores are an archipelago of nine volcanic islands in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, over a thousand kilometres from the coasts of N. America and Europe.

Due to this isolation, around 9% of terrestrial species are endemic, making the islands an ideal study system for biogeography.

Despite extensive human settlement and activity, many native and endemic taxa remain under-studied.



AIMS AND METHODS

To **inform conservation efforts** and provide a basis for **future studies of island biogeography**, this expedition aimed to increase our knowledge of the distribution, ecology, and natural history of the Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) of the Azores.

35 (23%) of the 150 species of Lepidoptera occurring in the Azores are endemic.

Over a period of seven weeks (Aug-Oct 2023) we visited each of the islands in the archipelago, collecting diurnal species on daytime surveys and systematically sampling nocturnal species using UV light traps.

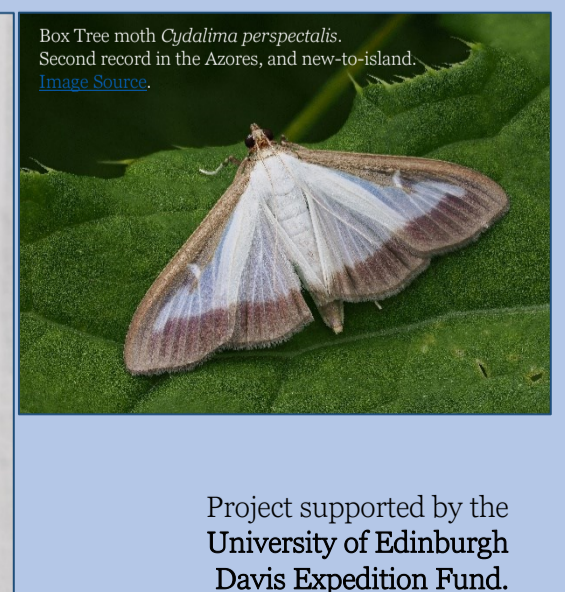


RESULTS

We gathered over 2,500 records of Lepidoptera and hundreds of records of other invertebrate, plant, and animal species.

In addition to voucher specimens for identification, genetic barcoding, and morphological analysis, JW collated extensive ecological meta-data on the Lepidoptera collected.

Some 6% of specimens/records sorted to date are 'new-to-island' records, extending our knowledge of the distribution of native and invasive Lepidopteran taxa.



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