University of Cyprus
Department of Biological Sciences

POSTGRADUATE SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENT

Seminar Series 2022-2023

Dr. Sonja Vernes

**Institute of Behavioural and Neural Sciences
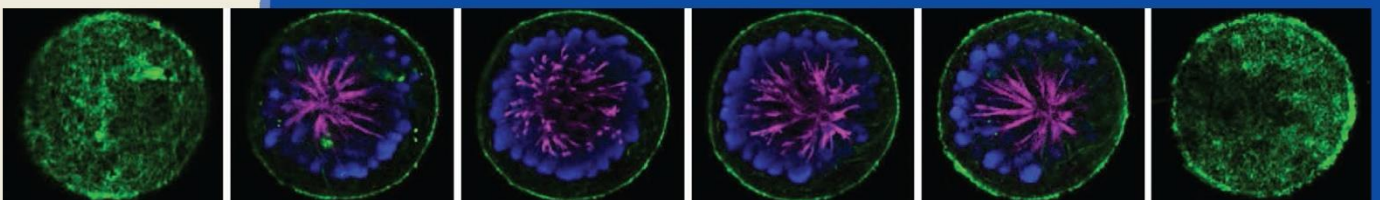School of Biology
Univ. of St Andrews
Scotland, UK**

"Inside the bat cave: using bats to shed light on vocal learning and human speech evolution"

**Wednesday,
19 October 2022
at 5:00 pm**

in Building CTF 01, Room 108

The seminar is open to the public.

The comparative approach can provide insight into the evolution of speech, language, and social communication by studying relevant traits in animal systems. Bats are emerging as a model system with great potential to shed light on these processes given their learned vocalisations, close social interactions, and mammalian physiology. Bats are highly social animals that have developed sophisticated vocal and auditory systems for navigation and communication. Furthermore, their small size, amenability to manipulation, and the rich history of studying the neuroethological of echolocation in bats, makes them an excellent system to model the biology underlying vocal learning behaviour. I will discuss current evidence for vocal learning in bats and highlight approaches we are using to understand the neurobiological and genetic mechanisms underlying this complex behaviour. This work aims to advance our understanding of the biological encoding of learned vocal communication in mammals and ultimately shed light on the evolution of speech and spoken communication.