Routes to hybrid speciation in *Heliconius* butterflies

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Heliconius butterflies have bright wing patterns used in signalling to predators and to potential mates. Diversification of these wing patterns is directly implicated in speciation, and they have been cited as an example of a 'magic trait' that can lead to rapid speciation under ecological selection. Hybrid patterns are common in the wild, and may occasionally become established as novel lineages. Here I describe recent work on a hybrid zone in Ecuador between two races of *Heliconius erato*, where we have shown that a hybrid form has become abundant in the centre of the hybrid zone, potentially representing an incipient hybrid species. I also describe results showing that linkage of mate preference and wing patterning genes is a common phenomenon. Such linkage could greatly facilitate the establishment of hybrid species, as novel traits (wing patterns) and preferences could be established together.