

Alma Solis was born and grew up in south Texas where she attended Texas Southmost College in Brownsville and developed a fascination with biology. She then went to the University of Texas at Austin where she majored in Science Education and continued on for a Master's degree in Biological Sciences. For her thesis research she studied lepidopteran leaf miners feeding on deciduous trees in a cloud forest in northeastern Mexico and expanded her study to include light-caught Lepidoptera. Although she had an early interest in geometrids from her fieldwork in Mexico, she launched into pyraloids for her dissertation research at the University of Maryland at College Park.

Alma is currently a Research Scientist in the Systematic Entomology Laboratory, Agriculture Research Service, USDA, and Curator of the Pyraloidea, Pterophoridae, Thyrididae, and Hyblaeidae at the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. She conducts systematic research on pyraloids that are agricultural pests, stored product pests, invasive species, aquatic plant feeders, and are used for the control of noxious weeds. She is a world authority on the Pyraloidea, or snout moths, and has been invited to teach workshops in the United States and internationally. She has published more than 100 research papers and book chapters on the higher-level classification of Pyraloidea and taxonomic identity of economically important pyraloids. She has conducted fieldwork and research in major museums in the United States, as well as throughout Latin America and in Asia. For 30 years, she has been collaborating on a project with D. Janzen and W. Hallwachs in Costa Rica to document Neotropical pyraloid diversity using morphology, larval habits, and DNA barcoding.

Alma was Research Leader of the Systematic Entomology Laboratory for ten years, a lab composed of eminent scientists that conduct systematic research on economically important arthropods. She is on various scientific and editorial boards and has been President of the Systematics, Evolution and Biodiversity Section of the Entomological Society of America, Entomological Society of Washington, and the Washington Biologists' Field Club. She is a co-founder and is currently editor of the Pyraloid Planet Newsletter. She has been married to Jason P. W. Hall, a riodinid butterfly specialist, since 2003. An NPR interview with the couple entitled "Rare Specimens: An Unusual Match-Up in Entomology" aired in 2012 to highlight their butterfly garden in Silver Spring, Maryland.