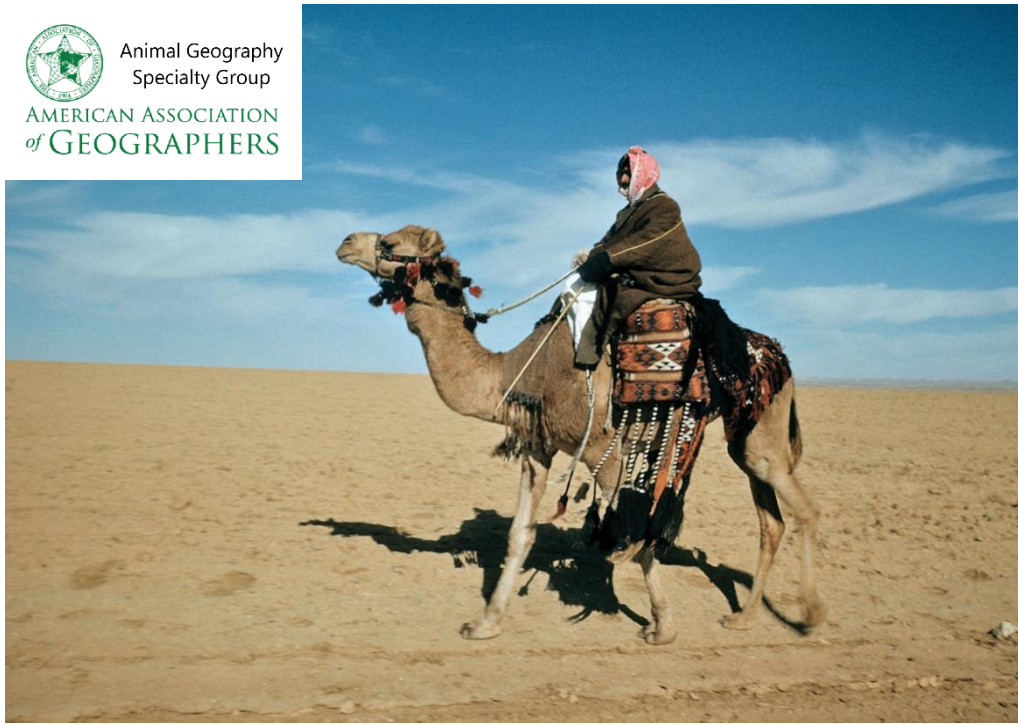




Animal Geography
Specialty Group

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
of GEOGRAPHERS



Animal Geography News

Research, Conference, Publication

April 2020

Letter from the Chair

Hello Animal Geographers,

I am pleased to introduce our eleventh annual Animal Geography Specialty Group newsletter. It has been a pleasure to serve as your chair over the past year.

Unfortunately, 2020 has turned out to be a year without precedent in living memory. The COVID-19 pandemic had indelibly marked each of our lives in these last few weeks, impacting people in ways we could scarcely imagine in 2019.

As social distancing becomes the new normal for the time being, the in-person AAG annual meeting has been cancelled, as you all no doubt know. As a result, we have, with heavy hearts, decided to postpone both our keynote address by Heidi Nast and our Graduate Student Paper Competition until the Seattle AAG in 2021. However, several sessions of interest to animal geographers will be going ahead as the AAG switches to virtual presentations this year. Please make sure to check the AAG Session Gallery to see which sessions are available. The AAG has done amazing work in a very short time to make this happen; I know we are all grateful for their efforts.

I also want to extend a warm welcome to our recently elected Board members. Joining us for the 2020-2022 term are Jason K. Blackburn, Ingrid Nelson, Angie Parker, and Jennifer L. Rahn. Courtney Berne and Carley MacKay are AnGSG's new Graduate Student Officers for 2020-2021. And John-Henry Pitas will be transitioning into the role of AnGSG Communications Officer. You will find more information about each of them in this newsletter.

Thanks also to our outgoing Board members, who have committed so much time and energy to our Specialty Group, including Kalli Doubleday, Rebecca Ellis, Anita Hagy-Ferguson, Jacqueline Johnston, and Heather Rosenfeld. Special recognition to one of our outgoing GSOs, Amanda Suzzi, who so expertly put together this newsletter, even as the information contained within had to shift and change with the recent upheaval.

Please take good care of yourself and your communities (human and nonhuman) over the coming months. I look forward to seeing you in Seattle.

Stephanie Rutherford
AnGSG Chair



Business Meeting

We hope you will join us for our virtual business meeting. I would encourage as many of you to join as possible at 2:30pm EST on April 8th at

<https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/432392705>



Annual Social/Mentoring Event

We also hope to enjoy your company and discuss animal geography related experiences and advice over coffee and tea while social distancing on Tuesday April 7, 1:30 pm EST at <https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/830122949>

Meet the 2020 AnGSG Board



Stephanie Rutherford, Chair

Associate Professor in the School of the Environment at Trent University in Canada. Her interdisciplinary work focuses on environmental humanities, politics, and animal studies. She is the author/co-editor of three books, the most recent on the history of local wolves.



Jason K. Blackburn

Associate Professor of Geography and a principal investigator in the Emerging Pathogens Institute and the director of the Spatial Epidemiology and Ecology Research Laboratory (SEER Lab) at the Univ of FL. His research focuses on the ecology and spatio-temporal patterns of zoonotic diseases.



Jennifer L. Rahn

Associate professor at Samford University in Alabama. She is a native of the great state of New Jersey and has lived and taught courses in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Florida, and Texas. Her research specialty is coastal geomorphology (especially in the Caribbean) and she also is skilled in GIS and cartography.



Shari Wilcox, Secretary Treasurer

Associate Director for the Center for Culture, History, and Environment at the Univ of Wisconsin -Madison. She has been a member of the ANGSG since its founding. Her current research considers the human and wildlife populations at the U.S.-Mexico border.



Ingrid Nelson

Assistant Professor, Department of Geography and the Environmental Program at Univ of Vermont. Ingrid's research focuses on the political ecologies of changing land and other natural resource use and environmental activism in rural areas, specifically in Mozambique.



Courtney Berne, Graduate student

PhD Student in the Geography and Urban Studies Department at Temple University. Her research focuses on human-equine relationships, specifically within urban environments as they pertain to racialized mobilities, bodily agencies, and redefinitions of spatial sovereignty.



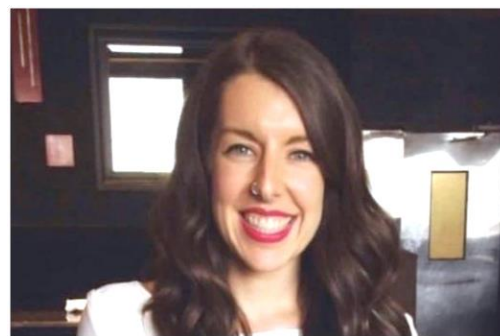
John-Henry Pitas, Communication

Critical human geographer interested in waste, environmental justice, and urban politics. John-Henry is currently a PhD student at the University of Maryland and Adjunct Faculty at Coppin State University.



Angela Dawn Parker

2016 Concordia University graduate (Montreal, Canada) with a masters degree from the Department of Geography, Urban & Environmental Studies. Her research focused on human-animal (non-human) interactions within specific spaces, particularly farm animal sanctuaries.



Carley MacKay, Graduate student

Doctoral student in the Department of Geography at York University. Her research interests include human-animal relationality, animal subjectivity, animal agriculture, food politics, and animal geographies.

New Publications, Awards, and Honors

Yamini Narayanan and Katie Gillespie co-edited the newly published special issue of the Journal of Intercultural Studies on "[Animal Nationalisms: Multispecies Cultural Politics, Race, and the \(Un\)making of the Settler Nation-State](#)". The special issue has two mandates. One, they explore why and how animals continue to be foundational to cultures of nationalism and racial demarcation in settler colonies. Two, they re-imagine how animals may feature in more 'inclusive nationalisms' or 'just nationalisms' that attend to difference within and across species.

Connie Johnston (Professional Lecturer, DePaul University) has a chapter in the forthcoming book, *Climate Change Ethics and the Non-Human World* (Routledge), edited by Brian Henning and Zack Walsh. Connie's chapter is titled "Gut check: Imagining a posthuman 'climate'". For its analysis, the chapter utilizes two entry points from recent research related to intestinal microbes: first, that the make-up and number of these microbes in some species are being affected by climate change and, second, that human gut flora affects not only

our overall health, but possibly our personalities and cognition as well. These emerging findings can pose several ontological challenges to ideas of "the human" and are explored through post-humanist and assemblage theories lenses. The chapter argues that a starting point for challenging the centrality of the human in climate change ethics is to first disrupt the idea of the singular human.

In collaboration with the National Vegetarian Museum, Connie Johnston received a 2018-2019 grant from Illinois Humanities for the creation of a story map titled "Illinois Role in US Vegetarian History". The map was completed in November 2019 and "launched" with a presentation and reception at Native Foods in Chicago. In addition to Connie, the map was the result of the work of Kay Stepkin (founder and president of the Museum), Rasa Whittaker (DePaul Geography'19), and Maddy Robertson (DePaul Environmental Studies '19) and [can be found here](#).

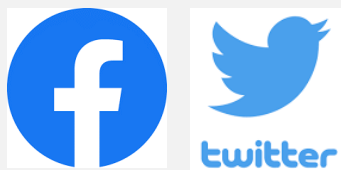
Jacquelyn J Johnston's first article was published in 2019. In this article, "[Incongruous killing: cats, nonhuman resistance, and precarious life beyond biopolitical techniques of making-live](#)", Jacquelyn explores a case of cats being killed by gassing to trace the underexplored consequences of 'nuisance wildlife' removal laws in the 'no kill' era of TNR-only programs in South Florida. The process of writing this paper brought her into conversation with legislators and attorneys, and these discussions are inspiring interest in rewriting some laws, policies, and ordinances to address the legal loopholes described in the paper – loopholes that make gassing cats legal for wildlife trappers in a state where gassing cats is illegal for animal shelters.

WANT TO BE FEATURED HERE?

If you'd like your recent publication information included in future newsletters, please contact your graduate student board members.

2020 GRADUATE STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS
Courtney Berne, Carley MacKay

STAY CONNECTED WITH ANSGG



[AnSGG Google Group](#)

The Google Group is the real-time-communication medium of the Animal Geography Specialty Group. Through it, members can debate ideas, exchange news, organize paper sessions, post calls for papers, and request information from colleagues.

Have your messages sent by email via angsg@googlegroups.com and/or log in directly to the Google Group and click "New Topic" to send a message.

Animal Geography Bibliography

As the field of animal geography continues to grow it is becoming more and more difficult to keep up with new publications. This is a particularly pressing problem given the interdisciplinary nature of the field. A few years ago, our board worked extensively to develop an animal geography bibliography as a service to our field.

There are already 1,191 items!

You can view the bibliography [HERE](#) (<http://bit.ly/AnSGGZotero>) to conduct searches or see what resources have been assembled under various subjects, including "Conservation", "Ethics", "Livestock/ meat", "Power/politics" and "Wildlife", among many others.

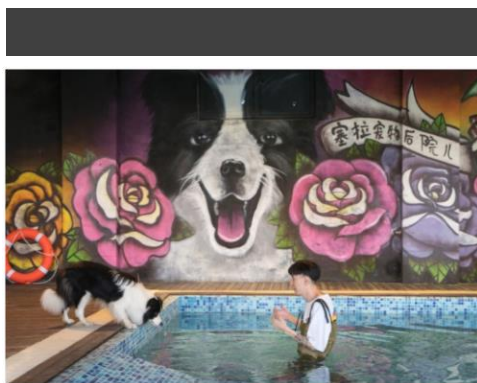
As the bibliography grows and matures it is hoped that it will move from focusing on works that scholars have found particularly productive towards a fuller coverage of the field.

Do you have contributions?

You're highly encouraged to add new entries! If you'd like to give it a go, let Shari know and you can be added to the group. [Contact](#) Shari Wilcox to be added as an editor.

Archives

The previous system, with over 1,100 entries, generously created by Suzi Wiseman in 2011, was through RefWorks; however, it did not easily allow group members to add their own citations. This system can still be accessed [HERE](#) (<http://bit.ly/AnSGGRefWorks>).



The geopolitical economy of human-canine life in China

Between 1983 and 1993, dogs were banned in China because of the tens of thousands of deaths caused by rabies, and before that, chairman Mao Zedong's Red Guards slaughtered pets, regarded as a bourgeois luxury, during the ideological tumult of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76).



FAST FACTS

Legislation has been gradually relaxed in the past few years, and there has been a surge in pet ownership in China as the country gets richer.

180

There are an estimated 180 million dogs nationwide.

220

There are an estimated 220 million cats nationwide.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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AnGSG Plenary 2020: postponed

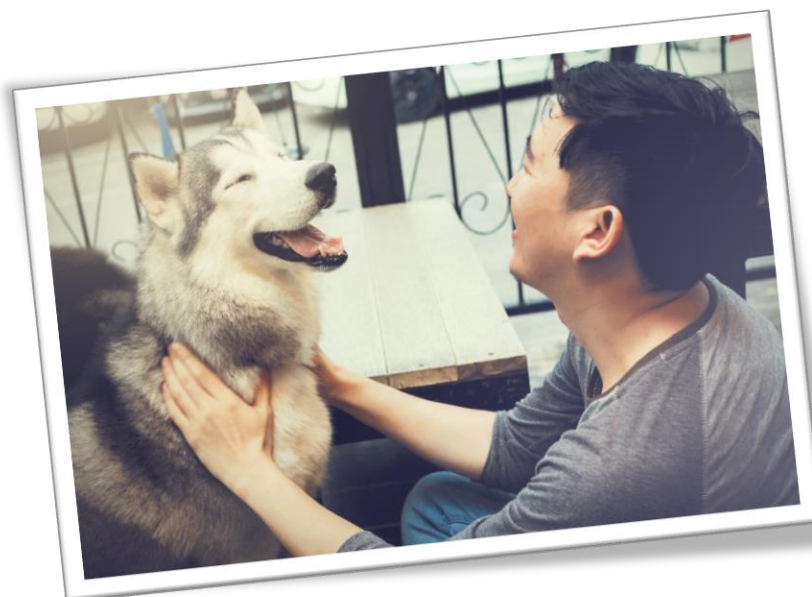
Next year, we are bringing Dr. Heidi Nast from the Department of International Studies at DePaul University to give a talk entitled, "The geopolitical economy of human-canine life in China, circa 1860 to 2000". Her work examines the geopolitical economy in relation to fertility and reproduction; critical social theory in relation to sex, race, post-humanism, the post-Anthropocene, animal-human relations, and pet studies.

Nast is the author of *For the love of life: Coal mining and pit bull fighting in early 19th-century Britain*, and *Pit bulls, slavery, and whiteness in the mid-to late-nineteenth-century US: geographical trajectories; primary sources in the 2015 book Critical animal geographies*. She has published widely across disciplines and is currently working on a three-volume work, *Pet-i-filia: Love and Labor in Contemporary Capitalism*, part of the series from the University of Georgia, "Geographies of Justice and Social Transformation."

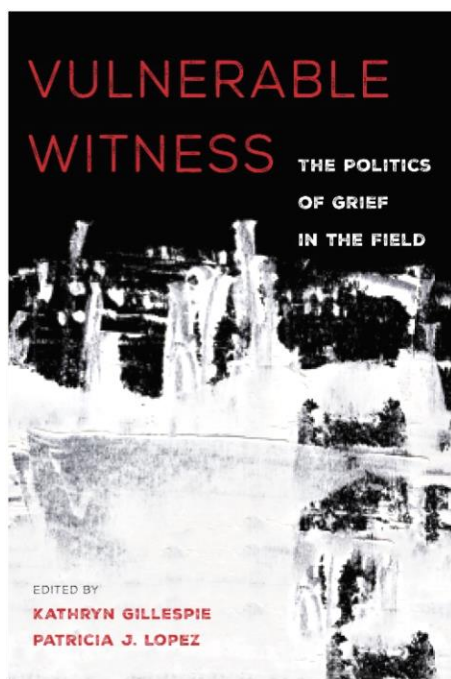
Deng's dogs: geographies of the commodity dog love in neoliberal times.

This keynote paper argues for a rethinking of the trajectory of animal geographies, as it relates to those animals we call pets. A recent and prolific strain in the subdiscipline has focused on the micropolitics of animal love, emphasizing the plays of power and agency between pet owner (companion, guardian) and dog. This has been a generative field of study but may also have

worked to obscure the ways in which pet love is inimically tied to, and constitutive of, human systems of oppression. Using the rise of pet ownership in China to illustrate these points, this paper represents a call to action for animal geographers to consider the geopolitical economy and cultural politics of pet ownership. By tracing the recent history of dogs in China—from the opening of China to foreign direct investment in the late 1970s to the cultivation of commodity dog markets for China's new elites—this paper shows how pet dog markets disappear inequalities through fetishistic, pleasurable diversion. Such diversion makes it impossible to see how China's myriad international pet expos, competitive grooming competitions, and domestic and international dog shows as integral to state-sponsored planetary hyper-exploitation, the territorialized disappearance of the Uighurs, the organ mining of the Falun Gong, or the reproductive brutalities of the one child policy. In mapping this geopolitical economic terrain, I put forward a larger argument: that China sheds light on pet dog-loving nations everywhere, where collectively hundreds of millions of persons spontaneously form networks to: advocate on behalf of homeless and abused pet dogs; organize pet dog fashion shows with some proceeds to go to dog-related charities; and ensure that pet dogs have passports and visas, too. This, while their states work alongside elite private interests to dissolve the public good and wreak profit from life's dispossession, hyper-exploitation, and worse. Deng's dogs point to the relational and ethical work that living non-epistemically requires.



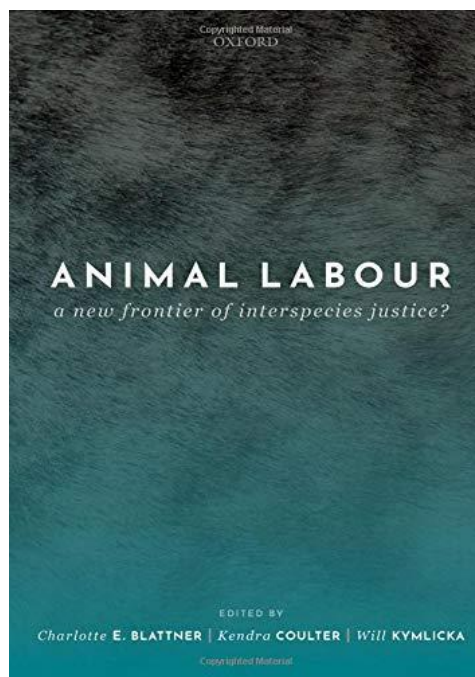
New Books



Vulnerable Witness: The Politics of Grief in the Field

Edited by Kathryn Gillespie and Patricia J. Lopez

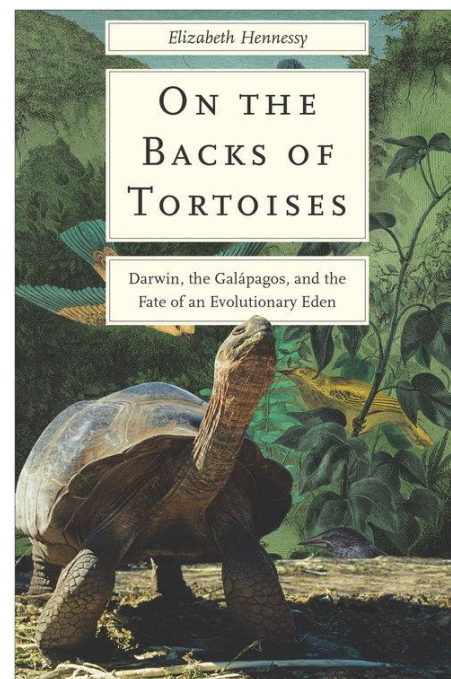
Scholars and practitioners who witness violence and loss in human, animal, and ecological contexts are expected to have no emotional connection to the subjects they study. Yet is this possible? Following feminist traditions, *Vulnerable Witness* centers the researcher and challenges readers to reflect on how grieving is part of the research process and, by extension, is a political act. Through thirteen reflective essays the book theorizes the role of grief in the doing of research—from methodological choices, fieldwork and analysis, engagement with individuals, and places of study to the way scholars write and talk about their subjects. Combining personal stories from early career scholars, advocates, and senior faculty, the book shares a breadth of emotional engagement at various career stages and explores the transformative possibilities that emerge from being enmeshed with one's own research.



Animal Labour: A New Frontier of Interspecies Justice?

Edited by Charlotte E. Blattner, Kendra Coulter, and Will Kymlicka

Is animal labor inherently oppressive, or can work be a source of meaning, solidarity, and social membership for animals? This challenging question drives this thought-provoking collection which explores the possibilities and complexities of animal labor as a site for interspecies justice. The book assembles an international and interdisciplinary group of scholars who carefully grapple with the many facets, implications, and entanglements of animal labor, and who, crucially, place animals at the heart of their analyses. Can animals engage in good work and have humane jobs? What kinds of labor rights are appropriate for animal workers? Can animals consent to work? Would recognizing animals as workers improve their legal and political status, or simply reinforce the perception that they are beasts of burden? Can a focus on labor help to create or deepen bonds between animal advocates and other social justice movements? While the authors present a range of views on these questions, their contributions make clear that labor must be taken seriously by everyone interested in more just and ethical multispecies futures.



On the Backs of Tortoises: Darwin, the Galápagos, the Fate of an Evolutionary Eden

by Elizabeth Hennessy

The Galápagos archipelago is often viewed as a last foothold of pristine nature. For sixty years, conservationists have worked to restore this evolutionary Eden after centuries of exploitation at the hands of pirates, whalers, and island settlers. This book tells the story of the islands' namesakes—the giant tortoises—as coveted food sources, objects of natural history, and famous icons of conservation and tourism. By doing so, it brings into stark relief the paradoxical, and impossible, goal of conserving species by trying to restore a past state of prehistoric evolution. The tortoises, Elizabeth Hennessy demonstrates, are not prehistoric, but rather microcosms whose stories show how deeply human and nonhuman life are entangled. In a world where evolution is thoroughly shaped by global history, Hennessy puts forward a vision for conservation based on reckoning with the past, rather than trying to erase it.

Long-listed for the 2020 PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award

[Teaching Guide available online!](#)

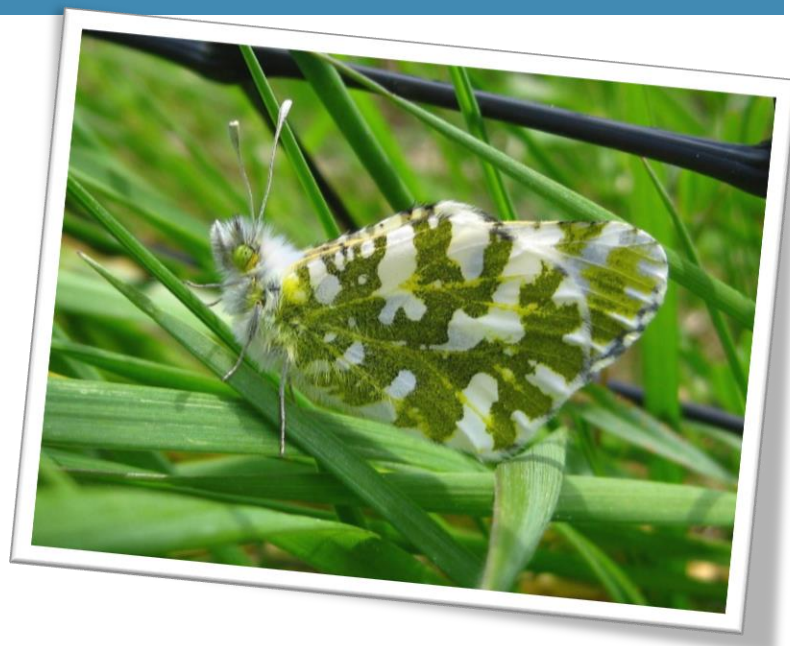
Spotlight on Research

Endangered Butterflies and their Non-Native Host Plants: Examining Shifting Values of Belonging in Restoration

Robert M. Anderson and Amy M. Lambert

Abstract: The island marble butterfly (*Euchloe ausonides insulanus*), thought to be extinct throughout the 20th century until re-discovered on a single remote island in Puget Sound in 1998, has become the focus of a concerted protection effort to prevent its extinction. However, efforts to “restore” island marble habitat conflict with efforts to “restore” the prairie ecosystem where it lives, because of the butterfly’s use of a non-native “weedy” host plant. Through a case study of the island marble project, we examine the practice of ecological restoration as the enactment of norms that define which species are understood to belong in the place being restored. We contextualize this case study within ongoing debates over the value

of “native” species, indicative of deep-seated uncertainties and anxieties about the role of human intervention to alter or manage landscapes and ecosystems, in the time commonly described as the “Anthropocene.” We interpret the question of “what plants and animals belong in a particular place?” as not a question of scientific truth, but a value-laden construct of environmental management in practice, and we argue for deeper reflexivity on the part of scientists and managers about the social values that inform ecological restoration.



PUBLICATIONS

Above from *Case Studies in the Environment* October 2019

Below from *ENE: Nature and Space* 2019



Guest Introduction: More-than-human contact zones

Jenny R Isaacs and Ariel Otruba

Abstract: Mary Louise Pratt used the term “contact zones” to describe those spaces where “cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today”. Building on three sessions at the 2017 American Association of Geographers’ Annual Meeting, this special section features articles which apply Pratt’s concepts to environmental research. We argue that these articles demonstrate a “more-than-human ‘contact’ approach” to (1) better account for nonhuman agency by multiplying

Spotlight on Research

perspectives, (2) intervene in cases of violence and injustice, and (3) decolonize knowledge/production. Included are empirical case studies which describe encounters with the nonhuman; these include a postcolonial reading of the BBC’s *Blue Planet II*, a feminist science study of migratory shorebird conservation on New Jersey’s Delaware Bayshore, and political ecologies of prescribed forest burns by Parks Canada and tidal energy production in the Bay of Fundy. These articles broaden the definitions of “contact” and “justice” as they direct critical attention to the politics of environmental knowledge production, technoscientific means of understanding and managing the living environment, and forms of resistance to the exclusive governance of “wild” spaces. They present sites of environmental management and exploration as places of transformation, co-presence, unpredictability, and often intimate violence. The section demonstrates how political ecologies and more-than-human geographies expand Pratt’s “contact” perspective.

The “bander’s grip’’: Reading zones of human-shorebird contact

Jenny R Isaacs

Abstract: This article applies Mary Louise Pratt’s “contact” perspective within a multispecies ethnography of conservation encounters on the Delaware Bay. Using critical insights from decolonial feminist science studies, environmental geography, and critical animal studies, the article deconstructs technoscientific environmental knowledge production within a more-than-human contact zone. The tools, technologies, and “conspicuous innocence” of hands-on shorebird conservation research practices are described. Re-inscribing nonhuman agency and colonial histories of place, it argues that certain elements of conservation research may be fairly read as “violent” expressions of “animality/coloniality” and “anti-conquest.” It concludes by offering some harm reduction strategies for improving conservation and critical environment studies.

Graduate Student Presentation Competition

DETAILS

We are sorry that the 2020 competition is postponed. We had many wonderful graduate student presentation submissions. You can read about them below.

AnGSG is sad to announce its 2020 graduate student presentation competition will be postponed. The submissions are from graduate students that are based on original empirical or theoretical research in the field of animal geography and engage directly with the animal geographic literature. Competitors would give a 10-minute presentation in this panel session. The winning panelist would be awarded \$100.



Mollie Holmberg from University of British Columbia will present "Crisis ecology at the Vancouver Aquarium: Putting octopuses to work for conservation". Mollie's research focuses on how interactions between scientific practices and power impact global ecosystems and health equity.



Courtney Berne from the Geography and Urban Studies Department at Temple University will present "Calls to Action within the Anthropocene". Her research focuses on human-equine relationships, specifically within urban environments as they pertain to racialized mobilities, bodily agencies, and redefinitions of spatial sovereignty.



Jeff Martin from University of California – Berkeley will present "Sheep/land/politics: Tragedy and commoning in the American West". Jeff's research focuses on human-environment relations, particularly around questions of human-wildlife conflict and political economy. He is currently writing up his dissertation on conflict over gray wolf conservation and livestock predation in the Northern Rockies through the lens of political ecology and economic geography.



Jacquelyn Johnston from Florida International University will present "Night terrors and daydreaming: Living with and learning from nonhuman animal victims of human abuse". Her current research intersects biopolitical analysis and more-than-human geography. She focuses on the arbitrary and contingent ways ferality is operationalized in animal welfare debates between domestic and wildlife advocates.



Robert Anderson from University of Washington will present "Killing for the common good: the biopolitics of wolf management in Washington state". His research interests include examining the practices of environmentalism in a time of multiple, interwoven crises including climate change and biodiversity loss, but also crises of identity and agency on the part of Western environmentalists.

Researchers, activism, and public conversations

by Jacquelyn J Johnston

I have been exploring the possibilities of reaching a wider audience by composing short opinion essays targeted to non-academic audiences related to recent news stories. Please find an example below of some thoughts in progress. I would love to hear from any other members working on the politics of 'invasive' animal management policies!

Iguanas, responsibility, and the industries of killing unwanted pets

During South Florida's one-day-long winter season, news stations reported of falling temperatures and falling iguanas. Longtime Florida residents are familiar with the phenomenon of cold-stunned reptiles, but nonnative Florida residents seemed stunned to see iguana bodies lying along golf courses and sidewalks.

Perhaps more shocking was the story about the sale of iguana meat in the Food section of the Miami Herald the following morning. Initially, my shock was visceral, but that guttural response was followed by revulsion for the lack of responsibility humans have toward animals traded as pets.

Imagine for a moment the Miami Herald published a story with locally caught hamsters or rabbits skinned and bound. These species and more are readily available for purchase as commodities in any of the hundreds of pet stores around South Florida. However, post purchase, there are almost no options for these pets if the owner wants to dispose of them. Animal shelters and humane societies don't accept most pocket pets and birds, and only a handful of small rescues specialize in adoptions for these animals. Many of these pets are released, abandoned to a life outside the cages in which they were born. Whereas the plight of Easter bunnies who lose the interest of their children has become more widely discussed, the suffering and neglect of many other pet animals remains underexplored. Whereas the

fluffier species die, some reptilian pet species thrive in Florida. When discussing what to do with the animals that survive – and thrive – when abandoned by the humans who bred and bought them, it's critical to remember this fact. We created them for our amusement and our profit.

Aside from the need to explore the ethics of responsibility for animals traded as commodities in the pet industry, there remains a fundamental miscalculation in the strategies used to control animals like iguanas. This species is still sold as pets. A bill to stop the sale of iguanas in the State was only introduced this week – after decades of legal sales and next to zero options for owners who no longer want or can keep the iguanas purchased from pet stores. Exotic Pet Amnesty Days are held around the state for people who want to surrender their exotic pets, but as of today only two events are scheduled this year across the state. The problem of what to do with an unwanted pet iguana results in more iguanas being released into the wild.

On the other end of this situation are the policies created to curb the populations of iguanas already living in Florida. Just last year Florida wildlife officials encouraged property owners to "humanely" kill iguanas, classifying the former pet shop jewels as pests, menaces, and an affront on the state's environment. The Florida Wildlife Commission website, however, refers such property owners "to obtain euthanasia services from local exotic veterinarians, humane societies or animal control offices". I called several humane societies and animal control offices in South Florida. Not one will accept a caught iguana for euthanasia. Some private exotic veterinarians I spoke with said that, if medically necessary, they would euthanize a pet iguana, but the process is costly. Further, these costs are prohibitive for any property owner who seeks simply to



remove the existing population and kill them in a humane way. The cost of seeking professional humane options only increases the likelihood property owners will resort to inhumane methods, despite anti-cruelty laws.

Iguanas are living in South Florida because humans put them here. Many of these iguanas have been living here longer than the humans who are stunned to see the reptiles falling from trees. Policy makers need to spend more time focused on the root causes of such perceived animal problems. Greater focus on ending irresponsible animal trade, address the lack of options for people who no longer want their pets, and engage in more proactive steps to end the subsequent release of pets is required.

At least two industries continue to profit from iguanas: pet shops and wildlife trappers. Perhaps, now, even the exotic food industry will benefit from selling flesh carved from animals exposed to unknown environmental toxins in our canals and prepared in unregulated spaces.

Classifying an iguana as "nonnative" and "invasive" is a convenient way to discursively deflect responsibility. The number of iguanas thriving in Florida is not an animal problem. The problem is one of greed, capitalism, and gross expenditure of public funds to address the result without consideration for the cause.



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION of GEOGRAPHERS

ANNUAL MEETING • April 6-10, 2020 • VIRTUAL

THE VIRTUAL MEETING IS ON!



AAG is facilitating a virtual annual meeting April 6-10, in response to restrictions on travel and gathering during the pandemic. The virtual conference will offer more than 130 sessions and panels on topics that include climate change, political and social geographies, the role of geographers as actors in public policy and advocacy, trends in geoethics and human rights, race, ethnocentrism's impacts worldwide.

Virtual sessions will continue to be added to the gallery.

[View the Virtual Session Gallery](#)

Not originally registered to attend AAG 2020 Denver, but want to get in on the virtual annual meeting? [REGISTER TODAY!](#)

All Biogeography and Paleoenvironmental Change Considered

Organizers: Stockton Maxwell, Nicole Zampieri
[Join Virtual Session](#)

The "All Biogeography and Paleoenvironmental Change Considered" poster session seeks to bring together researchers from both disciplines to further engagement and collaboration at AAG.

Can the more-than-human speak? Other ways of knowing in interspecies communication

Organizers: Paul Moss
[Join Virtual Session](#)

Denying a voice (or even the possibility of a voice) to more-than-human beings inscribes a hierarchical and hegemonic power dynamic that has proven to be destructive and damaging to all involved – leaving the more-than-human silenced, vulnerable, and subject to instrumental exploitation while creating a sense of loneliness, disconnection, and unmooredness in humans.

Interspecies communication, even when reported, may be denatured through its being viewed solely as an artifact of metaphor, symbol, or imagination, rather than its being understood and appreciated as a real and authentic phenomenon. Those exploring purposeful and meaningful communication between humans and plants, animals, fungi, and other beings are typically expected to conduct research using only objective, rational, and scientific techniques (as conventionally defined) without evidencing anthropomorphism. These approaches arguably serve to silence more-than-human interlocutors by proscribing the use of intuition and other ways of knowing their perspectives.

Yet, in alternative worldviews, epistemologies, and cosmologies, including but not limited to those of many indigenous and animist cultures, more-than-human beings do have meaningful voices that can be perceived by humans and which have been valorized, understood, and respected for thousands of years. These voices are starting to be heard within the academy as well.

Presentations will explore interspecies communication from multiple perspectives in support of building greater understanding and appreciation of more-than-humans and their voices.

Politicizing Wildlife Management

Organizers: John Connors, Roopa Krithivasan
[Join Virtual Session](#)

Wildlife management is often understood as the science and practice of maintaining wildlife populations to meet social and ecological goals. While this conceptualization situates wildlife management as an objective scientific endeavor, geographers have repeatedly demonstrated the variable ways that environmental management and the science that supports it is highly contested and emerges in the context of broader social and economic relations (e.g., Nesbitt and Weiner 2001, Rikoon 2006, Robbins 2004, Robbins 2006, Vance 2019). Rather than a process solely shaped by humans, animals themselves (as well as other non-humans) are increasingly seen as agents in these political processes – shaping human behaviors, influencing policy, and remaking landscapes (Dempsey 2010, Nadai and Labussiere 2010, Barua and Sinha 2017, Fleming 2017, Hovorka 2017, Hobson 2007). Emerging scholarship across geography, planning, and conservation biology has called for novel ways of thinking about wildlife management (e.g., replacing conflict with coexistence and cohabitation, multi-species planning) and resulted in productive new methodologies and provocative imagined futures (Hinchliffe et al. 2005, Lorimer 2015, McKiernan and Instone 2015, Boonman-Berson et al. 2016, Crowley et al. 2017, Pooley et al. 2017, Rupprecht 2017, Houston et al. 2018).

This session aims to hybridize perspectives of political ecology, more-than-human geographies, environmental justice, and related fields to shed light on how wildlife management strategies are (re)produced, mobilized, and enacted. Our goal is to provoke conversations that explore both opportunities and limits for scholars and practitioners to re-imagine human-wildlife relations that transcend traditional ideals of management.

The Animal Geography Specialty Group requires member support!

Mission

The Animal Geography Specialty Group strives to enhance geographic research and scholarship on matters relating to human-animal studies by:

- (a) encouraging the exchange of ideas among geographers studying biological, cultural, ecological, economic, political, and technical aspects of the myriad ways humans co-exist with other animal species,
- (b) promoting research in these areas,
- (c) facilitating collaboration between existing AAG specialty groups and committees to promote common interests and develop intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary projects.

The overall aim of AnGSG is to support discussion of human-animal issues by geographers as a legitimate and active part of the discipline.

Support

As you renew your AAG membership, I would remind and encourage you to make sure you pay your dues for the Animal Geographies Specialty Group. It's our only source of revenue and every membership counts!

When you become a member, your dues help support AnGSG's operations and initiatives including: student paper competition awards, specialty group social and mentoring event, website fees, and more (<http://www.animalgeography.org/>).

Membership with AnGSG has many benefits including connection to the largest Animal Geographies community in the US!



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