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ECCB 2024 bologna

7th European Congress of Conservation Biology

"Biodiversity positive by 2030" 17-21 June 2024 – Bologna, Italy



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Plenary Presentations

Research, 242, p. 106045. doi:10.1016/j.fishres.2021.106045. 4. Karnad, D. et al. (2022) To eat or not to eat: Shark and Ray meat consumption as a threat to India's elasmobranchs [Preprint]. doi:10.22541/au.166603256.66186502/v1.

ID: 229

Marsh frog invasions across Europe: multiple lineages, ecological opportunism, risk and conservation perspectives

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Whereas some biological invasions are well documented, others, more cryptic, are often underestimated despite multiple local warnings. This is the case of marsh frogs for which there is a lack of an integrative overview of its invasion patterns and risks to biodiversity. To fill this gap, we carried out an interdisciplinary study in phylogenetics, spatial and trophic ecology. We found out that introductions involved dozens of localities and many lineages, originating from three continents, fitting well with the history of importations of live frogs in Europe. They gave rise to nation-wide invasions, facilitated by the wide ecological tolerance of the invaders and resulting in large niche overlaps with native amphibians. Marsh frogs showed also a high trophic opportunism, predating on most native amphibians but also on many invertebrate taxa and threatening some emblematic species. Altogether, these results rank the marsh frogs as one of the most complex invasive amphibian species in the world. They call for the conservation of structured and vegetated ponds to buffer the impact of invaders as well as a complete commercial ban on importation of live water frogs to prevent the opening of the pandora box which may result from new lineage combinations in invaded territories.

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ID: 242

Desert tourism pressure on wildlife around natural water sources

<u>Einat Zahabian</u>, David Saltz, Oded Berger-Tal Ben-Gurion University, Israel Water scarcity in deserts is a common cause of human-wildlife conflicts. We studied the impacts of desert tourism on the behavior of wildlife around desert oases.

We placed camera traps during the spring and summer of 2021 at ten oases with high or low desert tourism levels. We found that human disturbance reduced activity and increased nocturnality in local species. Behavioral analyses unveiled heightened vigilance, reduced drinking, and reduced intraspecies interactions in the high-tourism sites, even among nocturnal mammals.

In a follow-up experiment, in the summer of 2022, we placed camera traps at six low-disturbance oases and subjected these sites to increased human disturbance in the form of a one-day field party (presence of people with a loudspeaker for 8 hours) and studied the behavior of wildlife around the water sources for three days before, during, and for three days after the manipulation. While all species avoided the water sites during the disturbance, we found species-specific differences in the time it took individuals to revisit the site and return to predisturbance vigilance and other behaviors.

ID: 245

Data integration improves monitoring efficiency for threatened tropical mammals

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Conservation initiatives strive for reliable and cost-effective species monitoring. However, resource constraints mean management decisions are often based on data derived from single methodologies, bringing inherent taxonomic or geographic biases. We introduce a data integration framework to identify the most cost-effective approach to monitor threatened mammals, focusing on tigers and principal prey (sambar deer and wild pigs) in Sumatra's largest remaining tropical forest. We applied integrated community occupancy models to combine biodiversity data obtained from unstructured ranger patrols, systematic sign transects and camera trap surveys. Integration of multiple datasets improved the precision of species occupancy estimates, reducing uncertainty by up to 42%, while expanding spatial scope of inference to landscapescales where interventions are typically staged. Moreover, utilizing multiple survey techniques reduced overall monitoring costs, demonstrating that a modest US\$10,000 budget can achieve occupancy estimates of tigers and prey within acceptable levels of statistical precision. Our framework offers a practical solution to overcome resource constraints in species monitoring and address common biases occurring when survey methods are implemented in isolation. This is particularly relevant in the tropics, characterized by a greater number of threatened species and limited monitoring capacity, where timely biodiversity assessments are critical and budgets must be minimized.

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