



**BOU**

#BOU2026

# Birds and people

University of Nottingham & Zoom & Bluesky

31 March - 2 April 2026

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## **Birds and people**

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## Welcome to #BOU2026 – the BOU's 2026 Annual Conference

I would like to welcome you all to the annual BOU spring conference for 2026. This year the conference theme is *Birds and people*. Within the broader birds and people topic, individual sessions are themed meaning that talks on similar areas are grouped together. The conference explores how people interact with birds and how birds interact with people. It explores how people can benefit birds through actions such as conservation, but also how people benefit from birds, such as through pest control and the wellbeing benefits of nature connections from bird watching. For many of us it will be that connection from birdwatching that catalysed our career choices that ultimately bring us here to this conference. The conference explores the crucial need to understand more about key relationships between birds and people for the benefit and continued persistence of all. The complexities of the relationships between birds and people will be considered to look at how birds and people can live together, including the challenges birds may pose to human interests and how the benefits they provide can be maximised. By drawing on science and research from around the world, the conference aims to provide an insightful look into bird-people relationships and provide inspirational ideas about how we can coexist in the future. This science-based evidence-led approach is essential in decision making, whether in agriculture, health, conservation or other spheres. Advancing ornithological science sits at the core of what BOU does and what BOU's mission is.

This is a hybrid conference, with delegates from around the world attending either online or in person. We are trialling this approach to make these conferences more inclusive, realising that not everyone is able to travel to the conference in person. It also recognises the need to think more about the carbon footprint of conferences. Delegates online and in person are all equally welcome and I hope you all get something more from this event than purely the content of the talks. The conference gives the opportunity to interact with the other delegates, catching up with one another and making new links and collaborations. As ever, Early Career Researchers are especially welcome, and I hope that you feel able to interact with everyone here. BOU conferences are friendly conferences so please all engage and interact through questions and discussions as part of the scientific and social programme. BOU is a community of active, interesting and interested researchers all of whom are linked through ornithology. We very much hope everyone will genuinely feel they belong.



**Graeme Buchanan** | BOU President

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### Code of Conduct

We welcome everyone to BOU events, be these in person or online.

We work hard to engender and promote a welcoming environment that is collaborative, supportive and engaging for everyone involved. Our events provide opportunities to share, develop and broaden viewpoints in a safe and inclusive environment.

We celebrate diversity in all its forms and expect that all our participants are respectful and considerate of each other, that they provide supportive critique, and embrace the multitude of opinions that are on offer.

If you have any concerns, or feel that any participant of an event has breached this code, or have suggestions for how we can make our events more inclusive and productive, please contact any member of the BOU staff, BOU's Meetings Committee or event organisers.

During an event, please report any incident as soon as you feel able, to allow us to act upon your concerns. Any reports will be handled in confidence.

Your primary contacts for any issues that may arise during this conference are:



**Graeme Buchanan**  
BOU President



**Leila Walker**  
BOU Chief Operations Officer

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The **British Ornithologists' Union** (BOU), founded in 1858 by Professor Alfred Newton FRS, is one of the world's oldest ornithological bodies. The BOU's mission is to promote ornithological science across the international scientific community, support the individuals who contribute to that science, and grow understanding of that science among a wider community.

To help achieve this mission, the BOU organises conferences that facilitate the sharing of high-quality ornithological science, to as many of the global ornithological community as possible, overcoming barriers to attendance and enabling widespread knowledge exchange and sector strengthening.

The BOU further achieves its mission by the quarterly publication of our international journal, IBIS. Published since 1859 by the British Ornithologists' Union, IBIS is an international journal publishing innovative research in ornithological science, with special emphasis on the behaviour, ecology, evolution and conservation of birds. We publish peer-reviewed original papers, reviews, short communications and forum articles. Our international scope, authorship, and readership allows us to drive development and have impact in the field.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Birds and people*, a conference organised and delivered by Nishant Kumar (Ambedkar University Delhi & National Centre for Biological Sciences (TIFR), Bengaluru, India & University of Oxford, UK), Tatsuya Amano (University of Queensland, Australia), Kristina Beck (Senckenberg Research Institute, Germany), Joelene Hughes (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, UK), Barry McMahon (University College Dublin, Ireland), Alice Risely (University of Salford, UK), Umesh Srinivasan (Indian Institute of Science, India), Josh Cooper-Evans (UK), and River Stewart (University of Portsmouth, UK) on behalf of the British Ornithologists' Union. The BOU would like to thank Heather Fortune (Imperial College London, UK) and Glen Hancocks (University of Salford, UK) for support during the conference and Zoe Davies (University of Kent, UK), Sana Huque (Nature Conservation Foundation, India), Karishma Pradhan (Nature Conservation Foundation, India), River Stewart (University of Portsmouth, UK) and Natalia Zielonka (University of Kent, UK) and for organising and running the pre-conference Early Career Researcher (ECR) workshops.

The BOU is very grateful to the individual speakers and their respective organisations for presenting their work at the conference.

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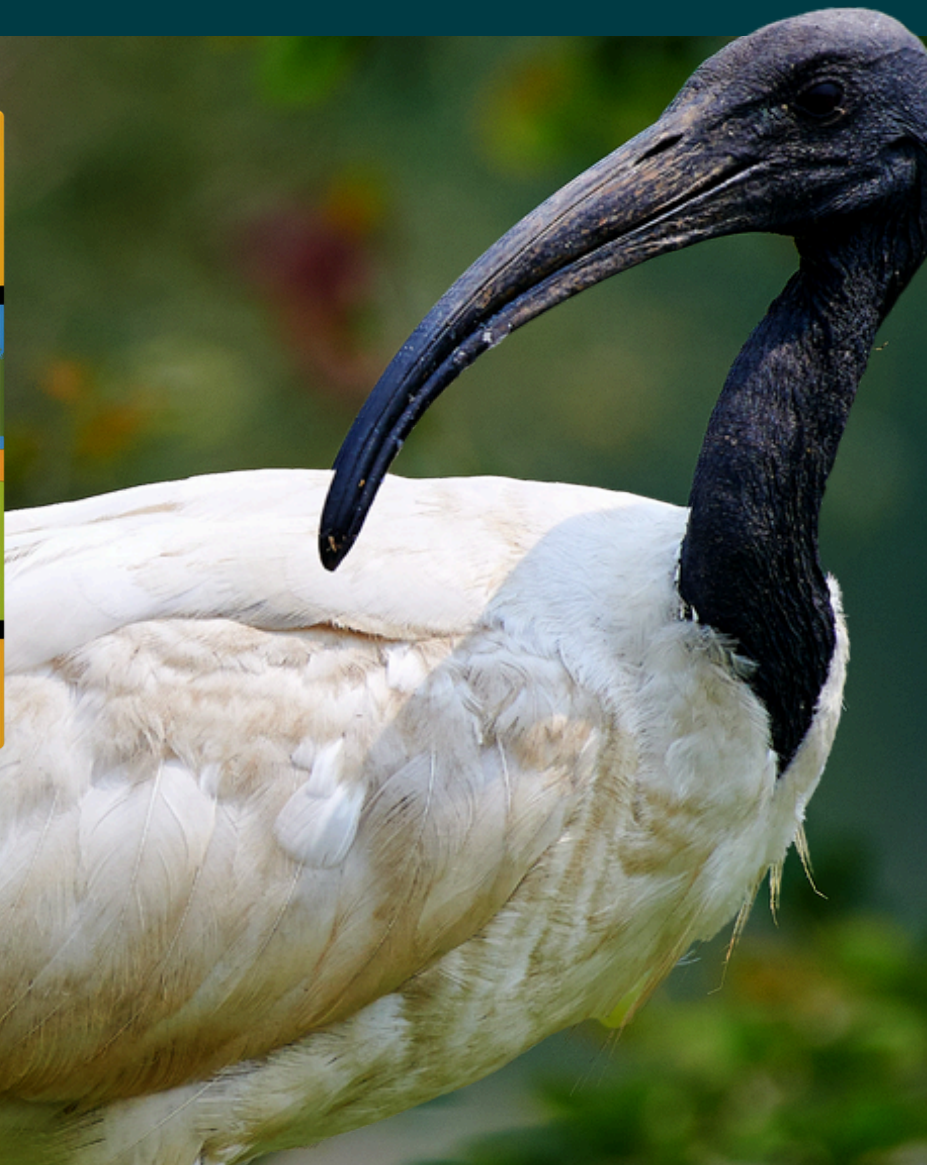
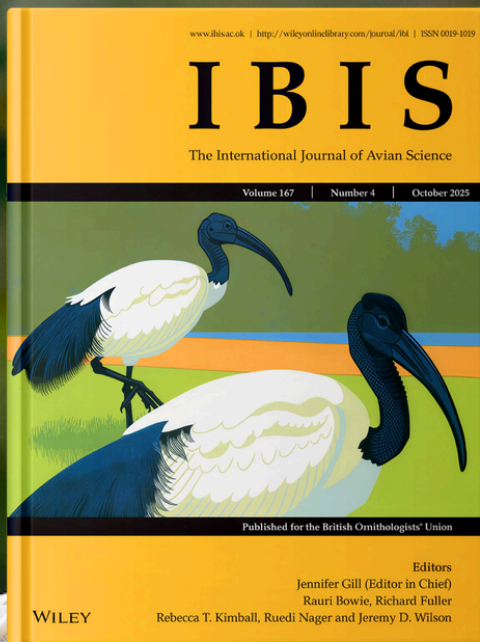
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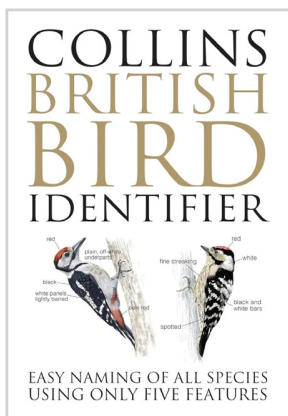
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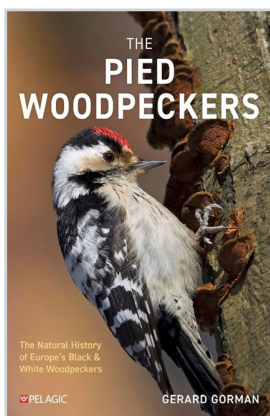
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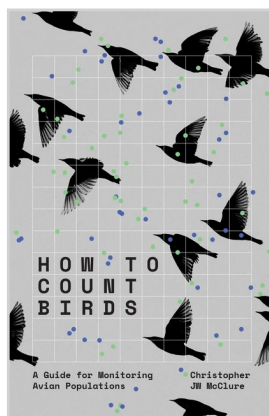
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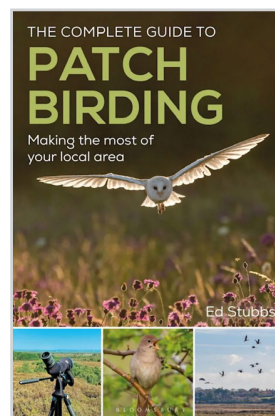
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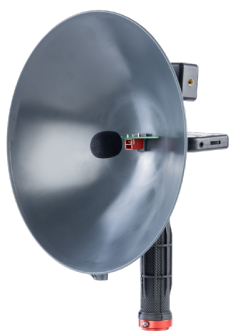
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*Illustration: Southern Fiscal Shrike - watercolour 34 x 50cm, Lillias August RI ©*

*Collected, South Africa, 1902, at the end of the Second Boer war*



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## ABSTRACTS

Abstracts for the oral programme are in programme order. Poster and Bluesky-only abstracts (from page 37) are in alphabetical order by the surname of the presenting author.

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TUES, 31 MARCH, 19:30

# Alfred Newton Lecture



**Claire Spottiswoode** (she/her)

FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, South Africa

### The natural history of a human-bird mutualism

Cooperation between humans and wild animals is vanishingly rare. Yet Greater Honeyguides (*Indicator indicator*) are African birds whose lives have been interwoven with our own, to mutual benefit, for probably as long as we've been human. This is because they seek out humans and lead us to an exceptional source of energy for both us and them: honeyguides know where bees' nests are located and eat beeswax, whereas we humans have unique abilities to use smoke and tools to subdue the bees and open their nest, exposing wax for the honeyguides and honey for ourselves. During a cooperative honey-hunt, honeyguides signal to humans using a distinctive guiding call, and in return people signal to honeyguides using specialised honey-hunting calls that vary culturally across Africa. Over the last decade, we have studied this mosaic of entwined species and cultures in collaboration with honey-hunting communities in Mozambique, Zambia and elsewhere in Africa. In this talk, I will share some of our findings together on how the honeyguide-human partnership functions, how it may have shaped and continue to shape the ecosystems we evolved in, and what it might be able to teach us about communication and the coevolution of cultures across species.

**Claire Spottiswoode** is a South African evolutionary ecologist, studying birds in Africa. She has been hooked on natural history since childhood, and is especially fascinated by species

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interactions. Her two main areas of research, together with her team, are coevolution between brood-parasitic birds and their hosts, and mutualism between honeyguides and the human honey-hunters with whom they cooperate to gain access to bees' nests. Both projects rely on close cooperation with communities in Zambia and Mozambique. Claire works at the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, where she is also Co-Director of the Max Planck–University of Cape Town Centre for Behaviour and Coevolution. She is also Honorary Professor of African Evolutionary Ecology at the University of Cambridge, UK.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 09:05 | KEYNOTE

### **Ethno-ornithology: science and society in dialogue**

**Andrew Gosler**

University of Oxford, UK



“Some writers have objected to the name of Hedge-Sparrow for this species... ..Yet a name which Shakespear has put into the mouth of one of his fools is hardly to be dropped, even at the bidding of the wisest, so long as the English tongue lasts.. .. It may be easy in some cases to change a name which has been only used in technical works, ..but the attempt to meddle with a word which is part and parcel of our language and literature is a very different thing.” So wrote the BOU’s founder, Alfred Newton of *Accentor* (now *Prunella*) *modularis* in 1871. Indeed, the folk-name *Dunnock* was chosen for its taxonomic neutrality. Newton was clear on the importance of culture in shaping human perceptions of birds, from their naming to how scientific discourse about them is framed. This lecture focuses on how British ornithology, which through its Empire influenced the world, developed through the interaction of two cultures: a popular class-based society deeply engaged with the natural world, for whom thousands of local bird folk-names were known and used by all social classes; and a scientific culture with a strong desire to find and understand order, patterns and processes, in nature. Influenced by the work of Charles Darwin and others, a growing and highly educated (male) middle class focused on birds (female focus was directed towards botany) drove this integration. The legacy of this foundation is influential still, and relevant to addressing the nature disconnect of contemporary post-industrial societies.

**Andrew Gosler** holds a joint position as Professor of Ethno-ornithology at the University of Oxford between the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology and Institute of Human Sciences, of which he is Director. His research over more than 40 years spans pure and applied ornithology, including avian eco-morphology and body-condition, the function of

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eggshell speckling, the etymology of bird names, the natural-history knowledge of post-industrial human communities, and the role of religion in environmental stewardship. He is Research Director for the Ethno-ornithology World Atlas (EWA) project, and a Fellow of Mansfield College, Oxford.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 09:35 | TALK | ECR PRESENTER

### Traditional honey-hunting and human-honeyguide interactions in Nigeria

**Ajik Anap Magaji** (she/her)

A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI), University of Jos, Nigeria |

 @iamanapgrace.bsky.social

Co-authors: Gabriel Dabo (A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute), Joseph I. Ibrahim (A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute), Gabriel A. Jamie (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cambridge), Naziru Muhammad (Yankari Game Reserve), Claire Spottiswoode (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cambridge) & Jessica van der Wal (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, Max Planck Institute for Biological Intelligence)

In parts of sub-Saharan Africa, greater honeyguides (*Indicator indicator*) lead humans to wild bees' nests in exchange for access to wax. Although this rare form of human-wildlife cooperation has been documented in several places in eastern and southern Africa, we provide one of the first scientific confirmations of human-honeyguide mutualism in Western Africa. We interviewed 69 individuals who collected or sold honey across eight villages in central Nigeria, where honey-hunting and honeyguides are common. About one third of honey-hunters reported following honeyguides, and, honey-hunters use no vocal signals to communicate with honeyguides, in contrast to many honey-hunting cultures. Honeyguides have access to increased beeswax availability, sometimes left intentionally but more commonly unintentionally by honey-hunters and beekeepers. Honey-hunters reported bee population decline, habitat loss, and declining youth interest as threats. These findings highlight an area where honeyguides play a limited role, raising questions about the persistence of this rare mutualism.

**Afan Anap Ishaku** is an ornithologist interested in behavioural and urban ecology. In 2022, she received a BOU Career Development Bursary to investigate human-honeyguide mutualism in Nigeria. She is now pursuing a PhD at the University of Jos and is a Research Associate at the A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute in Nigeria.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 09:50 | TALK | ECR PRESENTER

### Local Ecological Knowledge can shed light on past abundances of birds in understudied regions

**Daniel Villar** (he/him)

Department of Anthropology, Durham University, UK & Ethno-Ornithology World Atlas, Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology, University of Oxford, UK | [@daniel-a-villar.bsky.social](#)

Co-authors: Renzo Turpo Aroquip, Universidad Nacional del Altiplano; Edwin Gutierrez Tito, SERNANP; Edmundo Moreno Terrazas, Universidad Nacional del Altiplano; Andrew Gosler, University of Oxford

Lake Titicaca, shared between Peru and Bolivia, is the highest altitude lake on earth, with a surface altitude of 3814 metres. It is a continental centre of endemism, with over 90% of the native ichthyofauna being endemic, and its home to the endangered endemic Titicaca Grebe (*Rollandia microptera*). Despite its importance, it suffers from several anthropogenic pressures, including climate change, overfishing, and pollution from mining. However, there is almost no historical data on the abundance and biodiversity of Lake Titicaca. Here we used Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) to estimate population trends in waterfowl species. By interviewing indigenous fishermen, we estimated the abundance of commercially important waterfowl over a forty-year period. We compared the perceptions change in species abundance between novice, experienced, and veteran hunters and fishermen. We found evidence of shifting baseline syndromes between different age classes, though these are not all unidirectional, suggesting a more complicated population history than straight decline.

**Daniel Villar** is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Anthropology, Durham University, working on how traditional ecological knowledge changes in response to climate change. His doctorate was done at the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology under Prof. Andrew Gosler, and focused on the ethno-ornithology of Lake Titicaca.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 10:05 | TALK

### Hornbills and humans: connections and conservation in North Bengal, India

**Karishma Pradhan** (she/her)

Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF)

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Co-authors: Aparajita Datta, Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF); Arjan Basu Roy, Nature-Mates Nature Club (NMNC); Shilpita Mandal, NMNC; Sitaram Mahato, NMNC; Kezajacho Dukpa, NMNC and Sikander Dewan, NCF

The Eastern Himalaya is home to several hornbill species, of which three are threatened. Hornbills are functionally important as seed dispersers and are mobile birds ranging over large areas including human-modified habitats. Through semi-structured interviews in 10 villages near two hornbill habitats, we documented oral histories, perceptions and human-hornbill relationships. In one site, hornbills feature in rituals and folklores reflecting deep cultural and traditional linkages, while in the other site, hornbills and other birds supported nature-based tourism, a major livelihood source. At both sites, most respondents believed increasing hornbill populations would benefit the region. Understanding people's perceptions and interactions with hornbills added significant depth to our ecological research on hornbills conducted with several indigenous team members. These studies led to the development of a conservation action plan for hornbills, co-created with multi-stakeholder participation. The plan recognizes the knowledge of local communities and the role of community members in conservation stewardship.

**Karishma Pradhan** works with the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) as a Project Manager. She received the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) award in 2021 for expanding hornbill research and conservation in North Bengal. She currently engages with community representatives and youth groups to increase support and foster love for nature conservation.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 10:20 | TALK | ECR PRESENTER

### **The fall of a florican: a contemporary history of studying the Bengal Florican**

**Nisha Bhakat** (she/they)

Archives at National Centre for Biological Sciences | [@nickel-salt.bsky.social](https://twitter.com/nickel-salt.bsky.social)

For a critically endangered species such as the Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis*, every piece of information is crucial for conservation. But this study finds, we may have a one track, one season, one sex understanding of the species. In this talk, I trace the history of Bengal Florican studies and use that knowledge to critically examine contemporary management strategies. Using published articles, colonial literature, and primary archival sources, I piece together the story of this species's decline: reasons, knowledge gaps, and the future. The exercise reveals disagreements and gaps in knowledge of its behaviour, habitat,

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even population size. I discuss factors leading to these, and the implications for conserving Bengal Florican and other lesser-known endangered birds. Through this talk, I also make a case for incorporating archival sources in conservation planning for birds that are too rare today to give us a complete picture of the species.

**Nisha Bhakat** is a wildlife researcher interested in the past and present of wildlife beyond protected areas. Nisha's recent projects include archival research on ornithology in India and creating a digital archive of the Bengal Natural History Society papers.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 11:30 | KEYNOTE

### Getting a wellbeing boost from birds

#### Zoe Davies

University of Kent, UK



As John Muir said back in 1915, *"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks"*. Indeed, it is now widely accepted across research, policy and practice arenas that contact with nature is fundamental to human health and wellbeing. Compelling evidence shows that the personal and societal benefits people gain from interacting with nature are diverse, including stress-relief, reduced mental fatigue, improved cognitive development in children and greater social interaction. These positive outcomes have become of significant interest to the health sector, as the prevalence and costs allied with treating poor mental health and associated non-communicable diseases (e.g. diabetes, cardiovascular disease, depression) are expanding worldwide. While the literature regarding how nature underpins human health is rapidly growing, very little of it has examined how biodiversity plays in boosting wellbeing. The findings from the handful of nature-health studies that have examined objective metrics of biodiversity, such as the number of species and abundance of individuals, show inconsistent outcomes. Here, we will explore how bird species and/or their traits (e.g. colours, sounds, behaviours) elicit responses from people, across different wellbeing domains (physical, emotional, cognitive, social, spiritual and 'global' wellbeing, the latter being akin to 'whole-person health'). Building on this, we have developed the first psychometric scale ('BIO-WELL for birds') that specifically examines bird-wellbeing relationships. The scale can be used to help implement interdisciplinary thinking to support biodiversity conservation, citizen science engagement and nature-based public health interventions.

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**Zoe Davies** is a member of the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE) at University of Kent. She has diverse research interests, crossing traditional disciplinary boundaries but focusing on the use of empirical data to address questions of importance to conservation management and policy. They can be summarised into the following key themes: conservation practice and policy; biodiversity-human wellbeing relationships; and assessing the impacts of environmental change. Zoe gained a BSc in Zoology at Royal Holloway, University of London, before studying for her PhD at the University of Leeds. After gaining her doctorate, she worked at the Centre for Evidence-Based Conservation (CEBC) in Birmingham, before joining the Biodiversity and Macroecology Group (BIOME) at University of Sheffield as a postdoctoral researcher. In 2010, she was appointed as a Lecturer at DICE and is now Professor of Biodiversity Conservation.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 12:00 | TALK

### **Safeguarding hornbills through a Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme: a community-centric initiative**

**Sana Huque** (she/her)

Nature Conservation Foundation

Co-authors: Tajik Tachang, Nature Conservation Foundation; Dr. Aparajita Datta, Nature Conservation Foundation

People are integral to the success of many conservation programs. A community-centric conservation programme has become integral to the safeguarding of four hornbill species in Arunachal Pradesh, India. For 13 years, nest guardians from the Nyishi community have been implementing the Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme (HNAP) through partnerships with NGOs, and forest authorities, financially supported mostly through citizens from across India and other parts of the world. Although challenging to implement due to socio-political factors, the HNAP is largely viewed as successful for hornbill conservation, while benefiting people. Since its inception, the HNAP has protected nearly 40 hornbill nests helping 220 chicks fledge successfully. The long-term nest monitoring also contributes to a better understanding of hornbill breeding ecology and changes over time. The community's efforts demonstrate how scientific observations, combined with local stewardship, can safeguard the future of hornbills in Arunachal Pradesh and a model to emulate in other areas.

Sana Huque works with the Eastern Himalaya Programme at Nature Conservation Foundation. She is presently managing the Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme and the

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ecological restoration efforts in the Pakke Tiger Reserve and its surrounding areas in Arunachal Pradesh.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 12:15 | TALK (ONLINE)

### Human-honeyguide mutualism amid socio-economic change in northern Ghana

**Wiro-Bless W. Kamboe** (he/him)

FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Co-authors: Claire Spottiswoode (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology; University of Cambridge), Timothy Aikins (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology; University for Development Studies) & Jessica van der Wal (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, Max Planck Institute for Biological Intelligence)

Human cultural learning influences how we interact with other species, including in mutualistic interactions like some human cultures have with greater honeyguides (*Indicator indicator*). We studied human-honeyguide cooperation in northern Ghana, a region experiencing rapid socioeconomic change. We interviewed honey-hunters and people from other livelihoods to understand the current state of the practice. We found that 36% of honey-hunters used honeyguides, which partly could be explained by the fact that, honey-hunters typically harvested honey from known nests rather than searching for new nests. While honey-hunters did not actively recruit honeyguides, some whistled to maintain honeyguides' attention. Honey-hunters left wax after harvest, benefiting honeyguides. Relationship with honeyguides ranged from mutualism to conflict with honey-hunters reporting a decline in wild bees' nest. Despite the socio-economic changes, such as the use of motorised transport, honey-hunting in northern Ghana persist at low levels offering some insights on human-honeyguide cooperation amid socio-economic growth.

**Wiro-Bless W. Kamboe** is a conservation biologist passionate about human–bird interactions. His interest in birds began at a young age when he kept them as pets. His research focuses on human–wildlife conflict, coexistence, and cooperation in Ghana, exploring how these interactions exist and evolve in a country experiencing rapid socioeconomic growth.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 12:30 | TALK | ECR PRESENTER

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### Human-bird interactions in urban India: the level of extinction of experience in Kolkata

**Sarbasis Dutta** (he/him/his)

University of Granada, Spain

Extinction of Experience (EoE), referring to the growing disconnection between people and nature, is a pressing concern for biodiversity conservation and public well-being. EoE is particularly worrying in urban areas. Much of this knowledge comes from Global North cities while few studies focused on Global South areas despite suffering intense urbanization and holding massive biodiversity. This study investigates EoE in the city of Kolkata, India, one of the world's most densely populated metropolis. We collected information on bird diversity from different city districts while simultaneously interviewing 600 adults inhabiting those urban areas. We used an integrated analytical framework (i.e. structural equation modelling) including bird-related perceptions, nature exposure, childhood experiences, emotional connection, and neighbourhood characteristics (e.g. greenspace, safety levels...). We will discuss our results from complementary perspective of the loss of opportunity and orientation. Our research will provide useful information on this important conservation problem that is certainly affecting human-birds interactions.

**Sarbasis Dutta** is a PhD student in the Department of Zoology at University of Granada, supervised by Professor Juan Diego Ibanez Alamo. His research focuses on avian urban ecology and human-nature interactions in Asia, with an emphasis on India. He also contributes to urban nature education and outreach, particularly among children.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 14:15 | HOUGHTON TRUST KEYNOTE

### Complex interplay between birds, humans and the environment for modern disease threats

**Ian Brown**

The Pirbright Institute, UK



The interplay between birds, humans, and the environment in modern disease threats is a classic One Health challenge, where ecological, behavioural, and anthropogenic factors converge to influence pathogen dynamics. Migratory birds transport pathogens globally along flyways, including avian influenza, West Nile virus, and bacteria like *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*. Birds often carry pathogens asymptotically, making surveillance difficult and

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increasing the risk of unnoticed spillover. Urban dwelling birds have been found to harbour antimicrobial-resistant bacteria, creating additional public health challenges. Environmental factors can have a profound effect on disease incidence and spread. Climate change alters bird migration routes and habitats, expanding the geographic range of pathogens and vectors. Water systems act as reservoirs for pathogens such as avian influenza viruses that are shed in faeces, enabling transmission to other wild birds, domestic poultry, captive birds and some mammalian hosts, i.e. pig, dairy cattle and potentially to humans. Furthermore, habitat degradation and biodiversity loss reduce ecosystem resilience, increasing opportunities for disease emergence. Finally, direct consequences of human activities can have a major impact on disease threats. These include land-use change (deforestation, agriculture) intensifying human to bird contact, facilitating spillover events. Global poultry trade intersects with wild bird migration, amplifying the spread of diseases such as high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) viruses worldwide. Practices like wildlife feeding, poor waste management, and urbanization create hotspots for pathogen exchange between birds and humans. The convergence of avian ecology, human behaviour, and environmental change creates a dynamic system where disease threats can emerge and spread rapidly. This emphasises the need for integrated surveillance (wildlife, livestock, human health), environmental monitoring (water, soil contamination) and policy interventions targeting issues such as land-use practices, poultry trade, and Anti-Microbial Resistant bacteria containment. HPAI has created one of the largest modern day global disease threats with significant impacts on biodiversity, health and wellbeing of wildlife populations especially including birds with no immediate solutions in sight. HPAI will form part of a detailed case study in the presentation.

**Ian Brown** provides disease consultancy internationally and nationally to a wide range of stakeholders primarily on avian influenza. As a birder the natural link between disease and birds is something he has closely studied in his career. His specific research interests include epidemiology, vaccination, pathogenicity, transmission and infection dynamics in relation to the control of influenza in animal hosts including zoonotic threat. Ian holds a visiting Professorship position in Avian Virology at the University of Nottingham.

The Houghton Trust Keynote Lecture is kindly sponsored by The Houghton Trust, promoting research into avian diseases.



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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 14:45 | TALK

### **Disease risks and people benefits: considering the complex pros and cons of garden bird feeding**

**Joelene Hughes** (she/her/hers)

RSPB, UK

Co-authors: Willow Leonard-Clarke, RSPB

The risks and consequences of disease transmission through garden bird feeding are of increasing concern across the conservation community. For example, the spread of *Trichomonas gallinae* through bird feeding is considered to have driven huge widespread declines of Greenfinch and Chaffinch across the UK (Lawson et al. 2018, Hanmer et al. 2022). When determining how to mitigate these risks, it is widely understood that risks need to be balanced with ecological benefits for species, for example increased winter survival or reproductive success. However, when considering recommendations for garden bird feeding practice, the benefits for people are often ignored (Dayer et al 2024). Bird feeding is one of the most accessible behaviours people can conduct to engage with nature. Engaging people with nature is considered important to increase connection which can, in turn, increase pro-environmental behaviours across someone's lifespan as well as influence their wellbeing. Therefore, recommending changes to garden bird feeding has the potential to have wider conservation impacts. In this talk we present the results of a recent scoping review looking at the evidence on whether garden bird feeding can impact people's health and wellbeing, their connection to nature and motivate wider pro-environmental behaviour. Our results reveal a range of research that has been done showing benefits for people and the environment, but also highlights the research gaps that need to be addressed.

**Joelene Hughes** is a Principal Conservation Scientist at RSPB and, for the last 10 years, has been conducting social science research with colleagues in the RSPB Centre for Conservation Science. Previously a mammalian ecologist, Joelene achieved her PhD from the University of Aberdeen in 2006, having had an amazing time in the Canadian Arctic. Then moving to the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, University of Oxford, she conducted a variety of socio-ecological research on various topics such as economics of beaver reintroduction, conservation conflicts and human health and nature connection.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 15:00 | TALK

### **Using bird science to mitigate human-bird conflicts**

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### **Marcus Hagberg**

Wild Goose Chase, Inc., USA

In the United States, birds are responsible for over \$100 million (USD) in property and asset damage annually. With 99.75% of bird species being protected by the federal government, properties have explored innovative ways to mitigate these conflicts. Some of the most exciting innovations are those that leverage bird science—species-specific biology and behavior—to mitigate human-bird conflicts effectively and humanely: lasers specifically designed based upon bird eyesight are deployed across industries worldwide to provide targeted bird deterrence while not harming birds or the environment; minimalist yet effective window film has been applied to reflective surfaces on suburban and/or urban structures to significantly reduce bird collisions with buildings. This session highlights both proven interventions over the last quarter century as well as explores the future of science-based human-bird conflict mitigation.

**Marcus Hagberg** is the COO of Wild Goose Chase, an environmental services company that helps properties manage bird issues your science-based solutions. Wild Goose Chase is the largest bird management services company in the United States, helping over 1,000 properties across 15 states mitigate over 700,000 human-bird conflicts.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 15:15 | TALK

### **Time for a change? How best to use the law to protect birds**

#### **Matthew Heydon**

Natural England, UK |  @mattheydon.bsky.social

Since 1979, the Wild Birds Directive has provided the cornerstone of protection for birds in Europe. Its core principle is to protect all bird species. Many species involved in conflicts have benefited, particularly opportunist and predatory species, and the populations of some are now at historic highs. The Directive allows action to manage conflicts subject to strict legal tests applied with a conservation focus. For species that have recovered, does this remain the best approach? Human-wildlife conflict is recognised as a major threat by the Convention of Biological Diversity and the IUCN published guidelines in 2023 promoting collaborative processes that consider social, economic and cultural contexts to help achieve sustainable coexistence. It's vital to retain public support to secure nature recovery, but do

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our laws and policies give sufficient consideration to people in decision-making? This presentation examines whether it is time for a rethink using examples from England.

**Matthew Heydon** is deputy director for human-wildlife coexistence science at Natural England. Matt advises on conflicts between people and wildlife in England and on using the law to influence behaviour and manage our interactions with wildlife. Matt is UK focal point for the IUCN Human-Wildlife Conflict & Coexistence Specialist Group.

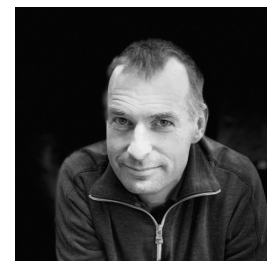
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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 16:15 | KEYNOTE

### The origins, dispersal and evolutionary history of chickens

#### Greger Larson

University of Oxford, UK



There are approximately 80 billion chickens on Earth which makes them by far the most numerous domestic animal. Despite their ubiquity, there has been little consensus regarding the timing or location or circumstances of their domestication. We are continuing to explore when, where, and how chickens first became associated with human societies, what happened next, how their close proximity to people drove the evolution of Marek's disease, a highly contagious viral neoplastic disease, and how chickens evolved to disperse into higher latitudes. Here, I'll discuss a critical assessment of chicken remains described in >600 sites in 89 countries, alongside an evaluation of zoogeographic, morphological, osteometric, stratigraphic, contextual, iconographic, and textual data. I'll also present studies predicated on direct radiocarbon dating of >20 ancient European chickens and an ancient genomic analysis of the selection pressures on chickens as they dispersed into Western Eurasia. Lastly, I'll discuss how an ancient DNA approach to Marek's virus is revealing new insights into the human-mediated selection of the increased virulence of this deadly disease.

**Greger Larson** received his bachelor's degree in 1996 from Claremont McKenna College, a small liberal arts college in California. He read just about everything Stephen J Gould ever wrote over the following three years while he wandered the deserts of Turkmenistan and worked for an environmental consultancy in Azerbaijan. Deciding that evolution was cooler than oil, Greger studied at Oxford and the University of Colorado before receiving his PhD in Zoology in 2006. He then spent two years in Uppsala, Sweden on an EMBO postdoctoral fellowship before starting a job in the department of archaeology at Durham University. Greger then moved to Oxford University to become the Director of the Palaeogenomics &

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Bio-Archaeology Research Network where he is continuing his focus on the use of ancient DNA to study the pattern and process of domestication. He rarely wonders what his salary would be had he stuck to oil.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 16:45 | TALK | ECR PRESENTER

### Use of anthropogenic landscapes in wild Rock Doves

#### Will Smith

University of Nottingham, UK | [@willjsmith.bsky.social](https://twitter.com/willjsmith.bsky.social)

Co-authors: Steven Portugal, Michał Jezierski

Despite the role of many domestic animals as model organisms, our understanding of their undomesticated conspecifics is comparatively poor. This limits our ability to infer the eco-evolutionary context of phenomena studied using model species. The domestic (and feral) pigeon's wild form is the Rock Dove (*Columba livia*). We carried out a pilot study, GPS tagging five Rock Doves in Scotland's Outer Hebrides, presenting the first individual-level assessment of wild pigeon movements, following decades of such research being carried out with domestic pigeons in laboratories all over the world. This work is discussed in the broader context of a population study of >1200 individually marked Outer Hebridean Rock Doves, started in 2019. We reveal strong association with agricultural regions, providing opportunities for future research into the pre-domestication human-pigeon relationship. More generally, this work highlights the value of researching laboratory model species in nature.

**Will Smith** is an evolutionary biologist focused on the wild-domestic interface, currently working at the University of Nottingham as a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow. Previously, Will was a post-doc studying brood parasitism at the University of Helsinki, and a DPhil student at the University of Oxford, working on wild-feral hybridisation.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 17:00 | TALK

### Using social sciences to inform the development of licensing policy for falconry wild take

#### James Hoggett

Natural England, UK

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Falconry is a protected activity under Sect. 16 (1)(e) of the WCA 1981. Taking birds of prey from the wild ('wild take') to practice falconry has a long history but ceased (in England) in the 1980s due to conservation concerns. Since then, falconers have relied on captive-bred birds. In early 2022, with the support of DEFRA, Natural England launched a review to inform the development of a recommendation for a specific wild take licensing policy for native birds of prey. A key question that the review sought to address is the extent to which captive-bred birds represent a satisfactory alternative for falconers and aviculturists to use in place of sourcing birds from wild populations. Incorporating social as well as natural sciences and informed by Procedural Justice Theory and IUCN best practice guidelines for managing human wildlife conflict, this paper discusses the outcomes of the review and learning developed from it.

**James Hoggett** is a social scientist (social psychologist) working for Natural England. James' work examines human wildlife conflict and coexistence. It explores the ways in which social science can help develop better understanding of the drivers of conflict and processes for conflict management that are participatory and based on social theory and evidence.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 17:15 | TALK

### **How are the birds' interests recognised in decision-making? The debate on mandating swift bricks**

**Jakub Kronenberg** (he/him)

Social-Ecological Systems Analysis Lab, University of Lodz, Poland |

 @jakubkronenberg.bsky.social

Co-authors: Erik Andersson, Chris Sandbrook

Can the coexistence of birds and people be based on the ideas of multispecies justice? How are nonhuman interests expressed and recognised? Using discourse analysis, we study whether and how three major stakeholders engaged with such narratives to address the representation and agency of swifts. We focus on a debate on mandating 'swift bricks' to mitigate the loss of their nesting sites in the UK. Representation refers to acknowledging and articulating the diversity of human and swift interests. Agency refers to recognising and positioning nonhuman actors as subjects of justice. The activist-conservationist gave an imaginary voice to swifts and thus attempted to focus public attention on what these birds demand. The policymakers did not relate to realities other than human and remained impervious to nonhuman rights. We suggest creatively addressing the multispecies

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perspective in debates on infrastructural improvements by rethinking the role of built infrastructures for nature conservation and restoration.

**Jakub Kronenberg** is an ecological economist working on the diverse values of nature, environmental justice, and the institutional context of environmental protection, especially in the context of urban green spaces and birds. He aims to reform how economics frames nature.

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WEDS, 1 APRIL, 17:30 | TALK | ECR PRESENTER

### **Aesthetic values of people both support and degrade bird conservation**

**Anna Haukka** (she/her)

University of Helsinki, Finland |  @annaha.bsky.social

Co-authors: Jon Brommer, University of Turku, Finland; Simon Bruslund, Global Development, Copenhagen Zoo; Ricardo Correia, University of Turku; Leonie Jonas, University of Turku; Jacqueline Juergens, Department of Biology, University of Southern Denmark; Aleksi Lehikoinen, The Finnish Museum of Natural History, University of Helsinki; Stefano Mammola, CNR, IRSA: Water Research Institute, Verbania; Andrea Santangeli, Animal Demography and Ecology Unit, Institute for Mediterranean Studies (IMEDEA), CSIC-UIB; Johanna Staerk, Department of Primate Behavior and Evolution, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology

Humans' value driven actions towards nature are both supporting and degrading to biodiversity. Aesthetic values of birds are associated with well-being impacts to humans, but also with threats to species for instance through wildlife trade. Here I present results from a project where an international online survey was used to collect information on the aesthetic values of birds. This survey resulted in an open access database of aesthetic value scores for all the birds in the world. The data were used for several purposes such as understanding the links of wildlife trade of birds and the contribution, or lack thereof, of aesthetic value to conservation funding in the EU. I will present the database, and how it has been used to understand connections of aesthetic value and different bird conservation issues. There are still unexplored opportunities to understand the matches or mismatches of bird species aesthetics and conservation issues.

**Anna Haukka** is a conservation scientist, ecologist and environmental educator. In her PhD dissertation she studied people-bird interactions by using questionnaires to understand

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aesthetic values of birds to people, and bird-feeding practices. Her interest lies in how people's values and behaviour influence conservation issues and species communities.

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THURS, 2 APRIL, 09:00 | KEYNOTE

### **Understanding how disturbance affects birds is crucial to their conservation**

#### **Will Cresswell**

University of St Andrews, UK



Disturbance makes the ecological world go round. The ecological consequences of disturbance, and the magnitude of these are very similar to non-lethal, but profoundly important effects of predation and interference competition. I will show examples of how bird populations are affected by the starvation-predation risk trade-off and by competition, and how these are exactly analogous to disturbance. How avoidance, whether of predators, competition or disturbance creates cascading ecological effects, and how humans create profound disturbances, often unintentionally. As human populations massively increase, the effects of disturbance on bird populations and their conservation, may then completely trump any other considerations, such as habitat and climate change. Bird species that can behaviourally adapt or evolve to ignore human disturbance end up as winners, and this process can happen very rapidly. Bird communities and species abundance may now be primarily determined by human disturbance in many areas of the world. However, for those species that cannot adapt to human disturbance, or that are affected lethally by humans (i.e. by hunting or other dangers associated with humans or their environments) understanding the consequences of disturbance, and then management of this disturbance is crucial for their conservation. Giving species the time and space to avoid humans, through human behavioural and cultural change, may be as key to many bird population's survival, as more traditional conservation approaches.

**Will Cresswell** has been watching animals and birds in the field for as long as he can remember. Research interests since 1989 include predator-prey behavioural interactions, interference competition, how non-lethal effects of predation risk structure avian communities, life history traits of tropical birds, migration and dispersal, and the conservation of birds in agricultural and other anthropogenic habitats. Will has had a NERC and Royal Society University Research Fellowship, was the Lecturer in Ornithology at the Edward Grey Institute and moved to St Andrews University in 2003 where he is currently a Professor of Biology.



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THURS, 2 APRIL, 09:30 | TALK | ECR PRESENTER

**Antipredator behaviour in birds changes according to urban landscape configuration**

**Anna Ramos Chernenko**

University of Granada, Spain

Urbanization modulates antipredator behaviour in birds. Numerous studies have addressed how urban factors (e.g., vegetation coverage or abundance of predators) modulate avian flight initiation distance (FID, distance at which birds fly away when approached), but no one the effect of urban landscape configuration. Here, we measured 4,052 FIDs from 80 populations of 76 bird species taken in eight European cities both in land-sharing (built-up areas interspersed with vegetation) and land-sparing (built-up areas set apart from vegetation) urban areas. FIDs were longer in land-sharing than in land-sparing urban areas, due to a higher abundance of predators, i.e. free-range cats. Conversely, larger vegetation patches typical of land-sparing configuration, e.g. urban parks, would offer more recreational opportunities for humans and decrease FIDs in accordance with the “human shield” hypothesis. Our study suggests urban areas with land-sharing configuration could act as “Ecological Traps” while those with land-sparing configuration could act as “Islands of Safety”.

**Anna Ramos Chernenko** is a PhD student in the University of Granada, Spain. Anna’s PhD focuses on how to improve the design of the urban landscape for the sake of bird conservation and citizen wellbeing. Anna’s research areas include landscape ecology, urban ecology, ornithology, biodiversity studies, behavioural ecology, human - nature interactions, among others.

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THURS, 2 APRIL, 09:45 | TALK (ONLINE) | ECR PRESENTER

**Tweet or retreat? Recreation impacts on passerines in Scotland**

**Amber Cowans** (she/her)

University of St Andrews |  @ambercowans

Understanding how human recreation influences avian distributions and activity is key to effective conservation in shared landscapes. We conducted a landscape-scale passive

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acoustic monitoring study in Cairngorms Connect, Scotland's largest habitat restoration project, to examine passerine responses to human recreation in the breeding season. Using autonomous recording units deployed in a paired on- and off-trail design, we collected over 13,000 hours of data and identified species with BirdNET. Recreation intensity was quantified using Strava-derived data, providing fine-scale measures of trail use by hikers and cyclists. We analysed effects of recreation on occupancy, space use and call rates using a bayesian framework. Our results indicate species-specific responses to recreation that have implications for community structure and behaviour in shared landscapes. This study highlights how technology can generate insights into human-wildlife interactions and inform strategies to balance conservation with recreation.

**Amber Cowans** is a statistical ecologist and PhD researcher at the University of St Andrews. Her work focuses on scalable biodiversity monitoring using passive acoustics and AI. She studies how human recreation shapes bird activity and community dynamics, aiming to inform conservation strategies in shared and regenerating landscapes.

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THURS, 2 APRIL, 10:00 | TALK | ECR PRESENTER

### **A predictive model for short-term bird movement to evaluate the probability of bird strikes**

**Graciela de Cuba** (she/her)

University of Amsterdam, Netherlands & German Aerospace Center, Germany

Collisions between aircraft and wildlife pose a persistent safety and economic challenge in aviation. Current mitigation strategies help reduce risks within airports, but are insufficient to prevent bird strikes outside airfields. Accurate assessment of the probability of a strike requires knowledge of both current bird positions and near-future bird positions, to provide timely warnings to controllers and pilots. Therefore, predicting the future trajectory of birds is important to identify potential intersections with the intended aircraft trajectory, which could result in collisions. This research focuses on the development of a predictive machine learning model designed to forecast short-term bird movements around airports, using trajectory data collected by an avian radar. The accuracy of the model will be assessed, and key variables influencing bird movement will be analysed. The model predictions could be used in the future to assess collision risks not only at airports, but also in the surrounding flight corridors.

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**Graciela de Cuba** is pursuing her PhD at the University of Amsterdam and the German Aerospace Center. Combining her ecology background with aviation research, she develops predictive models of local bird movement to reduce bird strikes and enhance aviation safety.

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THURS, 2 APRIL, 11:15 | KEYNOTE

### **Who gets to see urban birds? Environmental inequality in African cities**

**Chevonne Reynolds**

University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa



I thought I was studying birds, but it turns out I was studying privilege. We spend millions counting birds, but we rarely ask who gets to see them? Cities function as strong socio-ecological filters that create winners and losers among both birds and people. These filters create inequalities in access to urban nature, but we still struggle with clear solutions to address them.

As urban populations grow globally, access to urban nature becomes increasingly important for human wellbeing. African cities are at the epicenter of this challenge, expanding faster than anywhere else while supporting exceptional bird diversity alongside extreme inequality. Birds provide an ideal lens for examining urban environmental inequality because they respond sensitively to urban change and are charismatic and well-liked.

Our research on birds across African cities demonstrates the complexity of this challenge. While cities generally support lower bird species richness than rural areas, within cities wealthy neighborhoods consistently support greater bird diversity than poorer areas. However, these disparities extend beyond species counts into ecosystem services. For example, community surveys revealed which bird species people find most appealing. When these preferences are mapped against actual distributions, wealthy communities consistently have greater access to culturally valued species. In short, socioeconomic status determines not just which birds people encounter, but their qualitative experiences of urban nature.

Our research exposes how environmental injustice is embedded in our cities. These patterns are complex, they matter for human wellbeing, and they need urgent attention. The challenge remains how do we create cities where both people and nature can thrive?

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**Chevonne Reynolds** is an Associate Professor, landscape ecologist and ornithologist at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. She completed her PhD on waterbird ecological function and postdoc on land use change and bird communities at the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology. Since joining Wits in 2018, she has focused more on urban systems—how could you not when living in this mega-city? Her research extensively uses citizen science and open data to understand socio-ecological dynamics in African cities.

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THURS, 2 APRIL, 11:45 | TALK

### Landfills as both risk and resource for juvenile White Storks during first migration

**Florian Orgeret** (he/him)

La Rochelle Université, France |  @florgeret.bsky.social

Co-authors: Camille Santaniello (La Rochelle Université - Centre d'Études Biologiques de Chizé (CNRS-UMR7372)); Raphaël Musseau (BioSphère Environnement), Anne-Sophie Bonnet-Lebrun (La Rochelle Université - Centre d'Études Biologiques de Chizé (CNRS-UMR7372)); Christophe Barbraud (La Rochelle Université - Centre d'Études Biologiques de Chizé (CNRS-UMR7372))

White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) increasingly exploit landfills, yet the role of these anthropogenic food subsidies during juvenile independence and first migration remains poorly understood, especially in western France. We tracked 32 fledglings from Gironde and Charente-Maritime (Atlantic coast, France) using GPS–GSM loggers with accelerometers, monitoring movements, landfill attendance and mortality. After an initial post-fledging exploration period, all juveniles initiated migration. Almost all visited landfills repeatedly before departure and/or en route through France, Spain and Morocco. Landfill use was associated with reduced exploratory movements and longer stopover, but also with mortality events detected via accelerometry. At the same time, predictable food availability at landfills may buffer energetic costs during this critical life stage. Juvenile storks from western France integrate landfills into early dispersal and migration. Foraging at landfills may provide both benefits and risks, and changes in landfill management could therefore have strong consequences for juvenile survival and movement behaviour.

**Florian Orgeret** is a junior lecturer-researcher at La Rochelle University / CNRS, specialising in ontogeny, movement ecology and dispersal using biologging data from juveniles. His work explores individual variation and metapopulation dynamics under global change, with a particular emphasis on seabirds and coastal birds as sentinels of environmental risks.

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THURS, 2 APRIL, 12:00 | TALK (ONLINE) | ECR PRESENTER

### **Hot in the city: can human presence modify the effects of high temperatures on urban birds?**

**Leslie Fatuma Bayanza** (she/her/hers)

FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Co-authors: Susan Cunningham, FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology; Celiwe Ngcamphalala, University of Cape Town

Climate change and urbanisation are among the most rapidly-intensifying drivers of global change. However, their impacts are often studied in isolation, despite considerable scope for synergistic effects. This study examines whether high human presence modifies effects of high temperatures on behaviour and body mass of Red-winged Starlings, *Onychognathus morio* in a highly-urbanised university campus in South Africa. We found that starlings' daily mass gain declined with higher temperatures; however, this effect occurred only on weekends when human foot traffic was low, and was buffered during weekdays. Time spent foraging was unaffected by temperature or day status, but food intake rates declined with temperature. The proportion of starlings' diet that was anthropogenic in origin was high on weekdays (>90%), suggesting high energy anthropogenic food may buffer mass losses during hot weather on weekdays. These results suggest urban resources may have the potential to buffer negative effects of climate warming for birds.

**Leslie Fatuma Bayanza** is a master's student at the University of Cape Town under the FitzPatrick African Institute of Ornithology. Leslie has an interest in climate change, wildlife conservation, and environmental education. Her master's research project is examining interactions between climate change and urbanisation on Red-winged Starlings (*Onychognathus morio*).


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THURS, 2 APRIL, 12:15 | TALK (ONLINE) | ECR PRESENTER

### **Parenting in the Anthropocene: sex-specific differences in care in House Sparrows across urban and rural habitats**

**Agnes Francila** (she/ her)

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Bhopal (IISERB), India |

 @agnesfrancila.bsky.social

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Co-authors: Dr Vinita Gowda, Associate prof, IISER Bhopal

Urbanisation alters ecological landscapes, affecting species distribution, resource availability, and predation pressures. Parental care, vital for altricial offspring, is one adaptation shaped by these changes but remains poorly understood. House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), a widespread human-commensal, provide a model to examine how anthropogenic pressures shape reproductive strategies. We investigated sex-specific contributions to parental care across eight rural and nine urban populations in the tropical climate of India, where breeding is continuous, quantifying behaviours from nest construction to food provisioning.

Our findings show that urban females invested significantly more in parental care than rural females, while male effort remained stable across habitats. Yet, despite this higher investment, reproductive success was lower in urban areas, likely due to food limitations and increased predation risk. These results highlight both the plasticity and potential costs of parental care in urban environments, underscoring the importance of behavioural adaptation for species persistence in rapidly urbanising landscapes.

**Agnes Francila** is a PhD student in animal behaviour and ecology, examining how urbanisation influences parental care and reproductive strategies in House Sparrows. Her work highlights sex-specific investment in this commensalistic species, revealing how organisms adapt to human-modified habitats. Overall, my interests lie in understanding species resilience to rapidly changing environments.

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THURS, 2 APRIL, 12:30 | TALK (ONLINE)

### **Breeding around agriculture: the disadvantage of abundance**

#### **Aviad Heifetz**

Open University of Israel, Isreal

Co-authors: Roni Ostreiher, Open University of Israel; Roger Mundry, University of Göttingen

We examine the implications for the Arabian Babbler (*Argya squamiceps*), a cooperatively breeding songbird, of agriculture expansion into its natural desert habitat. Over a 24-year period, we monitored 32 babbler groups—16 located in natural desert habitats with no access to agriculture and 16 near agricultural fields. Groups living near agriculture exhibited more nesting attempts per year and produced more eggs, nestlings, and fledglings surviving to one month of age than groups in natural habitats. However, the number of offspring that

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reached maturity did not differ between the two categories. These findings suggest that desert-based groups are more efficient breeders, producing more mature offspring per egg laid. In contrast, fledglings in agricultural areas faced higher mortality, indicating that these environments act as ecological traps. This long-term study highlights how expanding agriculture in arid regions can create deceptive opportunities for wildlife, offering immediate benefits that mask long-term survival costs.

**Aviad Heifetz** is interested in social interaction among individuals: plants and animals in their habitats, human beings in the political sphere. Aviad conducts long-term research on the Arabian Babblers in Shezaf nature reserve.

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THURS, 2 APRIL, 14:15 | TALK

### Tracking the urban ecology of the Australian White Ibis: GPS vs citizen science approaches

**Dominique Potvin** (she/her)

University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia | [@silvereyedom.bsky.social](#)

Co-authors: Ben Gilby, Yolanda Massyn, Angela Webb, Bella Chaseling

The Australian White Ibis (*Threskiornis molucca*) has adapted to urban environments, often leading to conflict with human residents. To better understand its movement and habitat use in the Moreton Bay City area (Queensland, Australia), we employed two tracking methods: GPS telemetry via mobile networks, and a citizen science program using tagged individuals and public sightings. GPS data provided fine-scale insights into roosting, feeding, and nesting patterns, revealing high mobility and individual variation. Citizen science offered broader spatial and temporal coverage, with lower resolution but greater public engagement. Notably, both methods revealed unexpected mortality rates from collisions and entanglement. Our findings highlight the need for coordinated management across local governments and suggest that improving public perception and guiding ibis to safer nesting sites may be more effective than culling. This dual-method approach offers a model for urban wildlife monitoring and conflict mitigation.

**Dominique Potvin** is an Associate Professor in Animal Ecology at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. Her research explores how animals adapt to urban environments, with a focus on evolutionary processes, behaviour, and human-wildlife interactions. She uses

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fieldwork, genetics, and citizen science to understand ecological responses to environmental change.

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THURS, 2 APRIL, 14:30 | TALK | ECR PRESENTER

### **Nature-culture linkages: co-existence of people with Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) in the Himalaya**

**Amarjeet Kaur** (she/her)

Wildlife Institute of India, India |  @amarjeetkaur.bsky.social

Co-authors: R Suresh Kumar, Scientist-F, Wildlife Institute of India

Human-wildlife conflict shapes wildlife perceptions, yet Barn Swallows in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) demonstrate unique coexistence by nesting almost exclusively on human structures. Despite global declines, Barn Swallows remain understudied in the IHR. This study systematically monitored nests from 2019 to 2023, recording breeding mainly between 1000–2000 m asl, with 79% of nests in traditional buildings in Uttarakhand region. Significant annual variation was observed in nest initiation timing. Nest failures predominantly resulted from interspecific competition, and human disturbance. Surveys of over 450 residents revealed 93% protect old nests, supporting 82% nest reuse, and 30% reported nest failures linked to competition with House Sparrows. Urbanization, changing perceptions, loss of traditional sites and changing climate pose growing threats to this common species. The study highlights the need for long-term ecological monitoring and community engagement to preserve this culturally and ecologically significant human-swallow coexistence in a changing Himalayan landscape.

**Amarjeet Kaur** is currently pursuing a PhD titled "Ecological and Phylogenetic Aspects of an Avian Aerial Insectivore: The Barn Swallow in the Himalaya". Her PhD research is the first ecological research on Barn Swallows from India. She has recently joined as a Scientist – C (Assistant Professor) at the Wildlife Institute of India.

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THURS, 2 APRIL, 14:45 | TALK | ECR PRESENTER

### **From wetlands to lawns: White Ibis urbanization in Florida through the lens of community science**

**Doreen Chaussadas** (she/they)

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University of Georgia, USA | [@doreenbirds.bsky.social](#)

Co-authors: Sonia Hernandez and Jeff Hepisntall-Cymerman (University of Georgia)

As urban landscapes expand into natural habitats, wildlife is pushed into our cities, increasingly coexisting with people. Growing urban wildlife populations provide opportunities to understand how species establish and thrive in modified environments, raising questions about adaptation, evolution, and conservation while investigating our relationship with wild species. On one hand, as urban colonizers succeed, human-wildlife conflicts may intensify; on the other, city-dwellers gain new opportunities to connect with nature. We focus on the White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), a recent urban colonizer, to investigate how a wetland specialist adapts to life on suburban lawns while forming relationships with Floridians. Ibises are now so accustomed to people that their diets are dominated by handouts. Building on this bond, we created a community-science project to study ibis behavior and urban adaptation, while also exploring how participants perceive science, purpose, and conservation in a politically conservative context.

**Doreen Chaussadas** is a PhD candidate at the University of Georgia wanting to investigate the behavioral, physiological and genetic changes that are associated with urban diets. Using White Ibises as a steward prompted Doreen to start a community science project which has offered insights into people's perception of urban ecology and conservation.

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THURS, 2 APRIL, 15:00 | KEYNOTE

### **From persecution to protection: Tracking Galápagos Short-eared Owls through human-driven change**

**Petra Sumasgutner**

Konrad Lorenz Research Center, University of Vienna, Austria |

[@pesumas.bsky.social](#)



Co-authors: Petra Sumasgutner, Shane Sumasgutner, Paula A Castaño, Josué D Arteaga-Torres, Jens Koblitz, Timm Wild, Martin Wikelski, Sonia Kleindorfer

The Galápagos archipelago is often portrayed as untouched nature, yet Floreana's history tells another story: human settlement introduced invasive mammals and persecution that drove several endemic species to extinction and left the Galápagos Short-eared Owl vulnerable. Today, conservationists aim to "turn back the clock" through Floreana Rewild, one of the world's largest eradication projects targeting rodents and feral cats. For owls,

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however, this human-led restoration carries risks of secondary poisoning, prompting the safeguarding of 65 individuals in captivity until the environment is safe. We combined GPS and accelerometer tracking to assess survival, movements, and recolonisation potential, while working with the local community to promote an owl-friendly future. Within months of bait application, owls recolonised Floreana naturally, revealing greater inter-island connectivity than previously assumed. This case highlights how technology, necropsies, and education together inform conservation, and how the fate of island predators depends on people both as threats and as custodians.

**Petra Sumasgutner** is a movement ecologist and raptor expert at the University of Vienna. Her research focuses on human–nature interactions, especially how predators and scavengers navigate anthropogenic landscapes. Combining tracking technology, behavioural ecology, and conservation practice, she investigates raptor ecology to inform biodiversity protection in changing environments.

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POSTER

### Using bioacoustics to assess the impact of evergreen invasive plants on bird communities in Wales, United Kingdom

**Oluwadunsin Adekola** (he/him)

Sparsholt College, UK | 

Co-authors: Tomos Siôn Jonesa (North Wales Wildlife Trust), Katharina Dehnen-Schmutza (Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR), Coventry University)

Invasive alien species are one of the major drivers of biodiversity loss, with birds among the most vulnerable taxa affected by their impacts. However, their potential impacts on bird communities have rarely been investigated, particularly through bioacoustic monitoring and citizen science approaches. Here, we present a pilot study testing the feasibility of using bioacoustic monitoring, supported by citizen scientists, to explore how the formation of an evergreen shrub layer of invasive alien plants (*Rhododendron ponticum* and *Prunus laurocerasus*) may influence bird communities in broadleaved woodlands in Wales, United Kingdom. We trained volunteer citizen scientists on how to use passive acoustic monitoring devices (AudioMoths) to record bird calls. We then used the BirdNET software to identify bird species from 480 hours of audio recordings. A total of 28 bird species from 17 families were identified from the recordings. Overall, call frequency did not differ between the control and invaded plots. However, call frequency varied significantly across trophic niches, with omnivores showing a marked increase in call frequency in invaded plot. Our results highlight

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that invasive plants may not affect bird communities the same way. This pilot study shows that bioacoustic monitoring is an effective tool for investigating invasive species impacts and that it can be integrated with citizen science to assess how invasive evergreen shrubs influence bird communities.

**Oluwadunsin Adekola** is an academic and researcher at the University Centre Sparsholt, Sparsholt College, Hampshire, UK. In 2022, he completed his PhD at the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, South Africa, and recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Coventry University, UK, where he used bioacoustics data to assess the impacts of invasive plant species on birds.

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POSTER

### **Tip of the iceberg: estimating the true extent of raptor persecution associated with grouse shooting**

**Arjun Amar** (he/him)

FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Co-authors: Koi Pillay, Rob Thomson - FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town; Steven Ewing, RSPB

Despite decades of legal protection, raptors continue to be persecuted in the UK, particularly in the uplands where red grouse shooting conflicts with raptor conservation. Detecting persecution associated with this conflict is challenging due to its illegality and the remoteness of grouse moors, meaning official crime records likely represent only the 'tip of the iceberg,' with many incidents remaining hidden as 'dark figures.' Here, we attempt to estimate the true extent of illegal persecution, informed by published evidence on persecution levels and population data for Hen Harriers, Peregrine Falcons, Red Kites, and Golden Eagles. We then compare these estimates to recorded crime figures for the same species, period, and regions. Our findings suggest the actual scale of persecution is substantially greater than detected cases, underscoring the importance of recognising and accounting for 'dark figures' to avoid underestimating the severity of this threat to raptor populations.

**Arjun Amar** is an Associate Professor at the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology. His research is focused on avian ecology and conservation biology, with a taxonomic focus on raptors. He has worked for both conservation NGO's and in academia. Arjun leads a large research group and has published >130 peer-reviewed papers.



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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

**Investigating the impact of UAV noise on bird activity: a playback experiment**

**Sam Barrett** (he/him)

University of Salford, UK |  @sambarrett97.bsky.social

Co-authors: Sam Barrett, Glen Hancocks, Marc Green, Reece Woodcock, Ali Alameer, Antonio Torija Martinez, Amy Leedale, Mike Wood

Advancements in unoccupied aerial vehicle (UAV) technology have transformed the commercial sector with innovations such as delivery services, precision agriculture and urban air mobility. However, the ecological impacts of UAVs, particularly their unique noise profiles, remain poorly understood. Birds, due to their wide distribution, sensitivity to acoustic disturbance, and shared airspace with UAVs, were selected as the focal taxa for this study.

We developed a remotely operated speaker system to replicate UAV noise and conducted playback experiments at feeding stations. Noise exposure events occurred twice daily, alternating between a white noise control treatment and UAV noise, over a six-day period. This study provides an initial step towards understanding how UAV noise influences bird behaviour. Findings will inform future research and support the development of noise mitigation strategies and operational guidelines to reduce wildlife disturbance as UAV use continues to expand.

**Sam Barrett** is a PhD student at the University of Salford with interests in bioacoustics and the effect of noise pollution on wildlife. He is currently researching the impact of drone noise on birds, using passive acoustic recorders and computer vision techniques to assess avian response to simulated take-off/landing events.

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POSTER

**Can the common interests of conservation and shooting be harnessed for mutual benefits?**

**Mark Eddowes** (he/him)

Independent researcher |  @markeddowes.bsky.social

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Conservation and shooting groups have common interests: ground nesting bird breeding success. There can be no doubt that some of our ground nesting birds benefit from some moorland management practices, including habitat and predator management, funded by shooting interests. However, perceived conflicts between conservation and shooting are driving out the latter in some areas, reducing management activities. The adverse consequences for a range of species are evident on the Peak District Moors. These observations raise the question whether the current conflicts between the more extreme positions adopted by some within both groups might be replaced by some compromise to provide mutual benefits.

**Mark Eddowes** has a life-long interest in ornithology, pursued in a voluntary capacity through county ornithological societies, the British Trust for Ornithology and the British Ornithologists' Union, of which he is currently the Honorary Treasurer. He undertakes his own research, covering wader breeding success in the uplands.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### **Multi-season density patterns of sympatric synanthropic birds along the rural-urban gradient in Northern India**

**Anamika Gautam** (she/her)

Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History

Co-authors: Dr Ashutosh Singh and Dr Ridhika Kalle, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History

Urbanization alters habitats, affecting bird diversity, behaviour, and distribution. To assess the influence of season and landscape factors on the species density. To investigate the role of density in understanding coexistence/competition mechanisms among sympatric synanthropic bird species. We surveyed 194 fixed points, across consistent sites in both summer and winter seasons. Pearson correlation and NMDS assessed habitat variation across urban-rural gradient. We used open-population distance sampling to estimate bird density and growth rates, accounting for habitat variables and weather-based detection variation. NMDS (stress<0.06) for both summer and winter showed 25% rural-urban overlap; semiurban transitioned. Sixty-five percent of species showed significant differences in predicted density across the landscape gradient ( $P < 0.05$ ) in both seasons. The density of

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frugivores, omnivore was higher in winter while granivores, insectivores showed species specific seasonal peak. Sympatric frugivores were higher in urban gradient and other foraging guilds were higher along the rural gradient. The study highlights the coexistence of frugivore sympatric species in winter due to seasonal resource abundance. We found that higher abundance of sympatric omnivore, nectarivore and granivore in rural spaces provide resources for spatial variation in site-abundance. The opposite density pattern of sympatric species from shows spatial niche differentiation.

**Anamika Gautam** is a passionate wildlife researcher and PhD student specializing in bird ecology. Her work focuses on understanding bird diversity and density across urban–rural landscapes. With a strong interest in conservation, she combines field surveys and ecological analysis to inform sustainable planning and protect biodiversity in changing environments.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### **What is needed to save the world's birds? Understanding the conservation action gap**

#### **Holly Green**

University of Sheffield, UK

Co-authors: Gavin Thomas (University of Sheffield), Rob Martin (Birdlife International) and Karl Evans (University of Sheffield)

Effective conservation action is critical for halting the decline of bird populations, nearly half of which are decreasing due to threats like habitat loss, invasive species and overexploitation. Yet despite many conservation successes, failure to meet conservation outcomes demonstrates a “conservation action gap” – the difference between actions needed and those carried out. These gaps occur due to failure in funding, capacity or implementation stage.

This project explores the conservation action gap by developing a replicable framework to quantify gaps and understand the factors influencing them. It tests the hypothesis that conservation needs, implemented actions, and the gap between these vary in relation to Red List threat status, across taxonomic groups, spatial regions and ecological traits. This identifies where efforts are falling short, highlights priority species and regions, and provides a framework to guide more effective global bird conservation.

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**Holly Green** is a PhD student at University of Sheffield working with Birdlife International on the conservation action gap in birds. With a background in behavioural ecology, public environmental engagement and behaviour change initiatives, she is passionate about improving applied conservation through a deeper understanding of drivers of action.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### Can bird morphology and ancestry explain drone noise sensitivity? Insights from comparative modelling approaches

**Glen Hancocks**

University of Salford, UK | [@gleneth93.bsky.social](#)

Co-authors: Sam Barrett, Prof Mike Wood and Dr Amy Leedale

The use of uncrewed aerial systems (UAS), commonly referred to as drones, has rapidly expanded across scientific, commercial, and medical domains. In ecology, drones are valuable tools for data collection and monitoring. As their presence in global airspace increases, it is crucial to understand how drone noise may impact wildlife. Birds, with over 11,000 recognised species and a cosmopolitan distribution, represent ideal model organisms due to their sensitivity to environmental change. This research investigated whether evolutionary history and morphology predict avian sensitivity to drone noise. Using secondary data, we compiled a database of vocal and hearing traits, morphology, and ecology for over 70 species, analysed via phylogenetic and allometric modelling. Initial results suggest vocal learners (e.g., Psittaciformes) and species with lower dominant vocal frequencies are less sensitive. We predict body mass and cranial morphometrics to be key indicators of vulnerability. This research will inform drone-use guidelines in sensitive areas.

**Glen Hancocks** is a PhD student at the University of Salford. He holds a BSc in Wildlife Conservation and Zoo Biology and an MSc in the phylogeny of waterfowl (family Anatidae). He now researches the impacts of drone noise on birds as part of the EU-funded RefMap project.

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POSTER

### Conflicts between the White-cheeked Starling and people in Japan

**Hiroshi Hashimoto** (he/him/his)

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Meijo University, Japan | [@hi-hashimoto.bsky.social](#)

Co-authors: Kotonno Hirooka, Sanami Higuchi, Kaori Kato (Meijo University)

White-cheeked Starlings are increasingly forming roosts in urban areas across Japan, especially in street trees near stations. Large communal roosts form from summer into autumn, after the breeding season ends and the young birds have fledged. Previously, roosts would move to suburban bamboo groves in winter, but urban expansion has reduced such locations. As a result, some roosts now remain in urban areas year-round. Starlings prefer urban settings, where high foot traffic reduces predation and mid-to-high-rise buildings provide shelter from wind and rain. However, in these busy areas, issues arise between people and starlings in various places. This is not only because of the loud calls of large flocks but also because droppings fall onto pedestrians. Various efforts to dislodge starling roosts have been undertaken in different locations. Focusing on Nagoya City in central Japan, we will introduce the ongoing challenges between starlings and humans.

Hiroshi Hashimoto is an associate professor at Department of Environmental Bioscience, Faculty of Agriculture, Meijo University, Japan. He is a landscape ecologist and an ornithologist especially focusing on birds in urban and rural areas. He is a member of the BOU since 2016.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### **Quantifying historical egg harvesting and compounded drivers of Sooty Tern decline in Seychelles**

**Thalissa Inch**

Zoological Society of London, UK

Co-authors: Catharine Horswill, Malcolm Nicoll, David Murrell

In 2015, the Western Indian Ocean supported approximately half of the global Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) population, with an estimated 2.3 million breeding pairs in Seychelles. By 2023, the Seychelles national census recorded fewer than one million pairs, representing a 60% decline in less than a decade. Egg harvesting, long embedded in local culture, has been a major driver of these losses. However, despite the introduction of a nationwide moratorium in 2021, populations have continued to decline, indicating additional pressures such as habitat modification, vegetation encroachment, and shifts in food availability.

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Reliable assessment of these drivers is constrained by irregular monitoring and limited data on harvest intensity and habitat change. This study integrates diverse and previously disparate datasets, including colony-specific harvest records, to evaluate long-term trends in Sooty Tern colony sizes. We further examine the influence of nesting site characteristics, habitat change, and vegetation dynamics on population trajectories across Seychelles.

**Thalissa Inch** is a PhD student at the Institute of Zoology, ZSL and UCL, researching Sooty Tern population ecology in Seychelles. Thalissa's work examines drivers of change including egg harvesting, habitat and diet. Thalissa previously worked in sustainability PR and holds an MSc in Human Sciences and Evolution from UCL.

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BLUESKY-ONLY | ECR PRESENTER

### **No place like home! Understanding landowner motivations for engaging in bobwhite conservation in Kansas, USA**

**Bhavya Iyer** (she/her)

University of Georgia, USA | 

Co-authors: Bhavya Iyer (1, 2); Elizabeth Pienaar (1); James Martin (1); Jeff Prendergast (3); Jeffrey Hepinstall-Cymerman (1). 1 Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia, Athens, GA, USA. 2 Center for Integrative Conservation Research, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, USA. 3 Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, Hays, KA, USA.

Conservationists and policymakers increasingly recognize the need to involve people in conservation. For species such as the Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), effective conservation requires agencies and landowners to work together to manage habitat across the species range. The population of the Northern Bobwhite has declined drastically across the eastern United States. Over 95% of land in Kansas, a bobwhite range state, is privately owned, making landowner involvement necessary for positive conservation outcomes.

Understanding what motivates landowners to participate in stewardship programs is a necessary for conserving bobwhite habitat. Research shows that aligning program goals and methods with landowner values enhances participation in such conservation projects. By coding semi-structured interviews for values, I identify landowner motivations for, and barriers to, engaging in bobwhite conservation programs in Kansas. I assess landowner decision making through the lens of relational values, with particular reference to landowners' identity and relationship to nature, stewardship and conservation.

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**Bhavya Iyer** is a nature writer and wildlife biologist interested in interdisciplinary conservation research, including peoples' values regarding nature and stewardship, and bird habitat use in heterogeneous landscapes. She is a student in the Integrative Conservation (ICON) PhD program at the University of Georgia.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### **Bird-mediated cultural ecosystem services and urban development type**

**Lucía Izquierdo** (she/hers)

University of Granada

Co-authors:

1. Kai M.A. Chan. Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada
2. Alejandra Echeverri. Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA;
3. Anna Ramos. Department of Zoology, Faculty of Sciences, University of Granada, Granada, Spain
4. Juan Diego Ibáñez-Álamo. Department of Zoology, Faculty of Sciences, University of Granada, Granada, Spain

Urbanization drives important changes in bird communities as well as in the way citizens interact with them, having direct consequences on the cultural ecosystem services (CES) and disservices they provide. In this context, urban areas are developed along a gradient that varies between two extremes: land-sharing (small and fragmented green patches) and land-sparing (large and continuous green areas). This gradient leads to differences in bird diversity and in human–nature interactions, probably affecting CES and disservices provision. We follow an eco-sociological approach (combining bird censuses and social surveys) to examine the CES and disservices provided by all the species. We found differences in perception among species. Additionally, we found that people's perception varies across the landscape gradient and depending on socio-demographic factors. These results can help to better understand citizen perceptions of birds, which is vital for ecosystem service planning and for reconnecting people with nature in urban areas.

**Lucía Izquierdo** is a conservation biologist in the final stages of my PhD at the University of Granada (Spain). Her research focuses on urban bird ecology. She is investigating how urban design influences bird communities, human–nature interactions and people's perceptions of birds and the ecosystem services they provide.



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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

**Investigating links between recreational activity and cavity-nesting songbird parent behaviour**

**Gavin Kellerman** (he/him)  
University of Exeter, UK

Co-authors: Songbird Survival


Recreational disturbance impacts are well-studied for coastal birds, but less so for woodland passerines. Among passerines, nestbox proximity to recreation can impede nestling growth and success, but the proximal causes of these effects are as yet only inferred. This study investigates how recreational disturbance affects parent behaviour and, in turn, breeding success of cavity nesters. Recreational intensity will be measured using distance to path as a proxy, and camera traps will be used to monitor parent visitation rates to cavity nestlings. Nest success metrics of clutch size, hatching rate, and fledging rate will be gathered via an ongoing nestbox monitoring scheme. Nestboxes closer to paths are predicted to have lower parent visitation rates. In turn, nestboxes with lower parent visitation are predicted to have lower nest success. The results will be discussed in the context of responsible recreational behaviours and management strategies that balance human and avian needs.

**Gavin Kellerman** is a second year PhD candidate at the University of Exeter focusing on recreational disturbance and songbirds. His research explores both the avian and human dimensions of recreation, including direct ecological impacts, spatial patterns of human site use, and motivations surrounding target recreational behaviours.

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POSTER

**Birds and people: bird conservation narratives used around the world**

**Jakub Kronenberg** (he/him)  
Social-Ecological Systems Analysis Lab, University of Lodz, Poland |  
 @jakubkronenberg.bsky.social

Co-authors: Erik Andersson, Chris Sandbrook

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We analyse the responses obtained during 75 semi-structured interviews with people working in bird conservation around the world. The interviews reflect a diversity of bird conservation organisations in terms of size and location (over half from the Global South). While anthropocentric and instrumental arguments seem to prevail, and the benefits provided by birds are an important topic featured in bird conservation narratives, some organisations refer to non-anthropocentric and intrinsic arguments. One particularly important emerging theme is connectedness to nature, reflecting relational arguments. We structure the arguments that appeared in the interviews along the different gradients, such as anthropocentric–non-anthropocentric and cold-scientific–passionate. We suggest that the different bird conservation narratives reflect the persistence of the classic divide into pragmatic or practical and sentimental groups. The boundaries between these groups may be more blurry now than in the past, given how many organisations pragmatically use different arguments to talk to different audiences.

**Jakub Kronenberg** is an ecological economist working on the diverse values of nature, environmental justice, and the institutional context of environmental protection, especially in the context of urban green spaces and birds. He aims to reform how economics frames nature.

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POSTER

### **The transformation of British society's relationship with birds at the turn of the 20th century**

**Jakub Kronenberg** (he/him)

Social-Ecological Systems Analysis Lab, University of Lodz, Poland |

 @jakubkronenberg.bsky.social

British people's relationships with birds changed at the turn of the 20th century. Killing birds for food, feathers, collections, and sports gave way to seeing birds as creatures that deserved the right to live their own lives in nature. The campaign against using birds in fashion provides a key example of how conservationists started to change people's relationship with birds, offering insights into present discussions on the value of nature and how to leverage values for broader sustainability transformation. The wearing of bird feathers by women was debated in the media, on the streets, in shopping environments, and on many other occasions. The campaign against feather fashions was instrumental in creating the (Royal) Society for the Protection of Birds [(R)SPB]. This study is based on an

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analysis of around 200 leaflets, reports, academic and popular science articles, letters, and other documents, mostly associated with the (R)SPB, covering three decades (1889-1921).

**Jakub Kronenberg** is an ecological economist working on the diverse values of nature, environmental justice, and the institutional context of environmental protection, especially in the context of urban green spaces and birds. He aims to reform how economics frames nature.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### Exploring the effects of linguistic imperialism on engagement with ornithological knowledge in Catalonia

**Rowan Kuminski** (they/them)

University of Aberdeen, UK |  @RowanKuminski.bsky.social

Co-authors: Greta Bocedi (University of Aberdeen), Bennett Collins (University of Aberdeen)

Catalonia contains important habitats and populations of avifauna, many of which are Threatened; therefore, Catalonia hosts numerous conservation initiatives. However, much of the literature from this region is published in English or Spanish, despite Catalan being the official language of Catalonia. Our objective is to explore how linguistic imperialism – imposition and valuation of certain language(s) over others – affects engagement with ornithological knowledge produced in Catalonia but published in other languages. We hypothesize that Catalan ornithologists feel more inclined to engage with studies that utilise Catalan, including Catalan translations, abstracts, and names for species or habitats. We will conduct interviews with Catalan ornithologists and perform a Critical Discourse Analysis of peer-reviewed literature on biologically or culturally relevant species – informed by interviews – to summarise the linguistic discourse surrounding these species in Catalonia. This will serve as a case study for conservation initiatives in contexts where a regional language is spoken.

**Rowan Kuminski** is a PhD student at University of Aberdeen, and studies predation on seabirds as well as interdisciplinary approaches to addressing social barriers in ecology. They are specifically interested in linguistics and combatting language biases, but also work on initiatives to make ornithology more inclusive for LGBTQIA+ participants.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### **Ears in the orchard: using passive acoustic monitoring to detect and deter bird damage in fruit production**

**Michiel Lathouwers** (he/him)

Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO), Belgium

Co-authors: Natalie Beenaerts - Hasselt University; Tim Beliën - PCFruit

Bird damage to fruit crops is a major challenge for growers, yet remains difficult to predict and prevent due to its scattered, inconsistent nature. This project investigates passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) as a tool for objectively detecting when, where, and which bird species are responsible for damage. By linking PAM data to direct damage assessments and validating it with point-transect bird counts, we evaluate its reliability for monitoring bird-related fruit damage. These insights will support the development of a spatiotemporal risk model for Haspengouw, Flanders' key fruit-growing region, to help producers assess orchard-level risk and adapt management strategies. PAM also guides the targeted use of acoustic deterrents, which currently lose effectiveness due to habituation. By activating them only when damaging species are detected, deterrents will become more effective and less intrusive. Together, these three pillars form a novel, science-based approach to managing bird damage in fruit production and promoting coexistence with birds in agricultural landscapes.

**Michiel Lathouwers**, through his background in behavioural ecology, bridges both sides of human–bird interactions: how human activity affects birds, and how birds impact human interests. In his current role at the Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) he investigates wildlife damage and prevention, aiming to foster coexistence in an increasingly human-dominated world.

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BLUESKY-ONLY

### **Honey-hunting with honeyguides in northern Malawi: insights and lessons for conservation**

**George Malembo M'manga** (he/him/his)

Mzuzu University, Malawi | [@georgem88.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/georgem88.bsky.social)

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Co-authors: Lusayo Mwabumba (Mzuzu University), Tiwonge Mzumara-Gawa (Malawi University of Science and Technology) & Jessica van der Wal (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, Max Planck Institute for Biological Intelligence)

Positive human-wildlife interactions can offer powerful lessons for human-wildlife coexistence. We present our findings of the first study on human-honeyguide cooperation in northern Malawi. We interviewed 119 honey-hunters to investigate honey-hunting practices with honeyguides, their cultural significance, and threats to their persistence. We found that honey-hunting with honeyguides widely occurs, with wild honey valued for food, income, medicine, and ceremonies. Honey-hunters attract honeyguides using whistles or blowing instruments and reward them with wax combs, sustaining mutual trust. Reported threats include deforestation and agricultural expansion reducing bee and honeyguide habitats, the rise of beekeeping, and declining interest among youth. While the practice appears to be in decline, its cultural and economic significance suggests it will likely persist alongside beekeeping. Finally, we discuss how this example of human-wildlife cooperation offers valuable lessons for mitigating human-wildlife conflict by demonstrating how mutual benefits, traditional knowledge, and stable interactions can foster coexistence.

**George Malembo M'manga** is a conservationist from Malawi, with BSc and MSc degrees in Forestry and Environmental Management from Mzuzu University, Malawi. For his MSc thesis, he studied human-honeyguide cooperation in northern Malawi, and lessons to be learnt from this inspiring form of human-wildlife cooperation for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management.

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BLUESKY-ONLY | ECR PRESENTER

### **Predator call exposure during avian embryogenesis alters nestling physiology**

**Raena McCown** (she/her)

University of Georgia, USA |  @raenasbluebirds

Co-authors: Dr. Kristen Navara

Avian embryogenesis has traditionally been considered insulated from external influence. However, accumulating evidence indicates that embryos perceive acoustic cues, with lifelong consequences for phenotype and survival. To test the effects of predator calls, we conducted a field experiment on Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) across 120 nestboxes (February–August 2025). Experimental clutches were exposed to predator calls on incubation days 10–12, while

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controls were unmanipulated. Offspring were subsequently assessed for growth, behavior, and corticosterone responses.

Preliminary results show that predator-call exposure significantly reduced hatch success and decreased tarsal symmetry relative to controls ( $p < 0.001$ ). These findings demonstrate that acoustic environments during embryogenesis shape early morphology and survival. By revealing how anthropogenic and natural sounds influence avian development, this research highlights the sensitivity of wild birds to environmental noise, underscoring the importance of soundscapes in conservation and in sustaining coexistence between people and wildlife.


**Raena McCown** is a PhD student co-advised by Dr. Sonia Hernandez and Dr. Andrew Benson at the University of Georgia. She is interested in the ecological physiology of Passeriformes, with a focus on how varying conditions during oogenesis and embryogenesis can alter fitness in wild avian populations.

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BLUESKY-ONLY

### Community perception of vultures in bridging areas: challenges and opportunity for coexistence

**Pascal Murhula Mirindi** (he/him)

Gaston Berger University & Cheikh Anta Diop University, Senegal & Université Officielle de Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo | 

Co-authors: Pape Ibnou Ndiaye: Laboratoire de Biologie évolutive – Ecologie et gestion des écosystèmes, Département de Biologie animale, Faculté des Sciences et Techniques, Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, Sénégal, Bertin Murhabale: Université Officielle de Bukavu, Adrien Coly: Université gaston Berger de saint louis

The aim of this study is to examine the challenges and opportunities for coexistence between local communities and Rüppell's vultures (*Gyps rueppelli*) in the Bandia Forest Reserve in Senegal. Ornithological monitoring and interviews with communities were used to assess nesting habits, traditional uses and local attitudes towards the species. The results show that vulture's nest close to human dwellings, which led to an analysis of local perceptions. Thirty-four per cent of respondents said that vultures are hunted, mainly for ritual (34%) and medicinal (20%) purposes. Perceptions remain largely negative, with 84% of respondents considering vultures to be harmful, regardless of their level of education. However, 90% of respondents recognise their essential role as scavengers. This recognition

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and social acceptance have been exploited as an opportunity to develop ecotourism that promotes sustainable interactions between communities and cultures in shared landscapes.

**Pascal Murhula** is a biologist born in the DRC. Currently in Senegal for training in ornithology, he is a volunteer at NCD BirdLife Senegal and a member of the African Bird Club. He has received a Rufford grant for the Vautour 2024 project and a Wildlife Acoustics Grant 2023.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### **Urban disturbance suppresses anti-predator responses in Red-whiskered Bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*)**

**Sabah Mushtaq Puswal** (she/her)  
Guangdong Academy of Sciences, China

Co-authors: Yiming Hu and Huijian Hu Guangdong Academy of Sciences, China)

Urban environments create new challenges for bird-people relationships, as human disturbance alters how birds respond to threats. To investigate this, we conducted predator model experiments on Red-whiskered Bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) in urban parks in Guangzhou using sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), cat (*Felis catus*), and dove (*Spilopelia chinensis*) models. Preliminary results indicated predator-specific defences: sparrowhawk models elicited strong vigilance, alarm calling, and close approaches, while cat models triggered calling and congregation, and dove models provoked minimal responses. These behaviours, however, were context dependent. At moderately disturbed sites bulbuls displayed robust anti-predator responses, whereas in noisier, crowded areas, anti-predator responses were strongly attenuated, with sparrowhawk models rarely provoking alarm calls. This preliminary evidence suggests that urban disturbance can compromise critical survival strategies, highlighting how human activity reshapes bird behaviour. Understanding such dynamics is vital for managing biodiversity in cities and for fostering coexistence between people and birds in rapidly changing urban landscapes.

**Sabah Mushtaq Puswal** is a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute of Zoology, Guangdong Academy of Sciences, China. Her research focuses on bird behavioural ecology, acoustic communication, and how urban environments influence anti-predator responses, aiming to understand and promote coexistence between people and birds in cities.

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BLUESKY-ONLY

### Recreational honey-hunting with honeyguides in the Kingdom of Eswatini

#### Sanele Nhlabatsi

University of Eswatini, Eswatini | 

Co-authors: 1. Jessica van der Wal, Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology & Max Planck Institute for Biological Intelligence

2. Celiwe Ngcampalala, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Cape Town

In parts of Africa, people and Greater Honeyguides (*Indicator indicator*) cooperate to access bees' nests, from which humans harvest honey and honeyguides get wax. We present the first investigation of human–honeyguide cooperation in Eswatini, based on interviews with 83 honey-hunters and beekeepers, and observations of a honey-hunt. We documented the practice, associated cultural traditions, and its continuity. We show that honey-hunting with honeyguides is widespread in Eswatini, mainly as a recreational activity among young boys who herd cattle. Honey-hunters use acoustic signals such as chopping wood, verbal praises, and whistles on hollowed fruit or plastic objects to communicate with honeyguides. They reward birds with beeswax, fearing encounters with dangerous animals if they do not. Skills are passed down by elders and spread among peers. Despite decline due to education, employment, and habitat loss, the practice is expected to continue, sustained by cultural and social importance rather than economic incentives.

**Sanele Nhlabatsi** is a field ecologist specialising in animal ecology, with experience studying birds, small mammals and bats. Sanele's latest research focuses on investigating traditional human–honeyguide cooperation in their home country, the Kingdom of Eswatini, and highlights how local cultural knowledge can support species conservation and promote positive relationships between people and birds.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### The impact of human presence on birds differs by season in urban green spaces

#### Akinori Nishi

Meijo University, Japan

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Co-authors: Hiroshi Hashimoto, Meijo University

In Nagoya City, Japan, greenery has markedly decreased over the past 30 years. This study focused on street trees that connect urban parks with scattered green spaces across the city. Our aim was to clarify how human presence and other environmental factors affect bird populations. During the wintering and breeding season of 2024, we conducted four 20-minute observations at each of nine locations, including parks and adjacent street tree areas. We set up 50 m × 10 m areas where *Zelkova serrata*, a deciduous tree species, was dominant, and recorded bird activity. GLM analyses revealed a negative correlation between pedestrian numbers and bird abundance during the breeding season, but no such relationship in winter. These findings suggest that urban birds do not avoid street trees where there are many pedestrians, as foraging sites in winter, but avoid them as their nest-sites during the breeding season.

**Akinori Nishi** is currently enrolled in the Graduate School of Agriculture, Meijo University.

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POSTER

### Exploring local insights on the drivers of Nigeria's Grey Parrots decline and its conservation implications

**Ngozi Mercy Okafor** (she/her)

A. P Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI), University of Jos, Nigeria

Co-authors: Dr Shola Iwajomo University of Lagos; Dr Talatu Tende A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI), University of Jos

This poster addresses the increasing decline of Nigeria's endangered Grey Parrot population attributed to habitat loss, illegal trade, belief-based use, and low community awareness. It examines local knowledge and perceptions to understand the drivers of threats and design sustainable conservation strategies for the species and its habitat. Structured questionnaires were conducted in selected communities surrounding the Afi River Forest Reserve, Nigeria. Data were collected on respondent demographics, species awareness, sightings, threats, local uses, and attitudes towards conservation. The research revealed that most respondents are familiar with the species but have limited knowledge of their endangered status and legal protection. Deforestation and illegal trade were identified as the main threats. Many respondents expressed willingness to support conservation efforts, emphasising the need for awareness and community-inclusive conservation initiatives. By

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highlighting key threats, examining socio-economic drivers behind them, and identifying knowledge gaps, this research can inform targeted education, policy advocacy, and engagement efforts.

**Ngozi Mercy Okafor** is a bio-conservationist and ornithologist with an Msc. Conservation Biology from APLORI. Her research focuses on avian ecology, community-based conservation, and the impact of anthropogenic effects on wildlife. She has led field research and community efforts to enhance the conservation of the Grey Parrot in Nigeria's forest reserves.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### Effects of urban high temperature and greenery on the breeding of Eurasian Tree Sparrow

**Yutaro Okamura** (he/his/him)

Meijo University, Japan

Co-authors: Hiroshi Hashimoto (Meijo University)

The present study examined how air temperature and greenery in urban areas of Nagoya City, Japan, influence the nest-site selection of *Passer montanus*, which mainly use artificial structures. We conducted route censuses around Sakae Station and Shirakawa Park to locate nests. Using artificial nest devices designed to mimic the nests in artificial structures, we estimated the temperature of the nests. Additionally, we measured air temperature along the survey route. A total of twenty-three nests were found within the 8.5-km survey route. Nests were often found in Shirakawa Park and nearby areas, while no nests were observed in regions with high air temperatures, and a similar pattern was seen in the presence of young birds. Our results suggest that both air temperature and greenery coverage, which often correlate negatively, influence nest-site and chick-rearing site selection. The highest recorded nest temperature was 47.9°C.

**Yutaro Okamura** is currently enrolled in the master's program at Meijo University's Graduate School of Agriculture. He is interested in the ecology and reproduction of tree sparrows and is currently conducting research on nesting and breeding within Aichi Prefecture, Japan. He is fascinated by the tree sparrow's cute appearance.



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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

**Designing for birds: the integration of artificial habitat features in major English housing developments**

**Thomas Oliver** (he/him)

University of Oxford, UK

Urban development continues to erode and fragment habitats, displacing bird communities that depend on them. In response, artificial habitat features (AHFs) – such as swift bricks and sparrow terraces – are increasingly promoted by governments, NGOs, and developers as tools to compensate for habitat loss and support bird diversity. Yet, despite their growing use, little is known about how AHFs are integrated into the design of new housing developments or the extent to which they address human–bird conflict in urban settings. This study examines planning documents from major residential developments approved between 2021 and 2025 across the ten fastest-growing local authorities in England. It explores how AHFs for birds are recommended by ecologists, incorporated by developers, and supported by commitments to maintain and monitor efficacy. By evaluating the practical implementation of AHFs, this study provides insight into how urban development may both challenge and create opportunities for future human–bird coexistence.

**Thomas Oliver's** research on artificial habitats for birds began during an MSc in Biodiversity, Conservation and Management at the University of Oxford, where he now continues with a PGCert in Ecological Survey Techniques. He also serves as the Environmental Manager at DESNZ and sits on the BES English Policy Group.

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BLUESKY-ONLY

**Mutualism between honeyguides, beekeepers and honey-hunters in southern Tanzania**

**Amana Othman Kilawi** (she/her)

Tanzania Forest Conservation Group, Tanzania |  @Kilawiothman.bsky.social

Co-authors: Eliupendo Laltaika (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology), Jessica van der Wal (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, Max Planck Institute for Biological Intelligence), David

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Lloyd-Jones (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology), Claire Spottiswoode (FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cambridge)

The wax-eating Greater Honeyguide engages in mutualism with humans by leading them to bees' nests, which people harvest using smoke and tools, while the birds feed on leftover wax. Although the relationship between honeyguides and honey-hunters is well known, their relationship with beekeepers is less understood. We studied the relationship between people and honeyguides in southern Tanzania, where honey-hunting and beekeeping are important livelihoods. We interviewed 150 people across 20 mixed culture communities, visited beekeeping camps, and set camera traps to investigate the fate of beeswax left behind. We find that: (i) honeyguides and beekeepers often cooperate: birds lead them to harvest-ready hives, and receive empty combs in return; (ii) despite being illegal, honey-hunting with honeyguides persists, with honey-hunters using specialised signals; (iii) beekeeping is not less destructive than honey-hunting; (iv) honey-hunting with honeyguides is declining, yet beekeepers' use of guides could help sustain human-honeyguide mutualism.

**Amana Othman Kilawi** is a Tanzanian conservation biologist with expertise in human-wildlife interactions, rangeland management, and community-based conservation. She holds a MSc degree from the University of Cape Town, for which she studied human-honeyguide interactions in southern Tanzania. She is currently working in Long Fallows Project, Tanzania.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### **A global review of research on human-wildlife conflicts involving raptors as predators**

**Koi Pillay** (he/they)

University of Cape Town, South Africa | [@koipillay.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/koipillay.bsky.social)

Co-authors: Arjun Amar, Robert Thomson

Human-raptor conflict has been the subject of increasing research attention, yet no comprehensive review of this literature previously existed. To address this gap, we examined 196 published papers, finding that the number of studies has grown steadily over time, with current levels being the highest recorded. Research has been conducted across three main systems: conflicts with game species (54%), livestock (35%), and, to a much lesser extent, companion animals such as pets and racing pigeons (11%). Over time, the research focus has shifted from ecological studies to more social science, such as stakeholder perceptions.

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Research effort reflected livestock practices and game management governance, with more research on where livestock was managed extensively or where game management occurs on private land. Importantly, research patterns may reflect funding priorities and stakeholder influence rather than the true scale of conflict, leaving perspectives from underrepresented groups, particularly in the Global South, overlooked.

**Koi Pillay** is a PhD student from the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Throughout Koi's life they have loved and enjoyed the natural world and it has been their dream to make a difference. Koi's research allows them to live their dream and work with the animals they love most: birds.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### Effects of Omega-3 variation on the breeding performance of marine birds

**Miguel Polónio**

University of Coimbra, Portugal

Co-authors: Cerveira L, Rocha AD, Vignisson S, Assunção M, Araújo PM

Global temperature increase was particularly prevalent at high latitudes, where it affected the phenology and distribution of food resources, upon which Arctic breeding birds relied to provide for their chicks. Likely due to the declining availability of high-quality resources (e.g., fish), some avian marine species were recorded providing terrestrial food items (e.g., insects). However, such substitute diets reduced chick growth, which depressed productivity. In this study, we assessed the role of polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs), such as omega-3, which is particularly abundant in fish, on the growth rate of Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* chicks. We sampled two colonies (coastal vs. inland) and supplemented chicks with omega-3 to evaluate the effect of diets with varying PUFA levels on chick development. Additionally, we equipped the parent birds with GPS loggers (Global Messenger tags - 2.0 g) to evaluate their behaviour during incubation and chick rearing periods. These results anticipated the effects of reduced fish availability on the population resilience of Arctic breeding marine birds.

**Miguel Polónio Leitão** is in the second year of his MSc in Marine Biology and Global Change at the University of Coimbra. His research focuses on Arctic terns (*Sterna paradisaea*) in Iceland, where he investigates the ecological and physiological mechanisms underlying breeding performance and migratory strategies.



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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

**Does greenspace configuration matter for citizen subjective well-being? The mediating roles of bird diversity and nature connectedness in European cities**

**Anna Ramos Chernenko**

University of Granada, Spain

Nature connectedness, one's perception of being connected to nature, contributes to citizen's subjective wellbeing. Both greenspaces in cities and bird diversity mitigate urbanization impacts on subjective wellbeing, and both bird diversity and nature connectedness relate to greenspace configuration. These complex interlinkages between greenspace configuration, bird diversity, nature connectedness and subjective wellbeing have rarely been examined. We test whether bird diversity (actual and perceived) and nature connectedness mediate the relationship between greenspace configuration and subjective wellbeing using structural equation modelling. We conducted questionnaires and bird diversity surveys across eight European cities, from southern Spain to northern Finland. Bird species richness had a nearly significant positive mediating effect among greenspace proportion and subjective wellbeing, whereas nature connectedness mediated positively the effects of aggregated greenspaces on all subjective wellbeing outcomes. Our findings highlight the importance of incorporating greenspace configuration into urban planning agenda for the design of bird diverse cities with happier citizens.

**Anna Ramos Chernenko** is a PhD student exploring the varied effects of landscape ecology on urban avifauna and citizen wellbeing. Anna's research is focused on furthering the design of biodiverse cities with happier citizens.

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POSTER

**Birds and their impact on mental and physical health of people**

**Christoph Randler** (he/him/his)

University of Tübingen, Germany

Birds provide valuable cultural ecosystem services, with their songs and visual presence enhancing human health and well-being. This poster examines the positive impacts of bird

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environments on psychological restoration and overall well-being. Empirical evidence from two experimental manipulations in lay people and a survey study on birders indicates that bird species richness, diversity, and perceived naturalness all influence human experiences of well-being. Traditionally, frameworks such as Attention Restoration Theory (ART) and Stress Recovery Theory (SRT) have assumed that these benefits operate largely at an unconscious level. However, emerging research reveals that cognitive processes and individual psychological differences significantly shape the restorative and health effects of bird encounters. These findings highlight the importance of incorporating human cognitive and psychological variability into future studies, thereby advancing our understanding of how bird diversity contributes to human well-being beyond purely ecological measures.

**Christoph Randler** is professor in the biology department at the University of Tuebingen. He earned his PhD in 2004 with a study about cognitive and emotional factors contributing to learning. His research is mainly focused in the area of social sciences & biology, with a focus on ornithology and outdoor recreation.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### **Winter habitat selection for roosting and foraging in two populations of Taiga Bean Geese with contrasting population trends**

**Kees Schreven** (he/him)

Radboud University, Netherlands

Co-authors: Felipe Griffioen, Susanne Åkesson, Kevin Clausen, Tony Fox, Thomas Heinicke, Toni Laaksonen, Niklas Liljebäck, Ulrik Lötberg, Gerard Müskens, Markus Piha, Antti Piironen, Ole Therkildsen, Lisa Vergin, Andrea Kölzsch

Goose populations in Europe have generally fared well, but one population that has shown a long-term decrease is the Taiga Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis fabalis*). A recent local hunting ban had a positive effect on the population trend, but more knowledge about the habitat requirements is desired. We study habitat selection in winter (Dec-Jan) for foraging and roosting, using GPS-tracking data of the “Central” population (n=141) and the “Eastern1” population (n=52). This is part of the HABITRACK project, which aims to understand habitat needs of 14 huntable species with unsecure population status in Europe, aiming for better protection. We use step selection functions (SSF) to evaluate selection for land cover, protected areas, and distance to roads, buildings and wind parks. For foraging, geese selected mainly arable lands, but for roosting, protected areas were selected (grasslands,

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marshes, bogs, water), further away from human infrastructure. This suggests Taiga Bean Geese are especially sensitive to disturbance at night roosts. We recommend banning hunting activity around roosting sites and to create additional protected areas to cover more roost sites.

**Kees Schreven** is a bird ecologist focusing on migration, climate change and species interactions, and combines GPS-tracking, remote sensing, population genetics, and citizen science in behavioural life-history ecology. His PhD (2023) examined the extreme arctic range expansion of Pink-footed geese. He also studies breeding biology of skuas, raptors and owls.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### Drivers of changes in ranges of European waterbirds and implications for wetland conservation

**Ledi Selgjekaj** (she/her)

University of Debrecen, Hungary | [@lediselgjekaj](https://twitter.com/lediselgjekaj).bsky.social

Co-authors: Ledi Selgjekaj<sup>1</sup>, Zsolt Végvári<sup>2</sup>, Tamás Székely<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Evolutionary Zoology and Human Biology, University of Debrecen, Hungary

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Ecological Research

<sup>3</sup> University of Bath, UK

European breeding waterbirds are undergoing contrasting range changes, with some species expanding while others are contracting. As key indicators of wetland health, these changes can signal shifts in the capacity of wetlands to provide vital ecosystem services for people. This study examines how naturally selected traits, such as body size and adult survival, and sexually selected traits, such as sexual size dimorphism and sexual dichromatism, influence range changes across 70 waterbird species in Europe. By integrating phylogenetic comparative methods with spatial ecological analyses and using data from the European Breeding Bird Atlases (EBBA1 and EBBA2), we evaluate how these traits interact with environmental drivers, including climate, land use reflecting human interventions, protected area coverage, and governance. Our findings identify evolutionary and ecological drivers of waterbird range dynamics and pinpoint regions in Europe where conservation interventions are most urgently needed. These results provide evidence-based insights for the conservation of both waterbird species and wetland habitats, informing management

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strategies and policy aimed at safeguarding these critical ecosystems and the services they provide.

**Ledi Selgjakaj** is a PhD student in Evolutionary Zoology at the University of Debrecen, integrating bird conservation with evolutionary research. Her work focuses on bird population trends and biodiversity, aiming to understand how rapid environmental change shapes species and ecosystems.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### **Exploring public attitudes toward introduced Ring-necked Parakeets in the UK and France**

**Jessica Smith**

University of Exeter, UK

As urbanisation expands and ecological boundaries blur, human-wildlife interactions are being reshaped. Understanding social dimensions of human-wildlife interactions is crucial for managing conflict and improving coexistence. Introduced populations of Ring-necked Parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) have established themselves in multiple European cities, generating controversy for their charismatic appeal, perceived impacts, and contested control efforts. However, little is known about how people's perceptions, attitudes and tolerance vary between establishment length or cultural context. To address this gap, we used online questionnaires distributed via targeted flyers in well- and newly established areas in Greater London (UK) and Paris (France). We found that UK residents were generally more aware of and favourable towards parakeets than French residents. Residents in well-established areas preferred population decrease in their neighbourhoods, whereas those in newly-established areas were more accepting of stable or increasing populations. These findings offer insights for management strategies that align with local attitudes and promote coexistence.

**Jessica Smith** is a joint PhD student at the University of Exeter and Paris-Saclay Université, researching human-wildlife interactions and the social dimensions of introduced species. Jessica's work focuses on understanding the factors that influence people's perceptions of introduced Ring-necked Parakeets in urban areas, including ecological factors, socio-cultural contexts, and conservation culturomics.

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BLUESKY-ONLY

### Monitoring Bird Communities During Development: Lessons from a Caribbean Case Study

**Holly Trew**

Deborah Brosnan & Associates | 

Co-authors: Calvin Gore

Land development can have significant consequences on wildlife, including birds. As part of an environmental management plan, a bird monitoring program was established to assess the impact of changing land use to include a golf course and several new created wetlands. The monitoring was conducted by an experienced local bird expert. A total of 2,904 bird surveys (780 hours) were conducted between 2021 and 2025, documenting 41,490 birds of 96 species. Results show that bird abundance increased overall, with wetland and marine species showing the greatest increases, averaging eight-fold higher by 2024 when standardized for effort. Of the species recorded, 71 were linked to wetland or marine habitats and 75 were migratory. Land-based species did not show similar increases, and some may have relocated to adjacent areas. These findings highlight the complex impacts of development and the importance of habitat creation and adaptive monitoring for fostering positive outcomes.

**Holly Trew** is an ecologist with over 15 years' experience working in marine and terrestrial habitats in the Caribbean. She obtained her PhD from the University of the West Indies in Barbados and currently works as an environmental consultant.

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POSTER

### Dark-eyed Juncos: before, during, and after the pandemic

**Pamela Yeh** (she/her)

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), USA

Co-authors: Eleanor Diamant, Bard College, and Marlene Walters, UCLA

The Covid-19 pandemic regulations resulted in a marked decrease in human activity in many urban areas. Termed the “anthropause,” this period of fewer human disturbances had the potential to substantially affect wildlife in cities. We studied a population of urban birds, the Dark-eyed Juncos, from 2017 and continuing to the present day. We examined behavioural,

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morphological, and plumage patterns of juncos before, during, and after the anthropause. We discuss changes in beak shape, fear, and aggression levels.

**Pamela Yeh** is an evolutionary biologist and studies how birds evolve in urban environments. She received her BA from Harvard, her PhD from UCSD and conducted post-doctoral work at Harvard Medical School. She is currently a Professor at UCLA as well as an External Faculty at Santa Fe Institute.

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POSTER

### **From campus discovery to community stewardship: a Shenzhen coastal story**

**Haichao Zhou** (he/him)

Shenzhen University, China

University-led surveys in 2023 revealed Shenzhen's first Black-naped Tern breeding colony and a new mangrove stand of the rare *Lumnitzera littorea* on the Dapeng peninsula, all threatened by tourism, poaching and coastal works. Prosecutors convened a public-interest mediation that bound marine-enforcement officers, scientists and the fishing village into a single governance framework. A Mangrove & Migratory-Bird Friendly Community Volunteer Centre was opened; residents converted ongoing ecological monitoring into bilingual signage, citizen-science walks and school programmes, voluntarily extending patrols beyond statutory limits. A micro-wetland for *Lumnitzera* was fenced and hydrologically reconnected, while breeding-island access is now seasonally restricted and bird records continue to accumulate, illustrating how soft community engagement complements hard enforcement to rebalance human-wildlife coexistence.

**Haichao Zhou**, mangrove ecologist at Shenzhen University, links coastal biogeochemistry to biodiversity and policy, advising China Wetland Association, IUCN SSC and China's International Mangrove Center.

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POSTER | ECR PRESENTER

### **Barriers and bridges: understanding how people act for birds and nature**

**Natalia Zielonka** (she/her)


Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent |

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 @natbzielonka.bsky.social

Co-authors: Jessica Fisher (DICE, University of Kent) and Zoe Davies (DICE, University of Kent)

In the UK, adults express rising concern about the biodiversity crisis, and conservation charities are working to encourage greater public action for nature. While some people respond positively and engage, others remain disengaged. Understanding what motivates or prevents individuals from acting is vital for conservationists seeking to foster wider participation. To explore these dynamics, we collaborated with one of England's largest environmental NGOs, The Wildlife Trust, to conduct a questionnaire across southern England. The survey examined the actions people take for nature and investigated the drivers and barriers across different socioeconomic groups, highlighting how motivators and barriers vary with context. We present preliminary findings with a focus on birds, identifying conditions that foster and inspire positive actions as well as those that hinder them. With growing recognition of the health benefits of engaging with nature, such insights can inform programmes that benefit both people and nature.

**Natalia Zielonka** is a Research Fellow at DICE (University of Kent) where she undertakes interdisciplinary conservation research, largely focussing on the interactions between people's wellbeing and birds, with a particular interest in soundscapes. Natalia is also the chair of the Engagement Committee and the Equality & Diversity Working Group at the BOU.

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### DELEGATES

Carlos Abrahams	Wildlife Acoustics	In-person
Tara Adcock	BirdWatch Ireland	Online
Oluwadunsin Adekola  @holuwadunsin	Sparsholt College, UK BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Arjun Amar  @arjundevamar.bsky.social	Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology, South Africa BOU2026 poster presenter Chair, IBIS Management Committee	In-person
Ajik Anap Magaji  @iamanapgrace.bsky.social	A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI), Nigeria BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Graham Appleton  @wadertales.bsky.social	Wader Tales	In-person
Emma Arulanantham	Oxford University, UK	In-person
Lillias August	BOU2026 exhibitor	In-person
John Baker	BSG Ecology	In-person
Helen Baker		Online
Sam Barrett  @sambarrett97.bsky.social	University Of Salford, UK BOU2026 poster presenter BOU Engagement Committee	In-person
Leslie Bayanza	FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, South Africa BOU2026 speaker	Online
Jenni Beasley		In-person
Nisha Bhakat  @nickel-salt.bsky.social	Archives at National Centre for Biological Sciences, India BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Wiro Bless	FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, South Africa BOU2026 speaker	Online
James Booty		Online
Ian Brown	The Pirbright Institute, UK BOU2026 Houghton Trust keynote speaker	In-person
Aisha Bruendl	Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT), UK	Online
Graeme Buchanan	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, UK BOU President	In-person
Doreen Chaussadas	University of Georgia, USA	In-person

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## Birds and people

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 @doreenbirds.bsky.social	BOU2026 speaker	
Anna Chernenko	University of Granada, Spain BOU2026 speaker and poster presenter	In-person
Simon Cohen	NatureScot, UK	In-person
Andrew Commins		In-person
John Cooper	Wildlife Health Services	Online
Josh Coupar-Evans	BOU Conference Support Officer	In-person
Hélène Courvoisier	University Paris-Saclay, France	Online
Amber Cowans	University of St Andrews, UK BOU2026 speaker	Online
Keith Cowieson		In-person
Will Cresswell	University of St Andrews, UK BOU2026 keynote speaker	In-person
Mathias D'haen	Earth Ranger	In-person
Zoe Davies	University of Kent, UK BOU2026 keynote speaker	In-person
Graciela de Cuba	University of Amsterdam, Netherlands BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Andrew Douglas Wilson		In-person
Sarbasis Dutta	University of Granada, Spain BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Mark Eddowes  @markeddowes.bsky.social	Independent researcher BOU Honorary Treasurer BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Andrea Flack	Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior, Germany	In-person
Heather Fortune  @hxfortune	Imperial College London, UK BOU Blog Editor	In-person
David Fox		Online
Agnes Francila	Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Bhopal, India BOU2026 speaker	Online
Anamika Gautam	Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, India BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Isabelle George	French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), France	In-person
Jenny Gill  @jengill.bsky.social	University of East Anglia, UK IBIS Editor-in-Chief	In-person
Freja Gjerstad	Marine Management Organisation	Online
Andrew Gosler	University of Oxford, UK BOU2026 keynote speaker	In-person

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Holly Green	University of Sheffield, UK BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Marcus Hagberg	Wild Goose Chase, Inc. BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Glen Hancocks  @gleneth93.bsky.social	University of Salford, UK BOU2026 poster presenter BOU Engagement Committee	In-person
Steve Harberton	Elite Events Solutions	In-person
Hiroshi Hashimoto  @hi-hashimoto.bsky.social	Meijo University, Japan BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Anna Haukka  @annaha.bsky.social	University of Helsinki, Finland BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Aviad Heifetz	Open University of Israel BOU2026 speaker	Online
Matthew Heydon  @mattheydon.bsky.social	Natural England, UK BOU2026 speaker	In-person
James Hoggett	Natural England, UK BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Emma How	Natural England, UK	In-person
Joelene Hughes	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, UK BOU2026 Scientific Programme Committee BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Sana Huque	Nature Conservation Foundation, India BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Juan Diego Ibanez-Alamo	University of Granada, Spain	In-person
Thalissa Inch	Zoological Society of London, UK BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Lucía Izquierdo	University of Granada, Spain BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Amarjeet Kaur  @amarjeetkaur.bsky.social	Wildlife Institute of India, India BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Gavin Kellerman	University of Exeter, UK BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Yu Li Khoe		In-person
Amana Kilawi		Online
Jakub Kronenberg  @jakubkronenberg.bsky.social	University of Lodz, Poland BOU2026 speaker and poster presenter	In-person
Nishant Kumar	Ambedkar University Delhi & National Centre for Biological Sciences (TIFR), Bengaluru, India & University of Oxford, UK	In-person

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	Chair, BOU2026 Scientific Programme Committee	
Rowan Kuminski  @RowanKuminski.bsky.social	University of Aberdeen, UK BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Greger Larson	University of Oxford, UK BOU2026 keynote speaker	In-person
Michiel Lathouwers	Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO), Belgium BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Sang-im Lee	Daegu Gyeongbuk Institute of Science and Technology (DGIST), South Korea	Online
Joseph Lennon	BirdWatch Ireland	Online
Sonja Ludwig	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, UK	Online
George Malembo M'manga	Mzuzu University, Malawi	Online
Shai Markman	University of Haifa, Israel	In-person
Alex Mills	York University, Canada	In-person
Catriona Morrison	Biomathematics and Statistics Scotland (BioSS), UK Chair, BOU Meetings Committee	In-person
Sabah Mushtaq Puswal	Guangdong Academy of Sciences, China BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Sanele Nhlabatsi		Online
Christine Nicol	Royal Veterinary College, UK Houghton Trust	In-person
Akinori Nishi	Meijo University, Japan BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Ngozi Mercy Okafor	A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI), Nigeria BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Yutaro Okamura	Meijo University, Japan BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Thomas Oliver	University of Oxford, UK BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Eunice Ong	Singapore National Parks Board	In-person
Florian Orgeret  @florgeret.bsky.social	La Rochelle University, France BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Emma Phipps	SongBird Survival	Online
Koi Pillay  @koipillay.bsky.social	FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, South Africa BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Miguel Polónio	Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person

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Dominique Potvin  @silvereyedom.bsky.social	University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Karishma Pradhan	Nature Conservation Foundation, India BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Helen Pruzina	University of Stirling, UK	In-person
John Quinn		Online
Christoph Randler	University of Tübingen, Germany BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Chevonne Reynolds	University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa BOU2026 keynote speaker	In-person
Hazirah Ridzwan	Singapore National Parks Board	In-person
Alice Risely	University of Salford, UK BOU2026 Scientific Programme Committee	In-person
Rob Robinson	British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), UK	In-person
Merel Roks	Vogelbescherming Nederland, Netherlands	In-person
Fanny Rybak	University Paris-Saclay, France	Online
Gargi Sawant	University of East Anglia, UK	Online
Kees Schreven	Radboud University, Netherlands BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Ledi Selgjekaj  @lediselgjekaj.bsky.social	University of Debrecen, Hungary BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
William Smith  @willjsmith.bsky.social	University of Nottingham, UK BOU2026 speaker	In-person
Jessica Smith	Exeter University, UK BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Claire Spottiswoode	FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, South Africa BOU2026 Alfred Newton Lecturer	In-person
River Stewart	University of Portsmouth, UK BOU Social Media Support Officer	In-person
Petra Sumasgutner  @pesumas.bsky.social	University of Vienna, Austria BOU2026 keynote speaker	In-person
Tajik Tachang		In-person
Bryn Towning	Elite Event Solutions	In-person
Mathias Valceschini		Online
Juliet Vickery	British Trust for Ornithology, UK	Online
Daniel Villar  @daniel-a-villar.bsky.social	Durham University, UK BOU2026 speaker	In-person

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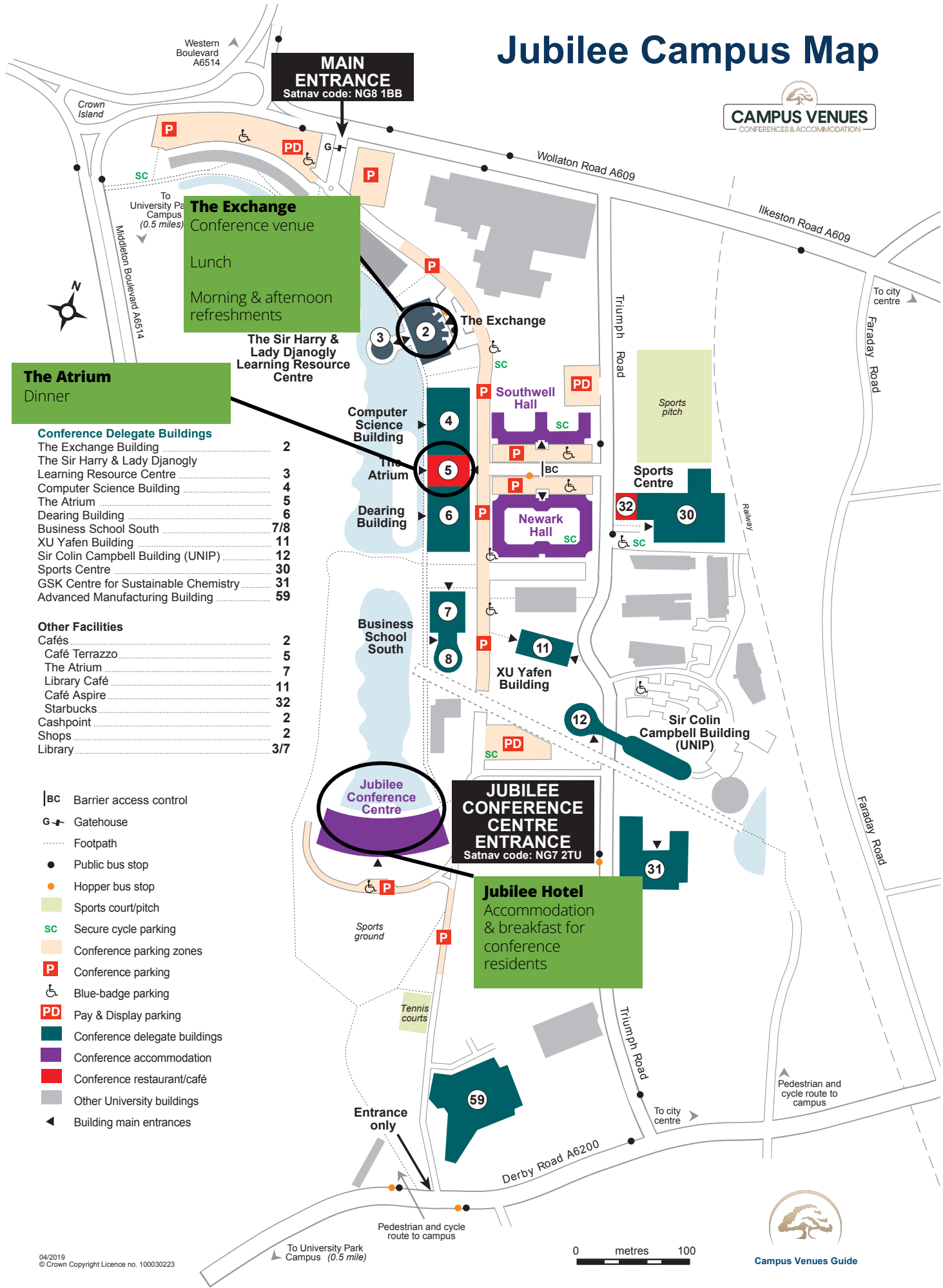
## Birds and people

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	IBIS Book Reviews Editor	
Leila Walker	British Ornithologists' Union	In-person
P.J. Wilkinson		Online
Abigail Williams		In-person
Pamela Yeh	University of California, Los Angeles, USA BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Haichao Zhou	Shenzhen University, China BOU2026 poster presenter	In-person
Natalia Zielonka  @natbzielonka.bsky.social	University of Kent, UK BOU2026 poster presenter Chair, BOU Engagement Committee	In-person

# Jubilee Campus Map



**MAIN ENTRANCE**  
Satnav code: NG8 1BB

**The Exchange**  
Conference venue  
Lunch  
Morning & afternoon refreshments

**The Atrium**  
Dinner

**Conference Delegate Buildings**

The Exchange Building	2
The Sir Harry & Lady Djanogly Learning Resource Centre	3
Computer Science Building	4
The Atrium	5
Dearing Building	6
Business School South	7/8
XU Yafen Building	11
Sir Colin Campbell Building (UNIP)	12
Sports Centre	30
GSK Centre for Sustainable Chemistry	31
Advanced Manufacturing Building	59

**Other Facilities**

Cafés	2
Café Terrazzo	5
The Atrium	7
Library Café	11
Café Aspire	32
Starbucks	2
Cashpoint	2
Shops	2
Library	3/7

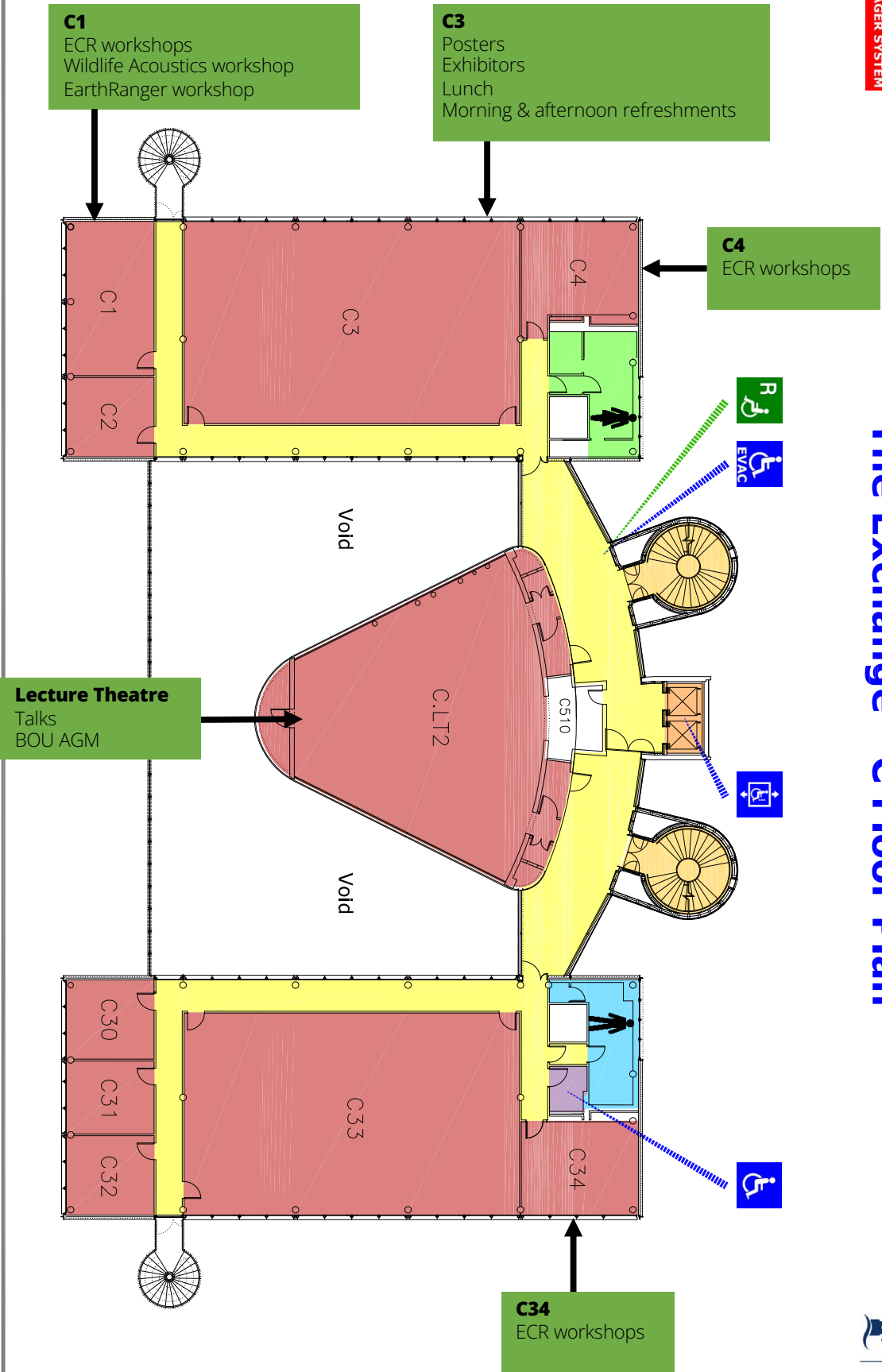
- |BC Barrier access control
- G Gatehouse
- ..... Footpath
- Public bus stop
- Hopper bus stop
- Sports court/pitch
- SC Secure cycle parking
- Conference parking zones
- P Conference parking
- Blue-badge parking
- PD Pay & Display parking
- Conference delegate buildings
- Conference accommodation
- Conference restaurant/café
- Other University buildings
- ▲ Building main entrances

**Jubilee Conference Centre**

**JUBILEE CONFERENCE CENTRE ENTRANCE**  
Satnav code: NG7 2TU

**Jubilee Hotel**  
Accommodation & breakfast for conference residents

# The Exchange - C Floor Plan



Key

- Designated Badge-Holder Parking
- Access Ramp
- Automatic Doors
- Accessible Lift
- Entrance
- Accessible Entrance
- Evacuation Chair
- Emergency Refuge
- Toilet (Female / Male)
- Accessible Toilet
- Reception
- Refectory/Cafe
- Central Timetabled Room
- Lift
- Fire Assembly Point