

Interdisciplinary Workshop

Rewilding – species, landscapes, society:

Dialogues across the Humanities, the Social and the Natural Sciences

Hosts:

- Global South Studies Center (GSSC), the University of Cologne (<https://gssc.uni-koeln.de/>)
- Rewilding the Anthropocene – a project of the European Research Council Advanced Grant (<https://www.rewilding.de/>)

Organizers

Prof. Michael Bollig, Global South Studies Center, University of Cologne

michael.bollig@uni-koeln.de

Dr. Léa Lacan, Postdoctoral Researcher, Global South Studies Center, University of Cologne

llacan@uni-koeln.de

Wisse van Engelen, Doctoral Researcher, Global South Studies Center, University of Cologne

wvanenge@uni-koeln.de

Venue

University of Cologne: Auerbach Library, Wienand Haus, Weyertal 59 (third floor), 50937 Cologne.

DAY 1: 5th of February 2024

- 9:00-9:30: Welcome & introductory presentation: Michael Bollig & Léa Lacan
- CLUSTER 1: Re-wilding: restoration values and ideals in the test of time
- 9:30-10:00: Luregn Lenggenhager - Back to a better past? Comparing Histories in Conservation Narratives in Southern Africa and the Swiss Alps
- 10:00-10:30: Wisse van Engelen - Removing veterinary fences, reintroducing herding: how the re-domestication of cattle may lead to wilder landscapes
- 10:30-11:00: Coffee break
- 11:00-11:30: Laura Quintero Uribe - Defining a framework for Rewilding European landscapes in the Anthropocene: Practical application in the Oder Delta Germany
- 11:30-12:00: Jamie Lorimer - Worlding and weirding with beavers: proactive multispecies niche construction in the Anthropocene
- 12:00-13:00: Discussion – led by Dolly Jørgensen
- 13:00-14:30: Lunch break

CLUSTER 2: Ethics of rewilding and the role of humans: what do people want?

- 14:30-15:00: Claudia Leal - Parks as abandoned landscapes for spontaneous rewilding? Insights from the high tropical Andes
- 15:00-15:30: Ravi van de Port - Rewilding frontiers: negotiating rewilding in diverse socio-cultural contexts
- 15:30-16:00: Coffee break
- 16:00-16:30: María González-Granados - Are large carnivores welcome back? A systematic review on human dimension of restoring large carnivores in Europe
- 16:30- 17:00: Léa Lacan – Rewilding democracy: the politics of human-wildlife relations in southwestern Zambia
- 17:00-17:15: Break
- 17:15- 18:15: Discussion – led by Martin Drenthen
- 18:45 – 19:15 Discussion Wrap Up at Workshop Dinner

DAY 2: 6th of February 2024

8:45-9:00 Welcome back

CLUSTER 3: Solutions for multispecies coexistence? Implementing rewilding

- 9:00-9:30: Michael Bollig - Contestation, Cooperation and Epistemology along the Arteries of Rewilded Landscapes: Wildlife Corridors in the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area
- 9:30-10:00: Miguel Delibes-Mateos - Living with expanding mesocarnivores: different perspectives on the Egyptian mongoose in central Spain
- 10:00-10:30: Martin Drenthen - Coexistence and control. The role of technology and interspecies communication.
- 10:30-11:00: Coffee break
- 11:00-11:30: Shih-Hsuan Yu - The more than wildlife conservation: rewilding the clouded leopard in Taiwan
- 11:30-12:00: Shelby Matevich - Changing the conservation conversation: rewilding in dialogue with convivial conservation
- 12:00-13:00: Discussion – led by Jamie Lorimer
- 13:00-14:30: Lunch break
- 14:30-16:30: World café/ discussion – planning an interdisciplinary publication
- 16:30-17:00: Coffee break
- 17:00-17:45: Presentations of the World Café results & wrap up

Abstracts

CLUSTER 1: Re-wilding: restoration values and ideals in the test of time

Back to a better past? Comparing Histories in Conservation Narratives in Southern Africa and the Swiss Alps

Luregn Lenggenhager (University of Cologne)

This contribution is based on a planned research project. In the project I will apply historiographical methods to engage with conservationists' ideas of past human-wildlife-land interaction and practices in Southern Africa and the European Alps. To legitimize their vision for future conservation, influential conservationist often use historical arguments. Concepts and practices of conservation, such as re-wilding, species re-introduction, or landscapes restoration often reference a better past, when people, animals and land still seemed to be in a harmonic equilibrium, as a role model for future conservation. Scholarly debates in the humanities have often focused on how the terms "wild" and "wilderness" have been used for imagined pasts, for example in the creations of European National Parks, where nature should develop back to its "untouched" past ; in debates around the nexus of wilderness narratives and colonialism ; and in more conceptual (re-)definitions of the wild. In restoration ecology, where historical baselines are grounded on historical ecological data, the usefulness of a backward oriented conservation is often questioned, because baselines constantly shifted and are often not restorable at all due to climate change. At the same time seminal proponents of rewilding and many popular conservationists still aiming to go back to less clearly defined distant past before humans existed , or just to a past before the extinction of a certain species.

In my presentation I will show that most historical references for future conservation have in common that they are hardly based on sound archival and oral history research and that they do not use the same imaginary pasts for everywhere – particularly not for the role humans played within these past natures. Following the idea of European environmental exceptionalism, conservationist narratives either look for the 'European genius' in the rural environments, who was in full control of nature, through a wise control of wildlife and sustainable forms of transhumant small-scale livestock; or the narrative is referring to reinstall a far-away nature, as it could supposedly have been found in the (former-)colonies. Imagined pasts in postcolonial settler colonies, are based on colonial narratives of an untamed, unorganized nature that could only became mastered through privatization and white commercial farming. In this narrative Africans are divided into either people being part of nature – who need to be included in the conservation effort, as it is suggested in communal conservation initiatives – or people that are a thread to that nature, and need to be removed to re-create a wild nature in parks or on private land. Both colonial narratives of past natures as wild, untouched and un-cultured, as well as the division of people into part or enemy of 'nature' is still widely used in Southern African conservation circles.

Removing veterinary fences, reintroducing herding: how the re-domestication of cattle may lead to wilder landscapes

Wisse van Engelen

Abstract: This paper describes the ongoing effort in southern Africa to rewild large landscapes through connecting conservation areas, and the attempt to overcome the challenge posed by veterinary modes of ordering landscapes. Veterinary fences, built to control the spread of economically important pathogens, are one of the region's main obstacles to long-distance wildlife movement. Past efforts from conservationists lobbying for the removal of some of these fences have been largely unsuccessful, but current attempts look more likely to succeed. Rather than solely presenting the negative impacts of the fences on wildlife, in these current attempts conservationists are actively involved in aligning veterinary with conservation modes of ordering. Indeed, they have successfully lobbied for the adoption of alternative international sanitary standards and are currently trying to put in place systems to facilitate compliance with this standard. Among others, conservationists are involved in restructuring communal livestock farming practices according to a model called 'Herding 4 Health'. This model is based on the reintroduction and professionalization of herding and kraaling, and aims to improve record-keeping, vaccination coverage, human-wildlife conflict mitigation and rangeland management. The latter entails herding the cattle according to the principle of holistic planned grazing, where herders let cattle graze only for short periods in any given area. This is said to mimic the dynamics of predator-prey interactions, where prey species are continuously on the move as they are stalked by predators. Thus, through Herding 4 Health, previously feral cattle – the main threat to animal health in absence of veterinary fences – are now being brought under human control again to facilitate fence removal and coexistence with predators, as well as restore degraded rangeland. This paper presents a conceptual analysis of these interlinked processes of rewilding and domestication.

Defining a framework for Rewilding European landscapes in the Anthropocene: Practical application in the Oder Delta Germany

Laura Quintero Uribe

The Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework recognizes rewilding efforts as essential for achieving biodiversity targets. It has gained attention as a restoration approach for sustaining more abundant and functional wildlife, climate change mitigation and fostering a transformative change. The success of rewilding depends on effective policy development and stakeholder engagement. Through participatory scenario planning involving diverse actors, co-production can help understand the benefits and trade-offs of rewilding. However, few studies involve stakeholders in rewilding design or consider diverse perspectives on nature values. We took a participatory approach, involving stakeholders to develop narratives that link social and natural values. We conducted workshops and interviews with locals to develop novel narratives where social and natural values are interlinked and fostered. We used the Nature Futures framework to reflect nature's positive and diverse futures, being one of the first approaches to implement this framework. We used the German Oder Delta as a case study where various rewilding efforts occur in a complex and heterogeneous landscape. Unlike previous participatory scenario projects, we found that stakeholders can reflect on futures where rewilding and human well-being co-exist. For instance, peatlands have high social, cultural and ecological value in the region. Through the development of scenarios, we identified the most appropriate actions based on the socio-ecological constraints of the region. We allocated different levels of rewilding

actions using scenario narratives and participant feedback. Conservation practitioners often overlook the importance of rewilding that aligns with various nature values to resolve conflicts and maximize co-benefits with society. The reason is that traditional perspectives on biodiversity conservation have rarely been linked to and implemented with these visions and actions. By recognizing the multiple values of nature, we can foster the successful implementation of rewilding measures and the upscaling of such efforts to larger areas.

Worlding and weirding with beavers: proactive multispecies niche construction in the Anthropocene

Jamie Lorimer

Scientists and policy makers promote nature-based solutions to the interconnected challenges associated with the Anthropocene. Often these involve the strategic use of ecosystem engineers: animals, plants, and microbes with disproportionate ecological agency capable of regional or even planetary scale niche construction. This mode of biopolitics is promoted as biomimicry: restoring, rewilding, rewetting, or rewiggling diverse ecological systems. This paper examines the multispecies relations enacted by this model through a focus on beavers in the Britain over the last 12000 years. It begins with beavers making Britain hospitable for early settlers and agriculturalists as they returned after the last ice age. It traces the subsequent demise of beavers due to hunting and land use change. It follows the recent return of beavers as tools for natural flood management and nature recovery, and then attends to situations in which these multispecies world making projects go awry. To do so it draws together cognate literatures from geography, anthropology, archaeology, and ecology to present multispecies niche construction as acts of worlding and weirding. It notes the beguiling potential of nature-based solutions while cautioning against tendencies towards anthropocentrism, apolitical scientism, and ecomodernist hubris.

CLUSTER 2: Ethics of conservation and the role of humans: what do people want?

Parks as abandoned landscapes for spontaneous rewilding? Insights from the high tropical Andes

Claudia Leal

Rewilding does not have much traction in Latin America, perhaps because costs are prohibitive or because, since the late Pleistocene extinctions, the region was left with relatively few large wild species, which tend to be the focus of rewilding efforts. Furthermore, its abundant forests have rendered these animals rather inconspicuous. In lowland savannas as well as in grasslands that lie high up the mountains, above the tree line, large species –such as vicuñas, guanacos, deer, bears, and even large birds– have been more noticeable, and so too has been their absence after their numbers dropped. The experience of one of these places, where Chingaza National Park was erected, suggests that conservation areas could be understood as spaces for spontaneous rewilding after being forcibly abandoned by local human dwellers and their domestic associates.

When Chingaza National Park was created, in 1977, to protect the water supply of Bogotá, pumas, Andean bears and deer had been decimated by hunting, and in their place, cattle had moved in. The bygone wild animals tended to share the treeless highland paramo with the cloud

forests found immediately below. Because this place was made into a national park, it was selected as one of the sites for the reintroduction of the Andean condor. This initiative was the product of efforts by the Colombian environmental authorities and the San Diego Zoo, which wanted to test the reintroduction of the Andean condor to its native habitat before doing the same with the California condor. The few “American” condors that remain from this experiment have been joined by deer and bears that most likely moved back in from the few remaining adjacent forests. The contested elimination of cattle ranching and the criminalization of hunting that characterized park building allowed for a slow rewilding carried out by the animals themselves.

Park building has given these wild species a second opportunity, at the cost of displacing peasants and their domestic animals (who are probably happier further down the mountain, where it is not as cold). While property owners received payment for their land, most of those who took their animals to graze in the area lost a valued productive space without receiving any compensation. Therefore, some rural dwellers paid the price of guaranteeing water supply for the millions living in Bogotá and for allowing a few charismatic mammals to return to one of the many areas where they have been displaced from.

Rewilding frontiers: negotiating rewilding in diverse socio-cultural contexts

Ravi Van de Port

The global environmental crises go hand in hand with social crises pertaining to our relationship with the natural world. Contributing is our increasing disassociation with the natural world, while at the same time our human impact on the planet has reached a global magnitude and has spurred the naming of our current geological epoch the 'Anthropocene'. Some scholars propose rewilding as a relatively new conservation approach in line with the aim to prevent and reverse the loss of nature and achieve climate goals stated by international policies and alliances such as the UN (Decade for ecosystem restoration), IPCC, IPBES and the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Rewilding is gaining positive attention both in and outside of the scientific world, but it also exposes conflicting ideals and interests in managing and using landscapes stemming from its association with the problematic notion of 'wilderness', and thus it remains difficult to reach common ground within the concept. Proposing more natural areas in our surroundings, rewilding increases the points of contact between humans and nature, forming contested spaces, or rewilding frontiers. The concept of rewilding frontiers is central to my investigation into how power moves in the landscape through a range of actors. This will be done by first, reviewing the types of conflict and conflict mitigation and management strategies in rewilding contexts, second, understand how rewilding facilitates the construction of frontiers through language using discourse analysis and third, how rewilding is enlived on the ground in frontier spaces using a feminist political ecology lens. The research purpose seeks to widen the concept of rewilding to encompass its necessary social dimensions in addition to its formerly ecological focus.

Are large carnivores welcome back? A systematic review on human dimension of restoring large carnivores in Europe

M. G. Granados¹, P. H. Vaquerizas¹, M. Martinez-Jauregui², J. A. Glikman¹ & M. Delibes-Mateos¹

mgonzalez@iesac.csic.es

Land use changes and conservation policies lead to the recovery of nature and some wildlife populations in Europe. In such a restoration context, understanding people's attitudes and perception towards returning species may be important to minimize human-wildlife conflicts and to promote coexistence. This is particularly evident in the case of large carnivores, whose recovery may lead to strong conflicts. In accordance to this, researchers are increasingly paying attention to the social aspects of the recovery of large carnivores. Such information could contribute to the success of large carnivore recolonization and management initiatives as well as informing future policy for the species.

Here we systematically reviewed studies on the human dimension of large carnivores (i.e. grey wolf, brown bear, Eurasian lynx, Iberian lynx, wolverine and golden jackal) in Europe in a restoration context. We revised primary studies from four peer reviewed databases (WOS, Scopus, PubMed and ProQuest) as well as grey literature including LIFE projects, doctoral thesis and reports of projects led by associations for the conservation and restoration of nature in Europe. The search string was composed of three terms concerning large carnivores, ecological restoration and human dimension of wildlife.

Preliminary results show a bias in the amount of studies concerning wolf compared with other large carnivores, and in the number of publications in some European regions. It is especially remarkable the scarcity of human-facilitated restoration projects compared with those with non-human intervention, which places rewilding initiatives in a prominent position for ecological restoration in Europe. This study also identifies differences in people's attitudes depending on the spatial and temporal proximity of the reestablishment of the species. In addition, we found differences in perception of the studied species and perceived cost-benefits assessment between expected advocates (e.g. nature conservationists, visitors) and opponents (e.g. hunters, shepherds) of large carnivores. Overall, our review provides valuable background to guide large carnivores' restoration initiatives in humanized landscapes as well as to inform future policy decisions related to human-wildlife coexistence.

Rewilding democracy: the politics of human-wildlife relations in southwestern Zambia

Léa Lacan

The Simalaha Community Conservancy in southwestern Zambia aims to rewild the ecosystems connecting Northern Namibia and Botswana with Zambia's vast Kafue National Park. Wildlife reintroduction is envisioned to restore landscapes and a harmonious coexistence between people and wildlife, while also promoting local economic development. Initiated by a Chief of the Barotse pre-colonial kingdom in western Zambia, the conservancy brings together diverse stakeholders, including traditional authorities, NGOs, international donors and government actors. However, communities contest the project, claiming inadequate benefits. This article examines the political impacts of rewilding in Simalaha, particularly within the inhabited wildlife sanctuary where reintroductions occur. It explores the opportunities and challenges

brought by this new institutional model in terms of representation and participation for local inhabitants. It also examines the changes in the role and influence of Barotse leaders as they collaborate with other institutional actors through the conservancy, and in their relations with their subjects within the wildlife sanctuary. Using an ethnographic approach based on interviews, observation and participatory wildlife mapping, this article shows that conflicts arising from wildlife damage to local crop fields serve as focal points and catalysts for discontent and opposition towards the conservancy and Barotse leaders. Through protests, local inhabitants of the wildlife sanctuary seek greater democratic inclusion and representation, and renegotiate the accountability of their traditional leaders. This article points to the political transformations resulting from the multiplication of community-based conservation and rewilding initiatives in the region, emphasizing the need to assess what kind of democracies they foster or silence.

CLUSTER 3: Solutions for multispecies coexistence? Implementing rewilding

Wildlife Corridors in conservation landscapes– the political ecology and symbolism of multi-species engagements along the arteries of anthropogenic conservation.

Michael Bollig

The massive decline of biodiversity is a key topic of scientific and public discussions around the globe. Reports and projections have triggered massive efforts to increase protected areas on a global scale, to safeguard the corridors connecting them and to rewild landscapes by means of wildlife relocations and abandonment. Linked to concepts of human-wildlife coexistence are imageries, narratives and practices to create and/or maintain an environmental infrastructure consisting of core conservation zones, buffer zones and corridors that are conducive to ecological connectivity. The wildlife corridors of north-eastern Namibia's conservation landscapes dealt with in this contribution are mainly thought to facilitate the mobility of elephants and other large herbivores (e.g. zebra, buffalo, wildebeest). But wildlife corridors are not only essential for species connectivity but are also an integral part of the booming ecotourism in northeastern Namibia's conservation landscapes. Lodges and camping grounds line up in the vicinity of wildlife corridors and at the border of national parks. The coexistence of humans and wildlife along wildlife corridors is challenging though. Human-wildlife interactions frequently result in damage, and often conservationist environmental infrastructuring runs against the aims of farmers to expand their fields for commercial crop production and to gain pastures for growing cattle herds. It also runs against other governmentally endorsed infrastructuring that brings tarred roads, water pipelines and boreholes. The immense increase of diverse wildlife populations (notably elephants) make contestations along corridors and the search for solutions more pressing.

Based on theoretical explorations on environmental infrastructures, political ecology and multispecies anthropology this contribution sets out to capture the complex and conflictual engagements within multispecies assemblages in and along wildlife corridors. I will regard wildlife corridors as environmental infrastructure co-constituted by wildlife agency as much as human agency. I will specifically emphasize that competing projects of environmental infrastructuring are underway, simultaneously shaped by various political and economic agendas and also by the demographic and social dynamics of wildlife species.

Living with expanding mesocarnivores: different perspectives on the Egyptian mongoose in central Spain

Miguel Delibes-Mateos^{1*}, Esther Descalzo², Francisco Díaz-Ruiz³, Jenny A. Glikman¹, María González-Granados¹, María Martínez-Jauregui⁴, Mario Soliño⁵ & Pablo Ferreras²

* E-mail address: mdelibes@iesa.csic.es

Land abandonment together with the development of stronger conservation policies have favored the expansion of some wildlife species across Europe. This has led to increasing human-wildlife interactions, which are often conflictive, potentially harming both people livelihood and wildlife conservation. A paradigmatic example of conflicts over increasing wildlife species occurs when carnivores are involved. Assessing the human dimension of carnivore expansion is challenging if coexistence between human and carnivore species is sought. To date most studies on this topic have focused on large carnivores, whereas the expansion of mesocarnivores has received much less attention in the literature. Here, we explored the case of the Egyptian mongoose (*Herpestes ichneumon*) in central Spain, its north-eastern range edge. This is the only mongoose species naturally occurring in Europe; in particular, it is distributed throughout most Portugal and south-western Spain, and their populations are expanding to the north-east of Spain. The mongoose preys on small-game species, which often leads to complaints from hunters about its presence. We assessed hunters and non-hunters views on the expansion of the Egyptian mongoose through online questionnaires. Our aims included: 1) assessing participants' attitudes towards the natural expansion of the species; 2) analyzing their perception on the potential benefits and negative impacts of the occurrence of the mongoose; 3) evaluating potential conflicts between hunters and non-hunters regarding mongoose perceived impacts; 4) studying participants' preferences over different potential management scenarios of mongoose expansion; 5) assessing attitudes towards different management tools to either favor mongoose expansion, or to halt it or, at least, to slow it down. Our results revealed that nearly all (>90%) hunters were against mongoose expansion. When we asked them about different potential management actions to stop mongoose expansion, most hunters selected options that involve mongoose culling by themselves or by game managers; the most selected option was including the mongoose in the game species list. The opinions of non-hunters regarding mongoose expansion were more neutral. Nevertheless, their most frequently selected option was laissez-faire. This is in agreement with results of the choice experiment, which showed that non-hunters preferred the laissez-faire management strategy over other management programs. In fact, we found a loss of well-being when other actions were considered over mongoose expansion. Variations between hunters and non-hunters in their view on mongoose expansion could be due to the fact that the former were more in agreement with potential detrimental impacts of the species, namely for the ecosystems and rural economy (e.g., impact on game), whereas the latter often agreed with the potential benefits associated with the mongoose. Consensus among hunters about the lack of potential benefits of Egyptian mongoose occurrence was generally higher than about the detrimental impact of this species. Consensus among non-hunters as regards benefits of mongoose occurrence was variable, but mostly high. Differences between hunters and non-hunters in their perceptions on mongoose impact suggest a potential conflict over the expansion of this species. More broadly, our study stresses the relevance of assessing the social setting of

the expansion of wildlife species as opposition by one or more parties may compromise wildlife restoration.

Coexistence and control. The role of technology and interspecies communication.

Martin Drenthen, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Europe is experiencing a major wildlife comeback. Species such as the wolf and several ungulate species are returning or greatly increasing in numbers, while others such as the European bison, semi-domesticated grazers or the beaver have been reintroduced. Management of these species is undergoing a rapid transition: from managing their scarcity and promoting population recovery to managing their impacts on humans, livestock and the landscape. There are strongly conflicting views in society about the future of this transition. Some celebrate the return of wildlife as a major conservation success and emphasize the positive impact of wildlife on ecosystems and human well-being. Others emphasize negative impacts on economic sectors such as agriculture, conflicting biodiversity goals and the spread of zoonotic diseases. Moreover, perceived benefits and conflicts determine people's tolerance of wildlife, but these views may not be equally distributed among social groups.

Traditionally, wildlife management leans heavily on the dominant Western, dualistic, anthropocentric worldview in which humans and nature are fundamentally different from each other and humans determine the value of non-human wildlife. Today, we see a gradual shift toward a less anthropocentric paradigm that recognizes that humans and nature are both part of an overarching ecosystem. There is a growing call for a transition towards a more nature-inclusive society and a shift in focus from controlling wildlife, towards rewilding and efforts to increase human-wildlife coexistence. Yet even such a new, non-dualistic form of wildlife management will have to deal with the tension between the willingness to give wildlife space, and the need to protect vital human interests against wild intrusions. And technology can play an important role in mitigating these tensions, they allow us to not only closely monitor animal behavior, but also to influence them.

In my paper, I will argue that the use of these wildlife surveillance technologies – and the way they get interpreted – will to a large degree depend on the underlying worldview. Whereas the traditional dualists view will focus on possibilities to control wildlife, and limit the uncontrollability of wild nature, a view that acknowledges humans and wildlife as co-inhabitants of the landscapes, will focus on modern technologies that allow for interspecies communication, and increase the resilience of our cultural systems to withstand perceived outside threats. For humans to coexist with wild predators requires that people can have a basic sense of control and safety, yet, we should also recognize that a certain sense of uncontrollability and wildness is of value to many humans as well, or even a prerequisite for a meaningful relationship with the non-human world. This paper seeks to provide a philosophical analysis of the role of interspecies communication in the pursuit of coexistence with wildlife, with a focus on the case of wolves returning to the Netherlands.

The more than wildlife conservation: rewilding the clouded leopard in Taiwan

Shih-Hsuan Yu

This contribution highlights the contested nature of the programmes aimed at rewilding the clouded leopard in the Taiwanese forests. This contribution looks at the contested role of indigenous communities, international NGO, and the dynamics of Felidae taxonomy. At the moment, the Taiwanese government tries to mainstream the rights of hunting for indigenous communities (5% of total population), who often suffer from cultural misunderstanding and social discrimination in the country. The initiating process of clouded leopard reintroduction programme aims at mutual empowerment and recognition of Taiwan's indigenous legacies on forestlands' culture and knowledge-making. Here, I look at the role of NGOs in building the trust of communities towards rewilding programmes, and examine how the assemblage(s) of global-local wildlife conservation NGOs and other stakeholders understand, interpret and utilize the reintroduction activism of clouded leopards in Taiwan for promoting their envisioned wildlife conservation.

Changing the conservation conversation: rewilding in dialogue with convivial conservation

Shelby Matevich

Convivial Conservation (CC) is a proposal for a transformative biodiversity conservation paradigm. It responds to the failure of mainstream solutions to address the intensifying environmental and biodiversity crises, as they remain rooted in Western-based protected area management and market-based approaches. CC is instead inspired by, and learns from, the “mosaic of alternative” conservation practices from the Global South. It is based on two foundational long-term principles: the spatial and philosophical re-integration of people and nature, and as such, the transformation of the global capitalist economy. Building on the momentum of the recent book *The Conservation Revolution* (2020) and multiple major research and action projects, a network of individuals behind CC are working to operationalize a platform and policy-action network to “change the conservation conversation” and further enable the uptake of alternative, convivial conservation practices worldwide. This session will outline the main tenets of CC with attention to allying conservation interventions to broader movements for social, political, and economic change. It will then consider how this is applied in practice through the work of the Convivial Conservation Centre. Finally, it will highlight synergies with the rewilding agenda and identify opportunities for alliance and integration between both approaches.