

CFAES

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SEMINAR SERIES

THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2023

Time: 4:10 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.



Conflicts in context: shifting baselines in carnivore conservation

Dr. Alexis Mychajliw
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Abstract: Human-wildlife conflict in both rural and urban areas is a persistent threat to the continued existence of many predators. Historically, mammalian carnivores have faced severe range contractions, but, in some places, they are naturally re-expanding or being reintroduced, accompanied by a range of political dilemmas and public misconceptions. In combination with traditional conservation studies of extant populations, I provide historic and deeper time baselines to anticipate these dilemmas and distinguish between novel carnivore behaviors versus the return of normal, pre-contraction ecological variation. Museum collections (spanning natural history, archaeology, and paleontology) can provide unexpected spaces for policy-relevant dialogues among stakeholders and be at the center of interdisciplinary working groups including ecologists, paleontologists, historians, practitioners and social scientists. Employing a diverse range of geochemical, genetic, morphological and archival techniques, I have used museum collections to reframe reintroduction of California grizzly bears, reveal a surprise case of North American “Pleistocene rewilding”, challenge the baseline for gray and red fox ranges, and evaluate how an otherwise abundant mink was overharvested to the point of extinction in the Gulf of Maine. Given the cultural biases present in historical narratives of carnivore conflict, museum specimens provide an irreplaceable mechanism for separating perception from reality to guide real-world policy decisions, and museum exhibits themselves can be vehicles for communicating this new understanding.

Location: 164 Howlett Hall

Join via Zoom: <https://osu.zoom.us/j/98889406098?pwd=UEdZQkhPTzRsTzBrTWdSSTM3cG5ZZz09>

Meeting ID: 988 8940 6098

Password: 506773

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