

The Ordinary Anthropocene

Biodiversity in the other 70%!

In 2022, the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity committed to set aside 30% of the earth's surface for protected areas. In this conference we ask, what about the biodiversity in the other 70%? While the Anthropocene is framed as a spectacular rupture and a catastrophic loss that demands protection for the remaining Holocene patches, we are interested in the life going on beyond the confines of these patches: the ordinary Anthropocene. As the concluding conference for the research project *BIOrdinary: Biodiversity Dilemmas in Ordinary Places*, we invite participants to join us in exploring the latent possibilities found in regular sites of more-than-human habitation, outside the spectacular.

Taking Roland Persson's 'Uninvited Guest' as our totem, we encourage participants to consider how to live alongside and responsibly dwell with the biodiversity that flourishes in the acuminate debris and detritus of deep histories of human mobility, habitation, agriculture and industrial activities. What happens if we explore the epoch outside the register of the spectacular, and hone in on the life that unfolds in ordinary places; in homes, across the city, in farms and plantations, and along coastlines, where more-than-human peregrinations and unruliness are the norm? How do people, animals, plants and microbes produce and encounter the Anthropocene in common spaces and through mundane entanglements, and how do they make diverse ways of life in the ordinary possible? How can we critically engage with the concept of biodiversity beyond apocalyptic and salvage frameworks to imagine future scenarios that focus not only on the survival of species labelled as endemic, but also on making room for future natives?



"Uninvited guest" by Roland Persson (2025)
Photo: Jussi Tainen

Programme | BIOrdinary Conference 2026

Day 1 – Monday 18 May

 Audiotorium 5, Södra Huset B, Floor 3

15.00 – 16.30	Keynote: “Invasiveness as a response to ecological escape, landscape change and disturbance: Rapid evolution in human transformed landscapes” – <i>Andrew Mathews</i>
16.30 – 18.30	<i>Welcome reception</i>

Day 2 – Tuesday 19 May

 SCORE (Stockholm Centre for Organizational Research)

9.00 – 9.45	<i>Coffee and opening comments</i>
10.00 – 11.30	Panel 1: Disturbing Biodiversity Biodiversity of the majority of the planet’s ecosystems has been disturbed in complex ways by a combination of anthropogenic factors and agency of species on the move. This panel explores emerging ecological entanglements in ordinary places shaped by these disturbances, while also seeking to disturb the very concept of biodiversity, and particularly, the different policies of managing non-humans carried out in its name: from conservation, restoration and re-wilding to exploitation and extermination. <i>Speakers: Aurora Fredriksen, Heather Swanson, Ivana Maček & Emma Cyr</i>
11.30 – 12.00	“Attending Otherwise: Microseason Mapping as Ecological Practice” – <i>Hiroko Tsuchimoto & Christina Fredengren</i>
12.00 – 13.00	<i>Lunch at Restaurant Lantbruket</i>
13.00 – 14.30	Panel 2: Imperial Appetites Starting from the premise that there is no innocent place in the food chain, this panel invites inquiry into the storied and polysemous relationships between imperial foodways and biodiversity changes. It explores how appetites have shaped and been shaped by circulations of people, plants, animals, and capital within imperial formations, and traces their consequences on who and what belongs in migrant ecologies. <i>Speakers: Sasha Gora, Jayeeta Sharma, Bengt Karlsson & Vilma Johansson</i>
14.30 – 15.00	<i>Swedish fika</i>
15.00 – 16.00	Showcase of public work – <i>BIOrdinary team</i>
16.00 – 17.30	Panel 3: Lethal Logics Emerging ecologies arouse many anxieties, vexing categories and threatening various 'biosecurities', where diverse biota is increasingly subject to lethal intervention. These lethal interventions stretch from harvesting and hunting, to routine culls and ambitious eradications, in ‘wild’ places as well as densely peopled landscapes. This panel thinks about the logics of these interventions, what orders they might enact, and the fraught relationalities of lethal engagement. <i>Speakers: Panos Kompartartis, Sarah Crowley, Gabriel Lennon & Erica von Essen</i>
19.00 – 21.00	<i>Conference dinner at Restaurant Mazra’a</i>

Programme | BIOrdinary Conference 2026

Day 3 – Wednesday 20 May

 Accelerator

9.00 – 10.30	Panel 4: Messy Natures Riffing off the title to Wartmann & Lorimer's (2024) article, this panel explores the aesthetic aspects of biodiversity politics and policy, where untidy environments are routinely apprehended as undesirable and morally dubious, challenging the work of rewilding. Delving deeper into the ideas around mess, this panel investigates how, on the contrary, tidy and ordered ecologies are regularly bound up with notions of disease prevention and the promotion of health, leading to a preference for less biodiverse and simplified landscapes. <i>Speakers: Jamie Lorimer, Carolin Maertens, Paula Uimonen & Tomas Cole</i>
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee
11.00 – 12.45	Panel 5: More-Than-Human Sovereignty This panel addresses sovereignty in its broad sense—as levels of control over territory, resources, and life trajectories—to explore (1) how individual and collective lives and futures are shaped and constrained by different forms of sovereignty, and (2) how emergent relations between humans, non-humans, and landscapes can challenge political and capitalist orders and policy frameworks, opening up alternative and unexpected possibilities and trajectories. <i>Speakers: Munira Khayyat, Vanessa Bateman, Roger Norum, Michael Eilenberg & Karin Ahlberg</i>
12.45 – 13.45	Lunch at Restaurant Lantbruuket
13.45 – 15.00	Screening of <i>Unaminal</i> (2025) film and Directors' Dialogue – Andrew Mitchell, Sally Jacobson & Tuva Björk
15.00 – 16.00	Conference sum-up and publication planning
16.00 – 19.00	(Optional) Excursion: Visit to Roland Persson's art studio

26.05.18
26.06.18

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY, STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY
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Panels & Papers



The Ordinary Anthropocene

Biodiversity in the other 70%!

"Uninvited Guest" by Roland Persson (2025)
Photo: Jussi Tiainen

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P1. Disturbing Biodiversity

Biodiversity of the majority of the planet's ecosystems has been disturbed in complex ways by a combination of anthropogenic factors and agency of species on the move. This panel explores emerging ecological entanglements in ordinary places shaped by these disturbances, while also seeking to disturb the very concept of biodiversity, and particularly, the different policies of managing non-humans carried out in its name: from conservation, restoration and re-wilding to exploitation and extermination.

The Inconvenience of Other Species: Human-Swallow Attachments in Times of Ecological Detachment

Aurora Fredriksen (The University of Manchester)

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Extending from Berlant's (2022) work on the 'inconvenience of other people', this paper considers the inconvenience of other species through the case of barn swallows in the Northeastern US and northern Europe, exploring ordinary attachments between barn swallows and people, the frictions of coexistence, and the ambivalent relations that arise in the event of swallows becoming inconvenient. Barn swallows are almost entirely dependent on human-made structures such as barns for nesting. While this adaptation has made barn swallows globally abundant, categorised as a species of 'least concern' by the IUCN, it also leaves them dependent on shifting human infrastructures and hospitalities. In the northeastern US and northern Europe, changes to farming practices in recent decades have seen marked decline in the number of smaller, open barns and, correspondingly, steep declines in barn swallow populations. In the Anthropocene, ordinary attachments to wildlife are loosening, becoming detached. Long a valued marker of the northern summer, swallows are increasingly inconvenient to people's desires for cheap food and sanitary buildings. This paper explores the variety of ordinary attachments and detachments between swallows and people and how these are shifting in ways that are both voluntary and involuntary for people and swallows in the Anthropocene.

Affirming Biodiversity in Disturbed Places

Heather Swanson (Aarhus University)

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Despite its limitations, failures, and co-options, might biodiversity still be a conceptual ally in our efforts to foster liveability in ordinary places? In this talk, which extends analytical insights developed in the publication "Amazon vs. the Amazon: Green Capitalist Imaginaries and the Death of Biodiversity" (with co-author Zachary Caple), I argue that while anthropologists and environmental humanities scholars rightly point out biodiversity's flaws, we often give inadequate attention to its ongoing analytical purchase. Via a brief history of the rise of biodiversity in the 1990s as a spectacular concern, the talk describes how

biodiversity came to prominence in both scientific-management and public imaginaries. It then traces the turn to more functionalist and substitutionalist paradigms that gained traction as biodiversity at once proved difficult to protect and became subject to increasing critiques. Yet rather than improving landscape liveability, many of the paradigms that have come “after” biodiversity have – if anything – weakened our analytics for noticing the historical, relational, and functional significance of place-based ecological landscapes. In the midst of ongoing damage, might renewed attention to and appreciation of biodiversity’s merits aid our understandings of and capacities for living well with ordinary places? This talk suggests that this seemingly conventional and managerial environmental concept may nonetheless hold generative possibilities for site-specific ecological relations.

Killing Without Culling: Wasting an ‘Invader’ in Northeastern Italy

Emma Cyr (Stockholm University)

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In the disturbed lagoons of Venice and the Po Delta in northeastern Italy, the blue crab, a recent arrival from the western Atlantic, defies categorization and challenges biodiversity governance. While invasive species as a problematic are discursively associated with interventions aimed at eradicating or containing a population deemed dangerous and out-of-control (Crowley et al., 2018), the blue crab in these lagoons presents a different consideration: a recognition of the impossibility of eradication. While policy oriented towards containment exists, it morphs into wasting in practice: crabs are brought to disposal centers or thrown into the lagoon as waste while fishers are transformed into precariously compensated waste workers. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted between 2024 and 2025, I trace three modes of wasting—indirect killing, intimate killing, and throwing back—to argue that blue crabs are made not only killable but waste-able. Wasting can entail both killing and not-killing, and it rests less on numerical population management than on breaking an unmanageable expanse into discrete encounters that can be ended by diverting excess away. Here, as blue crabs come to figure as a dangerous, unruly excess that can hurt back, necropolitical relations are partially inverted and wasting expresses ambiguity, futility, and the ongoing maintenance of violent relatedness.

Disturbing Oysters: Biodiversity in Governance, Local Perceptions, and Ecology

Ivana Macek (Stockholm University)

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Pacific oysters (*Magallana gigas*) have been classified as “invasive alien species” in Sweden, one of the defining criteria being the threat to biodiversity (IUCN 2024 *Toolkit*). As ecosystem engineers, the Pacific oysters indeed do alter the life conditions for other species where they build their reefs. On the West coast of Sweden, where they started settling twenty years ago, hitchhiking on the warming currents from the continental aquafarms, they have altered soft substrate of shallow sheltered bays, into hard substrate of oyster reefs. This change of the

ecosystem in a number of localities has, however, increased the biodiversity, rather than threatened it, albeit making the environment unfriendly for several species that thrived there earlier. The concept of biodiversity has been used in governance in a normative way, legitimizing the attempts to exterminate the newcomer oysters. At the same time, the extermination, or even control, soon proved to be impossible in practice. I counterpose this rigid understanding and use of the concept of biodiversity in governance, to governance officers' broader understanding of ecology, local population's perceptions of changes of species in the sea they live with, and the relationships of different organisms in the new environment of Pacific oyster reefs.

P2. Imperial Appetites

Starting from the premise that there is no innocent place in the food chain, this panel invites inquiry into the storied and polysemous relationships between imperial foodways and biodiversity changes. It explores how appetites have shaped and been shaped by circulations of people, plants, animals, and capital within imperial formations, and traces their consequences on who and what belongs in migrant ecologies.

A Headless Fish and the Afterlives of Salt

L. Sasha Gora (University of Augsburg)

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Codfish is everywhere in Jamaica—most famously as the co-star in its national breakfast: Ackee & Saltfish—but it's all body and no head. In 2007 *the Jamaica Gleaner* told its readers that the next time their grandmothers lure them into the kitchen with the promise of this dish to stop and ask, "why is it that you've never seen the head of this fish." Stories and rumours fill in the gaps, and history does too.

Planks of protein, dried and salted codfish fueled how Europeans remapped Atlantic waters with the forced migration of people and plants and worlds. In the Caribbean, where coasts are thick in calories from the likes of red snapper and mackerel, cod from icy northern seas stars in many of its cuisines. The question, then, is obvious: Why? What does the historical dependency on a fish from elsewhere say about local Caribbean fish today? And what does this have to do with biological diversity, with the extraordinary that becomes ordinary? Suturing the histories of a cod's head and body, tongue and tail, this talk departs from the quotidian sites of markets and kitchens to consider biodiversity from a culinary perspective.

Circulating Plants: Eurasian Migrant, Canadian Invader, Culinary Resource

Jo Sharma (University of Toronto)

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I explore two globally circulating plants whose meanings and uses fluctuated widely as they moved across time and space. They are dandelion, and butterbar, commonly seen today as wild weeds, ecological invaders, and overall nuisances. I examine the rich historical, culinary, and healing meanings that

accompanied those plants, as they moved with migrant people from Eurasia to North America. Both belong to the Asteraceae family of flowering plants, whose 24,000 species, from daisies, sunflowers and chrysanthemums, to lettuce and artichokes, egrow on every continent. For dandelions, unani, ayurveda, and Chinese medicines prized them, as did Indigenous peoples, whether in the Himalaya, the Nordic, or Turtle Island. Today it is mostly Italians or foodies who seek them out, despite their disrepute as botanical pests. A more recent oceanic journey is that of butterbur, from Japan to Canada's West Coast, known as fuki, which accompanied Japanese migrants as one of their prized sansai or mountain vegetables. Later, fuki proved seminal for the food security of World War II issei and nisei internees. Ironically, it is now seen as a dangerous invader, even in the regions where the sansei and yonsei descendants of those internees seek out that noble past. How might gardeners, foragers, biologists, cooks, artists, and anthropologists, and historians deal with such contradictory 'Bioordinary' perspectives?

Plantation Afterlives: Rewilding the Colonial Tea Garden

Bengt G. Karlsson (Stockholm University)

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In this paper I argue that the monoculture tea plantation developed by the British during the 19th century in India has reached its end. It is no longer socially, environmentally and economically feasible. In its place, other more diverse or lively ways of cultivating tea are emerging. We might think of these as ways of doing the plantation otherwise. Here I will discuss five such modes of rewilding or bringing diversity back into the plantation. These are 1. the *organic* monoculture, 2. the *small-holder*, 3. the *artisan*, 4. the *indigenous* and 5. the *feral*. In various ways, these experimental forms build on a different logic than of the colonial plantation. Instead of elimination, these alternative forms of tea cultivation build on the ecological affordances of particular locations. By engaging with these experiments, I suggest that the making of a biodiverse future begins in the agriculture field.

Blue-Green Horizons: The Agave Rush and the Future of Mezcal

Vilma Johansson (Stockholm University)

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This talk draws on the research proposal for my upcoming doctoral project, starting in September 2026. It examines the paradoxical rise in agave cultivation for mezcal production in Mexico by interrogating the affordances and limitations of this plant, crop, commodity. Agave has recently been reframed as a 'climate crop': drought-tolerant, fire-resistant, and well-suited to increasingly arid landscapes in the Anthropocene. At the same time, a drastic expansion of agave plantations that favours the quickest-growing and most high-yielding plant variety has intensified monocultural farming practices that erode traditional cultivation methods, threaten biodiversity, cause soil degradation, and generate new ecological and economic vulnerabilities—not dissimilar to the threats

posed to the plantation form elsewhere. While these cultivation shifts promise economic opportunity, they also cause volatile conditions for farmers.

This research “follows the plant” both *spatially*—across agro-food infrastructures such as farms, distilleries, quality certification facilities and offices, and mezcal bars—and *temporally*—from seed to spirit—to understand how agave is made-up, speculated on, enacted, and altered as it travels through various capitalist and non-capitalist value regimes. Ultimately, this study aims to enrich environmental and economic anthropology scholarship by investigating how corporate agriculture schemes not only direct what crops we plant and consume but also change social and political relations between people, plants, and landscapes.

P3. Lethal Logics

Emerging ecologies arouse many anxieties, vexing categories and threaten various 'biosecurities', where diverse biota is increasingly subject to lethal intervention. These lethal interventions stretch from harvesting and hunting, to routine culls and ambitious eradications, in 'wild' places as well as densely peopled landscapes. This panel thinks about the logics of these interventions, what orders they might enact, and the fraught relationalities of lethal engagement.

Monstrous Ecologies: Gore Kinship and the Afterlives of a Toxic Pufferfish in Crete

Panos Kompatsiaris (HSE University)

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This presentation examines the case of the toxic pufferfish *Lagocephalus sceleratus* in Crete to explore the limits of multispecies ethics when faced with invasive, harmful species. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and digital media analysis, it investigates how the fish is framed in public discourse as monstrous, destructive and economically worthless. The paper traces how narratives of extermination and exploitability emerge in tandem and how care and violence are entangled rather than opposed. It builds on multispecies theory while questioning its relational optimism as species like *lagocephalus* are tolerated only when transformed into extractable matter. Across both offline and online contexts, I identify two dominant strategies for dealing with *lagopsaro*: eradication and commercialization. These strategies offer competing yet similar responses to the invasive other, structured by a gore logic of exploitability. Whether framed as an enemy to be destroyed or a resource to be valorized, the fish's continued presence is made tolerable only insofar as it can be transformed into value. The paper pays attention to the affective infrastructures that merge inclusion with killability, including vernacular media, local ecologies, and innovation programs and calls for a more critical engagement with the uneven conditions under which multispecies “becomings” are allowed to unfold.

The Underminers: Structural Inattention to the Quiet Killing of Moles

Sarah Crowley (University of Exeter)

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European moles possess many qualities that should work in their favour. They are small, soft, harmless mammals with rich and broadly positive cultural representation. They also, however, do things that undermine the benefits of their charisma. Moles

tunnel, and because they tunnel, they are generally unseen. Their earthworks, though, are highly visible, upsetting aesthetic and functional topographies. Lawns are disrupted, vegetable roots dislodged, and silage crops ‘contaminated’ by the mobility of moles. Consequently, in Britain, moles’ purported popularity fails to shield them from largely unregulated lethal control. To be unseen is not to escape; mole control is widespread, requires no licence or justification, and employs methods that recent evidence indicates are markedly inhumane. Traps are laid underground, so death happens at distance and – mostly – unremarked upon. The lethal logic here is one of structural inattention: no culls, no campaigns, no parliamentary debates, just quiet killing, out of sight and out of mind. I will argue that these ordinary, longstanding practices of mole control undermine the contemporary British self-image of a wildlife and welfare loving nation. The mundanity of mole control highlights the ease with which exceptions are made, and speaks to the ambitions and limits of co-existence with common wildlife.

An Ordinary Cull: Lethal Goat Control and Ecological Maintenance

Gabriel Ulrich Lennon (Stockholm University)

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Culling is a labour of the Anthropocene, naming the lethal management of non-human populations in agricultural and ‘wild’ spaces alike. Projects of such violence toward unwanted, invasive, or ‘surplus’ animals come with ambivalences and controversies but are nonetheless increasingly ‘ordinary’ in the contemporary care of multispecies spaces. This is particularly so in Aotearoa (New Zealand), where ungulates have been subjected to official culls to suppress their numbers for about a century now, nurturing a community of experts in lethal ungulate control that have been exported to other global contexts.

This paper explores culling as a professionalised practice, focusing on these ungulate cullers in Aotearoa. Pulling from ethnographic engagement and research into the history of the profession, I consider how this practice articulates and subjectifies specific environments as knowable and governable, emplacing cullers in them. Rather than considering the cull as necessarily an irruptive event, I approach it as a practice of maintaining landscapes and a visceral mode of relating, with a logic of continual imbrication rather than a severing of relations. In doing so, I explore the practical and political ambivalences of their violent labour, the repertoires and relations that have emerged, and attempt to more widely mark out this practice as a particular labour of the Anthropocene.

To Catch a Predator: Regimes of Killing the Mink in Sweden

Erica Von Essen (Stockholm Resilience Centre)

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This paper examines the “lethal logics” of invasive species management through a comparative analysis of two dominant regimes of killing the American mink (*Neovison vison*) in Sweden: hunting and trapping. Drawing on interviews and ethnographic fieldwork in the Stockholm archipelago, I argue that these practices present distinct ways of organizing, distributing, and justifying animal death. Hunting operates as an eruptive form of killing, characterized by real-time, multispecies coordination between humans, dogs, and technologies, producing visible and affectively intense encounters. Trapping, by contrast, is irruptive: it displaces killing in time and space, delegating agency to devices and enabling broader civilian participation in conservation. These modes enact different configurations of responsibility, visibility, and human-animal

relations. By foregrounding how killing is structured rather than simply why it is justified, the paper contributes to debates on biosecurity, multispecies governance, and the ethics of lethal intervention in contemporary conservation.

P4. Messy Natures

Riffing off the title to Wartmann & Lorimer's (2024) article, this panel explores the aesthetic aspects of biodiversity politics and policy, where untidy environments are routinely apprehended as undesirable and morally dubious, challenging the work of rewilding. Delving deeper into the ideas around mess, this panel investigates how, on the contrary, tidy and ordered ecologies are regularly bound up with notions of disease prevention and the promotion of health, leading to a preference for less biodiverse and simplified landscapes.

Mess and the Political Aesthetics of European Rewilding

Jamie Lorimer (University of Oxford)

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Modern agriculture involves the systematic rationalisation of social and ecological processes, choreographing the spaces and times of life under the promise of healthy and productive environments. It gives rise to a distinct aesthetic that values order and control, expressed in simplified, homogenous, and linear ecologies. 20th century nature conservation contested this aesthetic by affirming traditional, pre-modern, low-intensity agricultural landscapes, marked by a heterogeneous patchwork of land uses. It sought to freeze time in space through the preservation of a distinct and orderly composition. Rewilding shifts the focus of conservation from ecological composition to processes, easing control, and choreographing ecological and hydrological dynamics to deliver more functional ecosystems. Rewilded landscapes look different to those of modern agriculture and traditional conservation. They are unpredictable, complex, and nonlinear, involving tangled, scrubby, feral ecologies: they are messy. Advocates affirm this mess, while critics oppose it. This paper critically analyses the political aesthetics of mess in the context of European rewilding. It explores how mess unsettles established ways of seeing, knowing and governing, to challenge who speaks for Nature and opening space and time for an alternative biopolitics.

From Pit to Future: Transformative Aesthetics of Mine Restoration and German Reunification in Bitterfeld-Wolfen, Eastern Germany

Carolin Maertens (University of Oslo)

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In this paper, I trace the transformation of a large coal mine into a picturesque lakeland in Eastern Germany against the backdrop of profound socio-political and economic rupture. Starting from the insight that mine remediation is not simply a technical procedure but also a process of meaning-making, I examine this transformation as both constituted by and constitutive of contested aesthetics that reveal central aspects of the socio-political struggles surrounding reunification in Eastern Germany.

While the transformation of a dust bowl into an idyllic lakeland might seem to offer obvious entry points for reflecting on landscape (through) aesthetics, I seek to unpack aestheticised notions of environmental disaster, post-industrial memorial, and post-socialist natural idyll in relation to their narration of socialist ruin, societal transformation, and East German experiences of reunification.

The paper shows how the interpretation and mobilisation of particular landscape aesthetics do not necessarily draw on pre-configured registers but instead emerge from socio-political struggles over East German subjectivity, historiography, and possible futures. Finally, by delineating how aesthetics become (part of) political practices, I argue for close attention to historically situated forms of practising aesthetics.

Messing Up Sublime Seascapes and Ordinary Ocean Cleaners

Paula Uimonen (Stockholm University)

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Focusing on the sea cucumber, this paper explores how biodiversity in seascapes are messed up through human intervention. The sea cucumber has become overexploited in many parts of the world to supply demand from a growing middle class in China, where it is valorized as sea ginseng. In Tanzania, coastal communities are now being encouraged to farm the sea cucumber, for export to China. But keeping sea cucumbers caged in ocean pens means messing up with their ecological role as ocean cleaners. Upon closer scrutiny, this seemingly unassuming ocean creature has an important function in the ecosystem, as it feeds off various forms of debris on the seafloor, thereby maintaining a vibrant environment for other oceanic lifeforms. And while it may come across as just an ordinary organism on the seafloor, the sea cucumber embodies some extraordinary features that demand a more creative appraisal of cognition: it has no brain, but knows how to live through its senses. Drawing on multimodal and multisensory fieldwork in Tanzania, this presentation shares some of the stories that I recently published in the monograph *Sea Cucumber Stories* (Routledge, 2026).

Nature by Design: Mimesis and Mess in Singapore's Constructed Ecologies

Tomas Cole (Stockholm University)

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In 2018 Lee Hsien Loong, the then prime minister, declared Singapore to be a “Nation By Design”, encapsulating the long-held notion that national progress in this city state is driven by intentional design choices, overseen by its sagely leaders. Efforts to protect and restore local biodiversity are likewise a form of Nature by Design. Singapore's Green Plan 2030 and the much-vaunted vision of a City in Nature are oriented not so much towards rewilding ecosystems as mimicking and optimizing them through clever design – enhancing so-called ‘Nature Capital’, to create a more liveable and sustainable environment for the city's human inhabitants, while keeping problematic fauna and flora at bay. Messy nature is regularly equated with both disease ecologies and moral disorder. The result is a broad array of meticulously manicured and often spectacular green surfaces which carpet the city, such as the Jewel at Changi Airport and the Supertree Grove, where very little is left to chance. These are constructed ecosystems, a clever mimesis of “real” nature. Scratching the surface, however, things get increasingly messy.

In this paper I get down into the weeds, exploring how – in these various mimetic projects to reinvent Singapore's environment, from state-led greening programs to grassroots initiatives – the plan often goes awry and mess, the very stuff of biodiversity, enters into the political aesthetics of designs. This paper probes the limits of intentional ecological design, exploring how preference for smooth surfaces and a fear of germs rubs against the realities of functioning ecosystems and possibilities of wilder futures.

P5. More-Than-Human Sovereignty

This panel addresses sovereignty in its broad sense—as levels of control over territory, resources, and life trajectories—to explore (1) how individual and collective lives and futures are shaped and constrained by different forms of sovereignty, and (2) how emergent relations between humans, non-humans, and landscapes can challenge political and capitalist orders and policy frameworks, opening up alternative and unexpected possibilities and trajectories.

The Fire Will Never Cease: Defiant Ecologies in South Lebanon

Munira Khayyat (NYU Abu Dhabi)

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Scorched earth, blackened skies, poisoned waters and fires everywhere. This talk shares urgent truths from the grounds of resistant being amidst ceaseless wars in South Lebanon. Here, rooted communities defiantly confront seasonal military assaults by imperial and settler-colonial war-machines as the intentional destruction of life. War is lived across decades as repeated environmental devastation upon the land, its dwellers and keepers, who together confront methodical annihilation and enduring occupation through defiant acts of return and repair. Speaking from the shattered grounds of the present amidst the immediacy of ongoing wars and occupation and so-called ceasefires, this talk brings to light the multi-species ecologies that resist and survive endless seasons of scorched-earth devastation in South Lebanon.

Globalizing Wildlife in the Ordinary Anthropocene

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Globalization is usually understood as an exclusively human phenomenon, focused on the movement of humans, commodities, capital, and ideas. This paper draws on my co-edited (with Raf de Bont and Tom Quick) volume *Globalizing Wildlife* (University of North Carolina Press, May 2026), which reinterprets globalization as a more-than-human affair by attending to ‘wild’ animals entangled in the processes that have reshaped the world over the last two centuries. Developed through the Moving Animals project (2020-2025) at Maastricht University, this research examines how animals are studied, managed, and controlled, and how, in turn, they respond to and reshape these processes.

Using a historical perspective, I consider case studies from the volume situated in the “ordinary Anthropocene”—ports, cities, and roadside environments—before turning to examples I have encountered in archives and everyday life where animals have been reintroduced or invited into sites shaped by globalization. These include bird boxes installed at landfills and the introduction of deer, elk (wapiti), and plant species in and around abandoned mines in Canada and the United States in recent decades. Such interventions seek to reconfigure damaged environments, yet they also reveal how non-human life is subject to overlapping regimes of conservation, restoration, and resource management.

Biomobilities of Invasiveness: Mosquitoes, Pink Salmon, and the Politics of Knowing Matter Out of Place

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This talk examines the movements of mosquitoes and pink salmon across Arctic and Mediterranean waters, landscapes, and settlements as climate change produces new conditions for more-than-human mobility. Focusing on these species as forms of "matter out of place," the paper explores how ideas of invasiveness emerge across scientific, political, and everyday registers, and how these classifications shape debates around belonging, biosecurity, and coexistence.

Rather than approaching biodiversity through frameworks of catastrophe or ecological purity, the talk attends to mundane spaces and quotidian encounters through which humans and nonhumans learn to live with emergent ecologies. Following mosquitoes and salmon through peri-urban environments, rivers, laboratories, policy discussions, and community narratives, the paper asks how species on the move unsettle distinctions between native and invasive, disturbance and adaptation, belonging and exclusion.

Methodologically, the research uses deep mapping, ethnographic interviews, participatory observation, and community-based narratives to trace how knowledge is produced through situated and cross-scalar encounters. The talk argues that these biomobilities challenge tidy ecological imaginaries by foregrounding relationality, unruliness, and uncertainty as constitutive features of rural everyday life. In doing so, it contributes to broader debates on biodiversity beyond salvage frameworks, asking not only how species survive environmental change, but also how humans and nonhumans make room for "future natives" in the ordinary spaces of the Anthropocene.

Feral Beasts and Frontier Making in Texas

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This study examines feral pigs in Texas as frontier-making animals, foregrounding the critical role of more-than-human actors in the ongoing production of frontier relations. Moving beyond classical resource frontier frameworks where value is extracted through the exploitation of "cheap nature," it centers feral pigs as active agents in processes of expansion, dispossession, and territorial reconfiguration. Cast as an invasive species, feral pigs animate a set of enduring and politically consequential tropes that structure everyday life along the contemporary Texas frontier. They are increasingly framed as ecological threats, agricultural pests, and dangers to human life, yet these representations obscure their deeper entanglement with settler colonial histories and futures. As settler beasts, feral pigs materialize relations of expropriation and accumulation while carrying forward the biological remnants of earlier frontier projects. The study shows how feral pigs operate as a nexus through which fantasies of homestead defense, frontier masculinity, and the figure of the invasive other are articulated, increasingly reframed within apocalyptic imaginaries of a Texas under siege. The study asks how the biological remnants of past frontiers persist into the present and how they are mobilized in the production of new frontier formations.

The Future is a Tropical Ocean

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If global warming was once an abstract discussion about average temperature rise, these abstractions have now been translated into lived experience through recurring heatwaves, droughts, and record-breaking temperatures. We hear apocalyptic statements of how heat will redefine life in the Anthropocene. But rather than imagining a future to come, changes

in the oceans provide a blueprint for what to expect on land. Oceans have absorbed 90% of global warming rising sea levels, ocean acidification, marine species migration, and increases in storms and hurricanes.

The fastest-warming sea in the world is the Eastern Basin of the Mediterranean Sea, which, within a few decades, will turn into a tropical sea according to meteorological definitions. But the Mediterranean Sea is actually undergoing a “double tropicalization.” In addition to rising sea temperatures, non-native tropical species are increasingly settling in the sea. Of the sea’s 17,000 marine species, 1,000 are non-native, and 600 of these have arrived independently from the Red Sea through the Suez Canal. They now make up a staggering 60–70% of species in shallow waters along the Levantine coast.

In this talk, I unpack this double tropicalization by thinking through sovereignty to open up questions about, invasion biology, species migration and the policing of mobility. Invasive alien species have become an increasing concern within biodiversity agendas and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. However, the Mediterranean case — involving 600 new species propelling a transformation of the entire biota — does not fit easily within current biodiversity frameworks, their theoretical underpinnings, or their proposed interventions. In my exploration, I will suggest that contemporary concerns about alien species may not only stem from their impact on local ecologies or our obsession with species “out of place,” but also from the ways in which they challenge the very foundations of biology as a science.