



CONVIVA

For co-existence, (bio)diversity and justice in conservation

INTRODUCTION

The CONVIVA project is grounded in the premise that conservation is critical to transformations to sustainability but that its practices need to change radically. Conservation can be effective in protecting biodiversity in places, but in toto has failed to halt global biodiversity loss. Continued habitat fragmentation and reduced funding during times of austerity compound this problem. Many conservationists now acknowledge this, leading to vigorous ‘Anthropocene’ discussions on how to reconfigure human-wildlife relations, protected areas and the role of economic development in conservation.

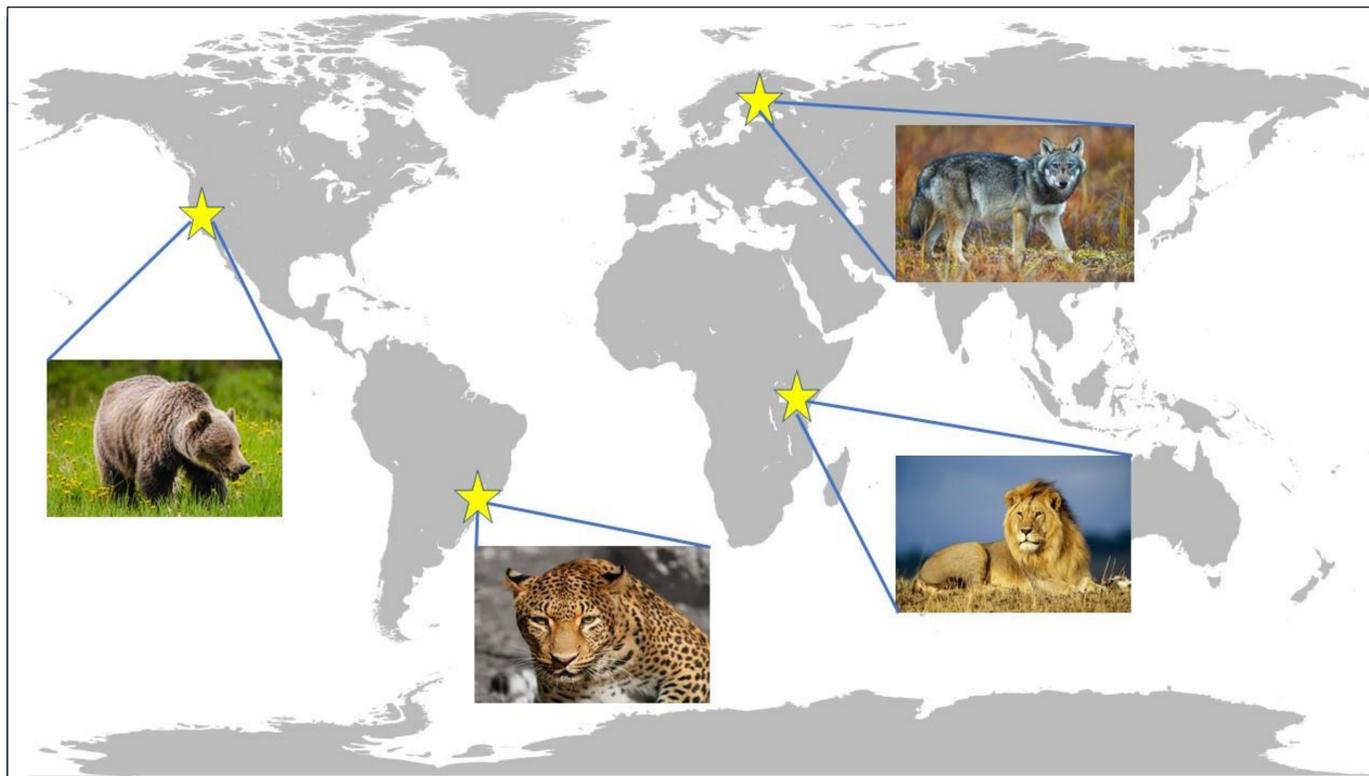
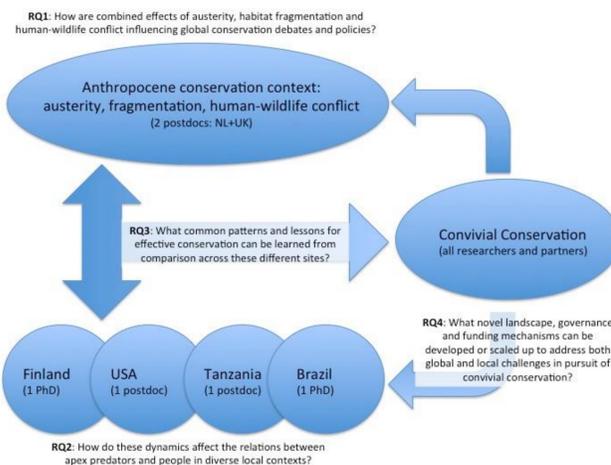
Two of these have gained particular prominence in recent years. The first, a self-styled ‘new conservation’, argues that conventional conservation approaches, grounded in creation of protected areas that separate humans and wildlife, is ineffective. They call instead for intensified market engagement to fund the production of ‘novel landscapes’ in which humans and nature coexist. The second is a resurgence of longer standing ‘neoprotectionist’ traditions. Thoroughly denouncing new conservation, many neoprotectionists are becoming increasingly critical of the promise of market engagements altogether. Under the banners ‘half earth’ or ‘nature needs half’, they instead place their faith in a dramatic expansion of strict protected areas to encompass at least 50% of the planet.

Both positions raise important points but ultimately fail to provide a convincing way forward. **An alternative model is needed** that goes beyond protected areas and faith in markets to incorporate the needs of humans and nonhumans alike within integrated landscapes. CONVIVA’s key objective is to conceptually refine and empirically test the prospects for one proposal emerging from these debates: ‘convivial conservation’. This new model moves beyond protected areas and faith in markets to build landscape, governance and funding pathways that integrate conservation and poverty reduction, while enhancing prosperity.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) How are combined effects of austerity, habitat fragmentation and human-wildlife conflict influencing global conservation debates and policies?
- 2) How do these dynamics affect the relations between apex predators and people in diverse local contexts?
- 3) What common patterns and lessons for effective conservation can be learned from comparison across these different sites?
- 4) What novel landscape, governance and funding mechanisms can be developed or scaled up to address both global and local challenges in pursuit of convivial conservation?

RESEARCH DESIGN



SITES AND SPECIES

1) Finland, Grey Wolves (*Canis lupus*)

The wolf is classified as highly endangered in Finland, mainly due to human persecution and habitat fragmentation. The management plan for wolves in Finland, updated in 2015, launched nine concrete projects to improve conditions for co-existence. In this case study, we will search for critical political, economic and scalar conditions necessary for alternative forms of convivial coexistence in eastern and northern cooperation groups.

2) USA (California), Grizzly Bears (*Ursus arctos*)

In 1850, there were an estimated 10,000 grizzly bears in California. Grizzlies became extinct in the state by the mid-1920s, yet the species remains California’s official mascot. In 2014 a non-governmental organization, petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list grizzlies in California as endangered and launch a reintroduction program. We will seek to better understand the attitudes, values and beliefs of residents in these areas, to identify the political and economic concerns that shape these communities’ willingness to support predator reintroduction efforts.

3) Tanzania, Lions (*Panthera leo*)

Tanzania contains 40% of all African lions. Yet, since the 1970s, the population and species’ range have contracted by at least 30% and 82%, respectively. Human-lion conflicts, particularly livestock predation, direct persecution and habitat loss, are the primary reasons. We will seek to better understand local people’s rationalities for their continued living adjacent to lion-dominated habitats, to explore costs and benefits of living in such habitats, and to contribute to finding spatial strategies for convivial conservation under different governance arrangements.

4) Brazil, Jaguars (*Panthera onca*)

The Brazilian Atlantic Forest (AF) is a highly endangered and fragmented ecosystem close to Brazil’s largest cities. Roughly 95% of the original ecosystem has already been lost, but the remaining AF pockets are still highly biodiverse and important for conservation, especially for the last remaining jaguars. This research will explore spatial solutions to human-jaguar conflicts in relation to opportunities for and challenges to economic landscape development, democratic governance and novel funding mechanisms.

MAIN FINDINGS

The project has thus far produced insightful findings on several levels:

1. **Processes of Transformation:** Our project has developed a particular “theory of transformation” guiding its work. Dominant efforts to improve conservation policy and practice tend to emphasize “circular” change within current political-economic structures rather than “axial” transformation aiming to transcend these structures themselves. By contrast, our project demonstrates the importance of pursuing axial transformation via confrontation with and “unmaking” of constraining political-economic structures to achieve effective conservation. It also evidences the utility of critical social science as an analytical device to politicise and pluralise conservation discussions addition to facilitating identification of transformative alternatives.
2. **Research for Transformation:** Despite growing calls for transdisciplinary collaboration, much current research concerning human-predator interactions is not as transdisciplinary as it could be, thus limiting its potential to contribute to transforming dominant patterns of human-wildlife interaction. To address this issue, via discussion and reflection concerning the methods employed and challenges encountered in executing the project itself, we have developed a question-based toolkit integrating diverse transdisciplinary techniques to help better understand, and improve, human-predator interactions in pursuit of convivial coexistence.
3. **Transforming Conservation:** To date, the majority of research and advocacy addressing human-wildlife interaction focuses on the immediate context of interaction between the different species. By contrast, our project demonstrates the importance of also attending to the overarching structures and process in which these interactions are embedded in order to transform human-wildlife conflict into convivial coexistence. From this perspective, we highlight how the relative power of different political-economic interests within a given site influences how the animals are perceived and valued, and how this in turn influences conservation interventions and their impact on human-wildlife interaction within these spaces. We emphasize the importance of attention to these dynamics both within and across locales in efforts to foster convivial conservation.

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IN COORDINATION WITH



FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on the project and outputs please visit our website:

www.convivialconservation.com