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"Human-nature Interactions through a Multispecies Lens"

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This introduction brings together a group of papers focusing on conservation theory and practice, and argues strongly for a new place-based conservation through a multispecies lens. Honouring the work of Brian Morris, a scholar who has consistently forged a persuasive set of conceptual connections between science and society, and building on his insights into environmental history and human-nature interactions, we outline a vision of conservation that incorporates new narratives – at the intersection between the ecological and the social – to reimagine the world in the Anthropocene. This includes challenging the persistence of fortress, neoprotectionist and other top-down forms of conservation, through a recognition that conservation is deeply rooted in (human, nonhuman and more-than-human) senses of place. The introduction urges scholars to focus on landscapes as units of analysis: "multispecies assemblages" that are easily overlooked at other spatial and historical scales. It calls for increased attention to the contact zones where the lives of humans and other species biologically, culturally and politically intersect, as a counterpoint to the dominant planetary perspective of earth systems and conservation science. It underlines the importance of deep relational analyses of human interactions with other life forms, through renewed attention to multispecies histories, locality, and forms of knowledge rooted in place. It is at this level, through historically nuanced accounts founded on a more place-based conception of ourselves as a species, that new narratives and answers to our current predicament will emerge. (Source: Conservation and Society)

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