Conference Announcement

Pathways – Human Dimensions of Fisheries and Wildlife Conference Europe

Goslar, Germany – September 16 – 19, 2018

Conference Theme: Resurrecting the Wild!?

Call for Papers

About the Conference

The Pathways – Human Dimensions of Fisheries and Wildlife Conference aims at bringing researchers and practitioners together that value the contributions of social, economic and social-ecological science to the improvement of natural resource management and conservation. The 2018 conference in Goslar marks the first stint in Europe since its original inception by the co-hosting Colorado State University in 2008. The conference's key target audiences are scientists, governmental and non-governmental natural resource managers, stakeholder groups, especially land and water users/land owners, and other practitioners in the field. It wants to attract enthusiastic presenters and trainers allowing professionals to participate and engage with like-minded professionals across national, state, and institutional boundaries. Scientific disciplines that are encompassed by the conference's topics are the "conservation social sciences" as described by Bennet et al. 2017[1], noting that the term "conservation social sciences" encompasses all social and economic sciences dealing with natural resource use, management and conservation of wildlife, fishes and supporting ecosystems.

Background

Improving the understanding of human dimensions of natural resource management and conservation through the application of social and economic sciences in a sustainable use and conservation context is being perceived as a major prerequisite for a successful balance of stakeholder interests, as reflected in the United Nations' recently adapted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in the EU Commission's "Action Plan for nature, people and the economy." However, crossing disciplinary boundaries and the effective engagement with the human dimensions of natural resources such as wildlife and fisheries is still uncommon, sometimes accredited to the lack of awareness about the scope and importance of social and economic sciences related to the environment.

Most wildlife – terrestrial, aquatic and marine – are used by humans to some degree and thus represent renewable living natural resources. Because humans intensively use many species and populations and have substantially altered the environment supporting wild-living stocks, there is tension among sustainable use and effective conservation. Most solutions to sustainability and

[1] Bennet et al. (2017): Conservation social science: Understanding and integrating human dimensions to improve conservation. *Biological Conservation* 205, January 2017, Pages 93-108

resiliency are embedded in how humans perceive, treat, respond and react to wildlife and fishes. Thus, an old adage implies that sustainable management of renewable natural resources is more about "people management" than about management of the natural population – something that is probably also true in regards to all human-wildlife conflicts. Increasingly, it has been realized that understanding the intimate feedbacks among ecological and social systems within a discipline called social-ecological environmental sciences is paramount if we are to develop science-based solutions to remain within planetary boundaries, of which biodiversity loss is one key dimension. A focus on the human dimensions of fisheries and wildlife in Europe allows assessing where we are in Europe in relation to this emerging topic.

Many fields of application in wildlife and fisheries obviously interface with the need for a better understanding of the human dimensions. For example, sustainable hunting and fisheries depends on people's incentives to constrain own resource use and invest in habitat restoration and conservation, which in contrast to the Public Trust Doctrine of North America in Europe is often tight to private ownership of land and water. This creates own challenges as to understand how private groups of land owners, angling clubs and others manage their resources in light of novel conservation conflicts. As another example, the introduction of EU nature legislation – namely the Birds Directive (1979) and the Habitats Directive (2002) which jointly create the Natura 2000 network – has lead to an increase in the number of protected species and areas as well as increase desire to extent these while curtailing natural resource use by humans. As of today, Natura 2000 is the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world and covers 18% of the land area and 6% of its marine territory. Due to a traditionally high degree of land use in Europe, management always carries a conflict potential that may arise from different land use perspectives, property disputes, economic impacts, or simply different world views such as "mutualism versus utilitarianism" or "anthropocentric versus biocentric." Implementation of Natura 2000 has suffered from a lack of resources to actively understand and mitigate conflicts between use and conservation interests. The 2018 Pathways Conference aims at providing current-edge knowledge to overcome these deficits and to help improve the understanding of the human dimensions of natural resource use and conservation.

One key conservation issue relates to charismatic species that are currently recovering in Europe and elsewhere. Over the course of the last two decades, many endangered species have made a remarkable recovery in their former habitats. The most emblematic and publicly most perceived are the group of the large carnivores (brown bear, wolf, lynx and wolverine), but other species such as beaver, otter, Northern geese species, cormorant or the common crane may be included in this list as well. All of them, regardless whether they are carni-, herbi- or omnivorous, are in competition with human land and water use interests and are thus bound to be labeled as "conflict species." This brings conservation management to a more complex stage as compared to 40 years ago when some of these species were at the brink of extinction and the immediate attention focused on the survival of the species. Effectively managing human-wildlife conflict requires integrative and adaptive management approaches that require a profound knowledge of stakeholder interests and behavior. Also, promoting the co-existence between humans and wildlife requires active stakeholder engagement in the process of knowledge generation – better known as transdisciplinary research that explicitly considers the contextual framing, problem-defining, needs and behavioral responses of stakeholders and nature users. New concepts, such as the idea of „rewilding" parts of Europe fall

right into this discussion, especially when it is associated with reintroducing species like the bison. These ideas may interfere with the sustainable use of resources for agriculture, forestry, recreational fishing or hunting as the leading paradigm in a natural resource context, where activities of practitioners have positively shaped Europe's specific biodiversity in many cases. Here, it is important to understand not only the attitudes, but also the behavior of certain user groups and then, in coupled social-ecological models, their interaction with natural resources and their potential impacts to allow for informed management decisions.

New challenges – such as the rising numbers and abundance of alien invasive species or climate change– require better multi- or interdisciplinary scientific approaches and transdisciplinary settings to improve management through the combination of scientific research and stakeholder involvement and experience. In this context, it is equally important for managers to understand the expectations towards natural resource management from stakeholder groups and how to actively engage and ultimately serve them in light of the biodiversity loss crisis. The exchange about best practice in managing these issues, interests and expectations demands not only the integration of the human dimensions, but also requires creating innovative settings for transboundary, cross-cultural approaches and increased stakeholder communication.

In a nutshell, conservation social sciences may be referenced as the "human dimensions of wildlife and fish management and conservation", dealing with the (social or economic) values, beliefs, attitudes, processes, and behaviors related to how we maintain, protect, enhance, and use our natural resources and the broader biodiversity on land and underwater. Managing living natural resources involves not only ecological processes, but also social processes and their feedbacks. Human dimensions research in wildlife and fisheries examines how people think and behave in relation to animals and other ecological resources and how the feedbacks and connections among social and ecological systems shape outcomes. It is important groundwork for integrated management approaches that reflect all pillars of sustainable development and, in the end, would provide for an improved management and conservation of living natural resources and supporting ecosystems.

Conference Themes and Topics

Aside from a general clash between world views, based on values, norms, attitudes and emotions on the basic position about the role of humankind in nature, we want to put a distinct focus on the human dimensions of fisheries and wildlife context in Europe. We welcome contributions from all fields of science that put a focus on the human and social perspective of natural resource management related to wildlife and fisheries. Looking beyond Europe is desired, with the objective to encourage global learning and exchange.

We are proposing four main themes for the conference:

1. **Social-ecological systems as a framework for conservation management**
    - Social systems and their interaction with ecological systems – theoretical frameworks, theory development, understanding feedbacks, ground truthing, etc.

- Integrating human dimensions into management and conservation of fisheries and wildlife– institutional and legal requirements.
- Applying social science theory in management and conservation.
- Strengthening resilience through social-ecological feedback mechanisms.
- How to link human and ecological processes through socio-economic models.

2. **Management of Human-Wildlife Conflicts: Large Carnivores in Europe (and beyond)**
    - Best practices on large carnivore management and conflict resolution.
    - Transboundary approaches to population management and stakeholder engagement.
    - Human-wildlife coexistence – hollow words or key term?

3. **Management of Human-Wildlife Conflicts: "Other" Species in Europe (and beyond)**
    - Best practices on the management of species with conflict potential: cormorants, beavers, moose, seals, etc. – minimizing conflicts.
    - Invasive Alien Species: Animal welfare versus nature conservation.
    - Management and conservation of recreational fisheries and hunting.
    - Stakeholder incentives and transdisciplinarity
    - Stakeholder reactions to management interventions for sustainable resource use.

4. **Natural Resource and Conservation Stakeholders: Managing Expectations and Engagement**
    - Frameworks and requirements for successful natural resource and conservation governance.
    - Values, attitudes, norms and emotions and social processes as drivers for conflicts or successful conservation management.
    - Stakeholder expectations in natural resources and conservation management.
    - Successful stakeholder management in participatory or collaborative processes.
    - Understanding volunteers in conservation: Who gets engaged and why? Best practices in volunteer management.
    - Understanding recreational resource users: Who goes hunting and fishing? Hunters and anglers as resource users or strategic allies in conservation efforts?
    - Stakeholder communication: Beyond mass media – requirements for successful stakeholder dialogues.
    - Tools for informing and educating the public.
    - The rural-urban population divide: Relevance to natural resource management?

Please use these bullet points for orientation; they do not reflect a complete list of relevant topics to the human dimensions of wildlife and fisheries! We do welcome studies on the advancement of theories, practical insights from managers and everything else that is relevant to decision-making and the advancement of conservation management.

Presentation Formats

Aside from invited key note speakers, we are encouraging everyone interested in the conference to submit proposals for the following:

a. individual oral or poster presentations;
b. organized sessions (either 90 or 120 minutes);
c. panel discussion or mini symposia (max. 120 minutes);
d. other formats or special sessions

Standard oral presentations follow the 15' + 5' format. We encourage you to bring forward your ideas for innovative session or presentation formats, especially when it comes to settings where you bring scientists, practitioners and stakeholders together.

Please refer to the conference web site at:

https://sites.warnercnr.colostate.edu/pathways/

http://www.nna.niedersachsen.de/pathways/

for further information on the conference and the submission process.

The deadlines for submissions are as follows:

- Individual abstracts for oral or poster presentations: February 28, 2018
- All other formats: February 15, 2018

You may also contact the organizers at pathways2018@nna.de in case of further questions.