

Speaker Biographies

Jon Ambrose

Jon has worked for NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service for 19 years and is the Salmon Reintroduction Coordinator for the Central Valley Area Office. Previously, he worked on Endangered Species Act implementation for coho salmon and steelhead in coastal streams south of the Golden Gate. His work included permitting, recovery plan development, permit streamlining, fish passage and water management issues, restoration projects, and enforcement actions. Prior to NOAA, he worked for 10 years as head biologist on Georgia-Pacific's timberlands in Mendocino County where he managed the company's numerous fisheries and wildlife programs as well as ensuring timber operations were in compliance with applicable State and Federal laws regarding wildlife protection.

Blake Barbaree

Blake developed a keen interest in avian ecology over 20 years ago and received degrees in wildlife science from Auburn University (B.S.) and Oregon State University (M.S.) before joining Point Blue Conservation Science in 2012. Since then Blake has strived to advance the conservation of shorebirds and their habitats across California and the Pacific coast of the Americas.

Marissa Baskett

Marissa is a professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy at the University of California, Davis. Her research focuses on modeling ecological and evolutionary responses to global environmental change. While researching a wide range of biological topics from life history evolution to ecosystem resilience, she develops theory relevant to conservation management decisions, particularly in marine systems. She was selected as an Ecological Society of America Early Career Fellow in 2013 and UC Davis Chancellor's Fellow in 2017. She received her BS in biology from Stanford University and her MA and PhD in ecology and evolutionary biology from Princeton University.

Jon Burau

Jon is a project chief in the Water Resources division of the U.S. Geological Survey. He received his formal training at UC Davis and at Stanford University in environmental fluid mechanics and has spent 35 years studying transport processes in the San Francisco Bay and Delta using numerical models and analysis of field data. Over the years, Jon has specialized in executing large interdisciplinary interagency investigations in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta including a study aimed at understanding turbidity as a migratory cue for delta smelt, numerous studies involving juvenile salmon outmigration; and more recently, investigations into improving ecosystem function for native fishes through changes to landscape, including changes in the landscape that can affect connectivity between habitats, the subject of this talk.

Denise Colombano

Denise is currently a postdoctoral scholar working in the Otolith Geochemistry and Fish Ecology Lab (ogfishlab.com) within the Department of Wildlife, Fish, and Conservation Biology at UC Davis. Her dissertation research (Moyle Lab, UC Davis) explored the use of tidal marsh habitats by fishes in the San Francisco Estuary.

Valerie Cook

Valerie is the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Nutria Eradication Program Manager and oversees interagency coordination and implementation of the State's nutria eradication efforts. Prior to the Nutria Eradication Program, Valerie served as the Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor within CDFW's Invasive Species Program, working on issues ranging from quagga/zebra mussels, invasive watersnakes, and invasive aquatic plants. Valerie earned a B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology, a M.S. in Wildlife Ecology and Management, and is a Ph.D. candidate in Natural Resource Ecology and Management at Oklahoma State University.

Tom Dilts

Tom is a research landscape ecologist at the University of Nevada Reno where he has been employed since 2007. He has a B.S. in Geography from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and an M.S. in Geography from the University of Nevada Reno. His research falls under the following three general themes: 1) using remotely-sensed data to map and quantify landscape change, 2) developing habitat models to understand species-environment relationships, and 3) quantifying habitat connectivity using a variety of methods including approaches from landscape genetics and graph theory.

John Durand

John is a research scientist at UC Davis. He received his B.S. and M.S. at SFSU, and his Ph.D. at UC Davis, where he remained. He studies estuarine and wetland ecology, and management of novel ecosystems and working landscapes. He mentors a crew of young scientists, including graduate and undergraduate students, who have contributed greatly to the work he is presenting today. He spends his spare time hanging out with his kid, and advocating for improved mental health initiatives for young Californians.

Alex Fremier

Alex is an Associate Professor at Washington State University in Pullman WA. He is currently on sabbatical in Montpellier France working on quantifying the ecosystem services provided by riverine areas across the globe. Amanda is a doctoral student at WSU. Amanda's dissertation incorporates ecological and legal aspects of riverine conservation to improve outcomes for society.

John Gallo

John is with the Conservation Biology Institute and has been performing action-research in connectivity science since 1999, with an emphasis on modeling and mapping. He leads the maintenance and further development of the Linkage Mapper connectivity modeling software.

He applies it and other tools for clients and partners worldwide. He also provides instructional workshops and online classes.

Letitia Grenier

Letitia is a Program Director and Senior Scientist at the San Francisco Estuary Institute, in Richmond, CA, where she co-directs the Resilient Landscapes Program. Letitia partners with public and private organizations to develop large-scale, nature-based solutions for restoring benefits provided by ecosystems against the backdrop of development, working landscapes, and climate change. As Science Lead, Dr. Grenier brought together and oversaw a team of over 200 environmental scientists, managers, and regulators to develop science-based recommendations for restoring and maintaining the health of San Francisco Bay's tidal wetlands in the face of rising sea levels and other stressors. Letitia holds a Ph.D. in Conservation Biology from the University of California at Berkeley.

G. Mathias Kondolf

Mathias is a fluvial geomorphologist, Professor of Environmental Planning and Co-Director of Global Metropolitan Studies at the University of California Berkeley, where he teaches courses in hydrology, river restoration, and environmental science and planning. He researches human-river interactions, including managing flood-prone lands, urban rivers, sediment in rivers and reservoirs, and river restoration (see <https://riverlab.berkeley.edu>) and advises governments and non-governmental organizations on sustainable management of rivers.

Patrick Huber

Patrick is a conservation scientist at the Agricultural Sustainability Institute at UC Davis. He received his Ph.D. in Geography from UC Davis and held a postdoctoral position there as well. His work is focused on landscape-scale ecological patterns and processes and the effects of spatial scale on conservation planning. He has worked for several years on a suite of projects that look to explicitly link data that are associated with the sustainable sourcing of agricultural products as well as sustainable agriculture within regional contexts. He is currently working with the Strategic Growth Council and Conservation Biology Institute on a conservation assessment of the Central Valley ecoregion of California.

Angela Laws

Angela is an endangered species conservation biologist. She is based in Sacramento, CA, Angela and works on habitat restoration for pollinators and monarch butterflies in the Central Valley. Her role at The Xerces Society also involves incorporating climate resiliency into pollinator restoration projects. Angela has over 15 years of experience studying arthropods in grassland habitats, including studies of how climate change can affect species interactions. She received a M.S. in Ecology from Utah State University, and a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Notre Dame.

Cyril Michel

Cyril has spent his career to date passionately devoted to restoring salmon stocks in California's Central Valley. This work has led him through a natural progression, starting with his Master's

Thesis work which produced the first estimates of high-resolution outmigration survival dynamics of Chinook salmon in the Central Valley, to present day, which consists of being the team leader for the Salmon Acoustic Telemetry Program and Salmon Predation Program at the University of California Santa Cruz, in affiliation with the National Marine Fisheries Service Southwest Fisheries Science Center. When Cyril isn't working tirelessly to restore salmon populations, he's secretly out catching them on his boat and bonking them on the head for dinner.

Robin Stewart

Robin received an undergraduate degree in Biology from the University of Victoria, British Columbia Canada in 1991 and a PhD in ecotoxicology from the University of Manitoba in 1998. For the past twenty plus years Robin Stewart's research has focused on identifying and understanding processes influencing the fate and bioavailability of selenium (Se), mercury (Hg), and organic contaminants in food webs across a range of aquatic environments including estuaries, rivers, lakes, and tidal rivers and reservoirs. Through a combination of field-based process studies, in situ monitoring of key biomonitors, biodynamic modeling and knowledge gained through laboratory-based studies of physiological uptake she strives to identify critical processes controlling contaminant bioaccumulation in nature.

Anna Sturrock

Anna is a Research Scientist at the Center for Watershed Sciences at UC Davis. She has worked with marine and anadromous fishes for over 17 years, using an interdisciplinary approach to explore the factors underpinning fish habitat use, migration behavior, and physiology. Much of her research involves using natural and applied tags to generate empirical data to inform policy and management, focusing on processes driving ecosystem function and sustainable resource delivery in a changing climate. Since completing her BSc at the University of Edinburgh (Scotland), her MSc at the University of Otago (New Zealand) and her PhD at the University of Southampton, National Oceanography Centre (UK), she has worked in the University of California (UC Santa Cruz, Berkeley and now Davis) for over seven years, focusing on salmon ecology, conservation and management.

Justin Yeakel

Justin is a theoretical (paleo)ecologist, and has been at the University of California, Merced since 2016. His interests include foraging dynamics, the extinction and assembly of communities, spatial processes, as well as exploring the ecological mechanisms behind macroevolutionary transitions observed in the fossil record. He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Cruz in 2012 and was a postdoctoral researcher with Jon Moore at Simon Fraser University until 2014, and an Omidyar postdoctoral fellow at the Santa Fe Institute in New Mexico until 2017.