Ash Levy Bhattacharjee

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Summary: Interdisciplinary ecologist with 10 years experience, seeking to work on proactive and conflict-sensitive assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services, nature-based solutions, and environmental decision-making. Accomplishments in technical research and support across diverse conservation projects for academic, nongovernmental, and intergovernmental organizations. Motivated, goal-oriented researcher with effective communication skills.

Education

PhD in Biology at City University of New York — New York, NY
Subprogram: Ecology, Evolutionary Biology, & Behavior — *2015 – 2021*

BSc at Rutgers University — New Brunswick, NJ
Major: Ecology, Evolution & Natural Resources; magna cum laude — *2011 – 2015*

Experience

Social Values Mapping Specialist at The Nature Conservancy — October 2022 – Present
Postdoctoral Associate with the Protect Oceans, Lands, & Waters unit — *New York, NY (Remote)*

- Developing and analyzing trends in spatially explicit data, integrating social (cultural, economic, and ecological) values to mitigate conflicts in renewable energy siting projects in Europe and India
- Assisting TNC Southeast Europe and India teams in incorporating social values (cultural, economic, ecological) into siting projects, reviewing datasets, proposing indicators, and conducting stakeholder and community engagement.
- Co-authored the report "Mapping a Sustainable Renewable Energy Transition: Handbook for Practitioners", focusing on land use and management planning for sustainable renewable energy development & decision making.

Consultant at The International Fund for Agricultural Development — April 2022 – September 2022
Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity team — *New York, NY (Remote)*

- Undertaking a stocktake of the peatlands portfolio in Southeast Asia (including a desk review and stakeholder interviews/engagement), and developing a concept note for the multi-country proposal on sustainable peatland management and conservation efforts in the region.
- Supporting the coordination of IFAD's engagement in the Indonesia G20 Presidency 2022.

Consultant at The Nature Conservancy — Sept 2021 – Oct 2021
Short-term contract with TNC's Asia-Pacific team — *New York, NY (Remote)*

- Conducted project analysis of major trends in terrestrial and marine ecosystems, drivers of loss, and key demographic/development measures in the Asia-Pacific region for development of their regional Strategic Plan.
- Gathered, summarized, and visualized spatial datasets, interpreted trends, and coordinated project tasks and outputs across the team.

PhD candidate at CUNY — Aug 2015 – Aug 2021
Advisor: Dr. José D. Anadón — *New York, NY*

- Developed, coordinated, and analyzed landscape level research on vertebrate scavenger diversity, ecosystem services, and the drivers (i.e., natural, anthropogenic, socioecologial) of observed patterns.
- Led an international and multidisciplinary team to implement a network of remote-sensing cameras, conduct avian point counts, and collected 143 in-person surveys with livestock farmers, across an elevation and biome gradient of 4,200m.
- Managed collaboration and communication for a network of national/international researchers, Nepali NGOs, governmental conservation authorities, and local community forest personnel.
- Successfully acquired project funding, presented research at national/international conferences, communicated with both scientific and non-scientific audiences (e.g., posters, reports, journal articles, web-based media).

Graduate Researcher for USAID-funded project — Jan 2016 – Dec 2017
Joint project between CUNY, TU, and IPM Innovation lab — *USA & Nepal*

- Organized & co-instructed two training workshops for graduate researchers at Tribhuvan University (TU) in Kathmandu for project on "Modeling for Biodiversity and Climate Change in Nepal".
- Introduced students to species-distribution modeling with the machine learning technique, MaxEnt, and applied field techniques for species monitoring with post-data collection analysis.

- Published a first-author journal review article on climate change effects on biodiversity in Nepal.

Trott Field Intern with Conservation International Jun 2016 – Aug 2016

Climate change unit *Apia, Samoa*

- Supported CI's Biodiversity Rapid Assessment Programme (BIORAP) Survey of Central, Upland, and Cloud Forests of Savai'i, Samoa.
- Collected in-field data via vegetation surveys (quadrat sampling, species abundance counts, posthoc pressing and preservation of selected flora samples), and avifauna surveys (point counts).
- Assembled a literature review and preliminary data report on climate change effects on local forest vegetation.

Expedition team member - collaboration with Peregrine Fund May 2016 – Jun 2016

Annual Vulture Population Survey *Nepal*

- Conducted walking-transects to survey raptor species in the Annapurna Conservation Area, under the supervision the Peregrine Fund's Asia director (Dr. Munir Virani).
- Sampled avian point count methodology, which was applied towards my dissertation study design.

Intern with United Nations Environmental Programme Jun 2015 – Aug 2015

Avian Species Unit, supervised by Dr. Borja Heredia *Bonn, Germany*

- Prepared a presentation for the Siberian Crane MoU and Eastern Flyway Workshop held in China.
- Assembled technical materials, including a background document and presentation on CMS Guidelines on Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds. Coordinated administrative tasks related to points of contact and attendance for the upcoming conference.
- Assisted with the technical development of materials for the African-Eurasion Landbirds working group, including a drafted background document on impacts of land-use change on avian species.

Field research assistant - study abroad Jun 2014 – Jul 2014

Supervised by Drs. Erin Vogel and Robert Scott, Rutgers University *Borneo, Indonesia*

- Assessed habitat characteristics and primate population via nest counts and daily food/activity surveys of orangutans in a peat-swamp forest near the Tuanan Field Research Station.
- Participated in focused group discussions with local community members on primate conservation, deforestation, climate change impacts to natural resource availability and sustainable livelihoods while living near a conservation area, and assisted with the set up of a new village composting system and communicated the use and benefits.

Research Assistant at Rutgers University May 2013 – May 2015

Dept. of Ecology, Evolution & Natural Resources (selected projects) *New Brunswick, NJ*

- (1) Aresty fellowship studying "Under Your Car: Island Biogeography in an Urban Setting" on the species-area relationship; (2) Review and data entry for a global meta-analysis of genetic diversity in marine animals.

Teaching & Outreach

Volunteer for the Queens Zoo Feb 2019 – March 2020

Part of the Wildlife Conservation Society *Flushing, NY*

- Conducted tours of the zoo and assisted science education camps for NYC youth (K-12). As one of the more experienced volunteers, I have also guided adult groups and university students on occasion.
- Gave three invited talks for middle and high school students, and adult volunteers at zoo events that covered my research experiences and potential careers in ecology for youth.

Lab instructor at CUNY Aug 2016 – May 2021

Dept. of Biology, Queens College *Flushing, NY*

- Taught undergraduate biology courses (in-person and virtual): "Life Forms and Ecosystems"(online and in-person), "Introduction to College Biology", and "Biostatistics Laboratory" with R software training.

Selected fellowships, grants, & awards

CUNY Science Fellowship	2015-2020
National Geographic Early Career Grant entitled *"From A Lowland Rainforest To The Himalayas: Community Structure And Ecosystem Services Provided By Scavengers In South Asia"*	2019
Doctoral Student Research Grant, CUNY Graduate Center	2017
Bryon Trott Field Scholarship	2016
USAID Graduate Student Research Stipend	2016
Peter S. Smouse Award for Outstanding Student in Evolution	2015

Skills

Data analysis: R software, ArcGIS, Google Earth, species-distribution modeling, general statistics (descriptive and inferential), regression analyses, population/ecosystem modeling, multivariate ordination analyses.
Biodiversity monitoring techniques: Vegetation surveys, camera-trapping (specialized in large mammals, mesocarnivores and large avian species), point counts, social surveys/questionnaires, in-field and open-access environmental data collection and/or sourcing.
Science communication: National Geographic's Science-telling Bootcamp Participant 2019 (Public Speaking, Writing, Social Media, Photography). *For published works, see Google Scholar or ResearchGate.*
Languages: English (fluent), French (intermediate), Thai (conversational), Hindi (fluent in communication), Urdu (conversational), Bengali (conversational), Spanish (beginner).