

Ash Levy-Bhattacharjee

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Work Authorization: Indian Citizen, US Permanent Resident

Summary: Interdisciplinary ecologist with 8+ years experience, seeking to contribute towards scientifically and socially informed biodiversity conservation, global policy, and the relationship between people and nature. Accomplishments in technical research and support on biodiversity across diverse projects for academic, nongovernmental, and intergovernmental organizations. Motivated, goal-oriented problem solver 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

Consultant at The International Fund for Agricultural Development

April 2022 – present

Environment, Climate Change, and Biodiversity team

New York, NY (Remote)

- Undertaking a stocktake of the peatlands portfolio in Southeast Asia, 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 – 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 – Jul 2021

Advisor: Dr. José D. Anadón

New York, NY

- Developed, coordinated, and analyzed landscape level research on terrestrial vertebrate scavenger diversity, ecosystem services, and the drivers (i.e., natural, anthropogenic, socioecological) 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 – 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 – 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 – 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-Eurasian Landbirds working group, including a drafted background document on impacts of land-use change on avian species.

Field research assistant - study abroad

Jun – 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 – *present**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 “ <i>From A Lowland Rainforest To The Himalayas: Community Structure And Ecosystem Services Provided By Scavengers In South Asia</i> ”	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).