Contribution of RPAS in research and conservation in protected areas: present and future

Protected areas management has historically benefited from a wide range of technological advances, from remote sensing, camera traps or wildlife tracking devices to a continuous development of analytical techniques to deal with such large amounts of data collected. During the last decade, we have witnessed a growing interest in projects aimed to evaluate the feasibility of RPAS for conservation purposes. So far, RPAS have been tested or directly applied for a variety of research and management activities including environmental and wildlife monitoring or anti-poaching strategies. But there are technical, ethical, and legal barriers that are currently limiting its effectiveness. However, as a result of efforts to improve the features of these systems, followed by a greater concern related to animal welfare and the parallel development of novel surveys and statistical methods, their presence as an essential tool for conservation in protected areas is increasingly justified.

# Introduction

## Current context

Civil applications of remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS, also known as unmanned aerial systems, UAS, drones) have been raised in an increasingly number of scientific articles. During the last few years there have been a significant amount of wildlife research projects in natural protected areas using RPAS (J. Linchant et al. 2015; Chabot and Bird 2015; Christie et al. 2016) and it is rapidly taking its place within the broad set of technological solutions that support conservation (Pimm et al. 2015). In most cases, feasibility studies were carried out, assessing the capacity of RPAS in relation to traditional conservation instruments by measuring the overall performance, delimiting their strengths and weakness, and establishing guidelines and recommendations, resulting in new perspectives of application.

Although the potential of RPAS for mapping is tackled at the end of the seventies (Colomina and Molina 2014), we found some references dating back to the early 1980s, where first trials with RPAS on environmental issues began with the objective of acquiring aerial photographs and demonstrating their usefulness in forestry applications, the management of fish resources or the coupling of sensors for atmospheric studies among others (Tomlins and Lee 1983). Towards the end of the 20th century, the first mapping surveys of vegetation in threatened species appeared (Quilter, 1997), while with the arrival of the new millennium the number of publications began to increase significantly (Hardin and Jensen 2013). At present there are some initiatives that seek to determine the current state of the RPAS in the areas of ecology and conservation. Recently, the journals *Remote Sensing in Ecology and Conservation* and the *International Journal of Remote Sensing* made a call to the scientific community for the sending of proposals in order to update the current state of RPAS applied into the environmental spere. As result, a significant production of RPAS related papers on the matter is expected. On the other hand, it is remarkable the greater presence of web portals that center their activity around civil applications with RPAS. In the field of research applied to conservation, the website <http://conservationdrones.org/> is a worldwide reference, whose contents illustrate recent pioneering projects, so they are not always reflected in the scientific literature. The popularity of RPAS has transcended the scientific-technical field, giving rise to the emergence of user communities with a large presence on the Internet. One of the most active portals is <http://diydrones.com/>, which brings together fans of the do-it-yourself philosophy that encourages the use of open platforms versus the traditional closed systems offered by the traditional industry. This has unchained the reduction of costs of these equipment and, together with the development of specialized open source software, have led to the democratization of technology, bringing it closer to a broad number of users and organizations. The scientific community has probably benefited from this general trend. For some authors, the flexibility in the assembly of RPAS offers in principle a greater degree of customization, allowing to combine different sensors and control systems according to the particular needs of each project and within the research group itself (Koh and Wich 2012). In the commercial field, more companies offer RPAS of high performance and reliability along with professional services and software, so the sector benefits from great dynamism.

## Protected areas

As defined by UICN, "a protected area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values" (Dudley 2008). Despite the fact that the number of protected areas has increased considerably at a global level, with 15.4% of the land area and 8.4% of the marine areas under some protection figure (Juffe-Bignoli et al. 2014) the size of wildlife populations has been estimated to have decreased by 52% in the period 1970 to 2012. Habitat fragmentation, severe pollution particularly in freshwater ecosystems, overexploitation of resources, environmental impacts of climate change and the impact of invasive species on indigenous populations have been identified as the main threats to biodiversity (Barnosky et al. 2011; Conabio 2017). To address the current environmental crisis, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) established in Nagoya, Japan, a strategic plan for the period 2011-2020 which includes the so-called Aichi targets for biological diversity. Among the goals raised is the increase in protected area systems of special importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services (target 11) following governance, equity, management, representativeness and ecological connectivity criteria.

Protected areas are reference sites for monitoring and managing biodiversity. As part of the large array of observing systems monitoring ecosystems and measuring human impacts (Forum 2008, Pereira et al. (2013)), RPAS can fill the gap at an intermediate spatial scale, surpassing the financial and technological constrains of remote sensing and ground / aerial manned vehicles based surveys (Koh and Wich 2012; A. Rodríguez et al. 2012; Chabot and Bird 2015). First, while it is possible to acquire satellite images at low or virtually zero cost (LandSat, MODIS, Sentinel, etc.), most of these platforms operate on a global or regional scale. The limited spatial and temporal resolution, along with the inconveniences of cloud presence, especially noticeable in tropical areas, reduces the effectiveness of remote sensing in the collection of data at fine-scale, according to the requirements of ecological studies at the level of species, habitats or populations (Wulder et al. 2004). Second, the large extent of these protected areas significantly increases the costs of field work on foot, particularly in hadarzous and inaccessible areas. Finally, while manned aerial vehicles offers an optimal alternative for covering much larger areas, they suffer from excessively high operational costs and are also subject to observer bias. In addition, air accidents are ranking as the leading cause of death in wildlife specialists in the United States (Sasse 2003). As a consequence, RPAS have been positioned as an appropriate complement for conservation activities (Zahawi et al. 2015) avoiding to a certain extent some of the above-mentioned drawbacks. In developing countries, especially sensitive in terms of budgetary allocations and technical capacities, monitoring and surveillance programs are being successfully developed through the use of RPAS. For example, by capturing aerial images in the Volta delta, Ghana, a team of scientists measured the effects of climate change on coastal areas and evaluates the effectiveness of prevention and restoration measures against erosive processes (Gerster/Panos 2017).

## Legal barriers

RPAS operations faces important legal barriers that undermine the true potential in the civilian sphere (Stöcker et al. 2017). An overly restrictive regulatory framework could limit the possibilities of use of the RPAS in the field of conservation, which makes clear the urgent need to harmonize the legislation . In the United States and in most of the European countries consulted, interim legislation has been adopted which, to a certain extent, equates the management of RPAS with that of traditional aircraft. In general terms, the situation in Latin America is uneven, however there is a general tendency to develop specific laws to cope with the rise of the RPAS in both the civil and military sectors (America 2017). Africa is one of the continents where the impact of RPAS in conservation has had greater repercussions. However, in the opinion of some conservationists, their use has not been without problems, resulting in governments that have totally or partially prohibited drone operations, arguing national security problems in detriment of protection of natural areas (Andrews 2014). But RPAS have also been generally welcomed in several developing countries in Asia, where an array of related programs are being carried out (Nugraha, Jeyakodi, and Mahem 2016). The uncertainty of the users along the world has promoted the development of associations in order to advise on the legal aspects to be taken into account during the operation, with the International Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems (AUVSI) <http://www.auvsi.org> being the largest nonprofit organization in the world dedicated to advancing the community of unmanned aerial vehicles users.

# Methods

To achieve the proposed objectives, a bibliographical review of scientific articles, gray literature, postgraduate theses, websites and specialized journals was carried out, following a similar line to other studies (J. Linchant et al. 2015; Christie et al. 2016). The main tools for selection of the cited bibliography include Google Schoolar, Research Gate and Mendeley Desktop, while the use of Internet search engines include other references outside the scientific scope. Key search criteria for keywords included unmanned aerial vehicles in their various meanings and acronyms (RPAS, UAV, drones, etc.), along with a variety of terms referring to natural protected areas, primarily in English. Last references revised was published on June, 2017.

The selected information was categorized according to the role played by RPAS in direct or indirect relation to conservation in protected areas. It is presented in tabular format, identifying where the study was conducted, the expected accomplishments and technical specifications of the aerial platform. After posing main results obtained, gaps are indentified and possible scenarios for implementing RPAS as essential tools to help achieve conservation plans in protected areas are discussed, highlighting some trends and opportunities that apparently have not yet been adequately exploited.

# Results

## Wildlife Monitoring and Management

Manned aircraft have been traditional used to undertake a variety of ecological surveys. As remarked by most papers reviewed such techniques are risky, costly and despite several efforts to minimize error estimation (Cook and Jacobson 1979) are subject to visibility bias since a greater number of observers is required to guarantee an exhaustive count of populations. RPAS have emerged as a feasible alternative to surpass such drawbacks. Several studies addressed counting large terrestrial mammals with positive contributions (Jain 2013, Lancia et al. (2005), Mulero-Pázmány et al. (2015)). (Colefax, Butcher, and Kelaher 2017) reviewed the potential of RPAS as surveys tools in species relying on coastal and marine ecosystems . RPAS have as well been applied to study population dynamics in bird colonies (Sardà-Palomera et al. 2012), but also in the inspection and characterization of inaccessible nesting sites using multicopters (Weissensteiner, Poelstra, and Wolf 2015). In some cases, in order to overcome the barriers to directly detect the species of interest, the studies focused on locating and characterizing their breeding and nesting areas (Andel et al. 2015, Szantoi et al. (2017), Andrew and Shephard (2017), Serge Wich et al. (2016)).

One of the central themes in ecology is the development of surveys and statistical models for estimating abundance and distribution of animals in wild populations (Lancia et al. 2005; Mateo, Felicísimo, and Muñoz 2011). Such methods allow inferring the potential or suitable habitat of organisms by collecting environmental information and species presence data from different sources and techniques. Wildlife telemetry tracking is one of the most common methods used to gather movement data. (Mulero-Pázmány et al. 2015) compared the performance of RPAS as tools for data collection against biologgers when estimating spatial distribution of foraging domestic herbivores impacting food availability in natural areas, easily identifiable by high-resolution aerial images obtained by photographic sensors on board. Targeting cattle (*Bos taurus*), the authors obtained similar results regarding the performance of the models, but they emphasized the cost-benefit factor of RPAS as the main advantage. In general, the relatively expensive purchase of electronic tracking devices limits their availability for research purposes, reducing sample size. Added to the risk of marking individuals under non-random criteria, it is argued that robustness of the analysis can be seriously affected. However, main advantage of wildlife telemetry is its ability to provide a large amount of data for longer periods of time. Nevertheless, the authors pointed out that both methodologies have the potential to complement each other throughout all phases of the study. Other innovative techniques have recently been illustrated in scientific papers evaluating the feasibility of pairing radio locators in RPAS in the search for individuals marked with VHF radio collars (Soriano, Caballero, and Ollero 2009, Körner et al. (2010); Bayram et al. 2016; Cliff et al. 2015; Leonardo et al. 2013).

Given the large amount of information generated, it is not surprising that software have been developed in the field of computer vision and machine learning to handle the automatic detection, recognition and counting of individuals captured in scenes acquired by visible and thermal-infrared sensors, replacing otherwise time-consuming manual tasks (Lhoest et al. 2015; Abd-Elrahman, Pearlstine, and Percival 2005; Gemert et al. 2015, Chabot and Francis (2016), Christiansen et al. (2014)).

Outside the scientific literature, there are projects for monitoring wildlife in both marine and terrestrial ecosystems, generally supported by non-governmental organizations and research centers. Based on information gathered at <https://conservationdrones.org> several studies have been identified pursuing methods for registering individuals in marine mammal populations, primates and macrofauna in general. For instance, a work conducted in the Amazon Basin in Brazil is testing the use of RPAS to improve the density and abundance estimation of different species of dolphins, compared with direct observation by specialists (S. Wich 2017). The main research aims include the validation and harmonization of both methodologies and, indirectly, evaluate the feasibility for its regular application in monitoring projects with a similar purpose, taking into account the cost-benefit of the execution.

## Infrastructure and risk assessment

Other research projects highlight the convenience of RPAS in assessing the risk that human infrastructure posed for wildlife, which results in the implementation of more cost-effective preventive measures. For instance, some species of birds nest on high voltage power lines poles, making them especially vulnerable to death by electrocution. (Margarita Mulero-Pázmány 2014) used a long endurance fixed-wing RPAS as a low cost alternative for the visual evaluation of linear electrical structures. Collisions with the wiring is one of the most common causes of death in birds. (Lobermeier et al. 2015) proposed to install marks that are easily visible through the use of robotics arms installed in multicopters. Due to the ease of maneuvering of the platform, multicopters are more suitable for precision work. As a pre-harvest activity, generally performed under mechanical procedures, (Mulero-Pázmány Margarita 2011) suggested a flyby to identify possible nests on the ground, and if necessary, take the appropriate actions to avoid their destruction.

## Monitoring and mapping of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems

During the last decades, the emergence of remote sensors on board air or space platforms has led to an increase in applications for the study of ecosystems (Wulder et al. 2004). The data obtained have enabled the development of vegetation and soil maps, enhance the characterization of habitats or the understanding of the structure and function of forest ecosystems, develop digital elevation models or geomorphological maps. The emergence of RPAS has led to the quantitative analysis of habitats at a level of detail that had not been possible previously, either for economic reasons or for technological limitations. This momentum has been especially notable with the parallel development of affordable multispectral and hyperspectral sensors adapted to small aircraft. RPAS has been used by The United States Geological Survey (USGS) to classify vegetation cover in wetlands (USGS 2014). (Zaman, Jensen, and McKee 2011) monitored the spread of invasive species in such ecosystems. (Perroy, Sullivan, and Stephenson 2017) conducted several flight to quantify the detection rate of invasive species under different flight parameters, enviromental conditions and vegetation cover. The characterization of forest stands constitutes an important section, considering the number of papers facing the issue from different perspectives. (Gini et al. 2012) employed a quadcopter model operated at low-height and RGB and NIR cameras in small areas. Due to the reduced reliability and autonomy of the platform and the difficulties to increase the load capacity, the flight planning is reduced to three passes with a percentage of 80% and 30% of longitudinal and transverse overlap respectively. (Lisein et al. 2015) performs a multitemporal analysis of the spectral response to phenological variations in different species of deciduous trees and concluded that intraspecific spectral variation is of maximum interest for the optimization of classification algorithms and discrimination between species. During the research, the authors operated a fixed wing RPAS model, used different sensors in the visible and near infrared range and optimized the flight parameters to cover the maximum surface area with the fewest possible number of flights. (Zahawi et al. 2015) applies the Ecosynth methodology, a toolkit for mapping and measuring 3D vegetation using digital cameras and artificial vision open source software. Such project was aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of restoration actions in forests using RPAS as a viable alternative for traditional field measurements and applying different predictive models of the presence of frugivorous birds from height and canopy structure data. Recently, shallow coastal habitats were also mapped using cost-effective consumer grade RPAS (Casella et al. 2017, Ventura et al. (2016)).

## Surveillance and support for compliance with laws in protected areas

RPAS have also relevance in the control and surveillance of protected areas, documented through different experiences focused mainly on controlling poaching. This type of study is characterized in giving greater emphasis on improving first-person view methods (FPV) in order to obtain a real-time view of the monitored area. Also, it is worth mentioning the suitability of fixed-wing RPAS for longer flight times to cover large areas, the convenience of using thermal cameras in low visibility conditions, generally related to hours of greater furtive activity, along with advances in computer vision systems programmed to detect the presence of humans and target species under pressure from illegal trade in protected areas. (Mulero-Pázmány et al. 2014) focused on the African rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*, *Ceratotherium simum*) and noted the advantages of real time video compared to still photography, which despite the better overall quality, requires longer post-processing time. In addition, authors emphasized the need to improve the resolution of thermal sensors to increase the chances of detecting suspicious activity at night time. (Franco et al. 2016) suggested using RPAS to combat poaching and illegal fishing activities in marine protected areas (MPA), claiming million-dollar economic losses in the fishing sector. (Duffy 2014) analyzed the consequences of the militarization of conservation practices as an increasing trend in natural protected areas around the world and illustrates the use of RPAS through several examples.

## Ecotourism

The high degree of diversification offered by RPAS in the ecotourism industry is summarized in a recent article, which shows possible recreational activities, business opportunities, search and rescue operations, mapping and formulas for granting RPAS flight permits in designated areas (King 2014). Within the still scarce literature, (Hansen 2016) values the effectiveness of RPAS in monitoring visitors in marine and coastal areas, in combination with other innovative solutions. According to the author the RPAS would theoretically allow to operate under different environmental conditions, improving the level of detail and offering a continuous coverage in the flow and behavior of visitors, as opposed to other techniques of habitual use like the manual observation or the installation of networks of surveillance cameras.

## Impact of RPAS on wildlife

Animal welfare should be present on wildlife monitoring and ecological research using RPAS , establishing ethical principles that complement the current standards in research and conservation (Wilson and McMahon 2006). (Vas et al. 2015) analyzed the response of birds to RPAS, assessing the impact of color, speed and angle of flight on the behavioral responses of wetland birds to the approach of multicopters. The latter factor is considered as the primary trigger for changes in behavioral patterns, especially in vertical approaches at an angle of 90º. Finally, a core set of recommendations is included, and authors encouraged to extend the trials to a wide range of RPAS and species. (McEvoy, Hall, and McDonald 2016) accomplished the most intensive disturbance assesment on waterfowl to date, by combining an array of fixed wing and multirotor RPAS at various altitudes. (Scobie and Hugenholtz 2016) quantified noise detection by several representative species, suggesting flying higher than 200 meters to minimise noise disturbance. (Ditmer et al. 2015) measured physiological stress in American black bear (*Ursus americanus*) by electronic recording of cardiac activity in the presence of RPAS. Although no changes in behavior patterns are detected, the increase in beats per minute (bmp) is significant in most cases observed. (Pomeroy, O’Connor, and Davies 2015) noted evidence of variation in reactivity in seal populations based on a variety of factors, from the RPAS platform, height and lateral distance to the breeding or moulting season. No adverse reactions have been reported in elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) or cattle (*Bos taurus*) on flights at a minimum height of 100 meters (Jain 2013, Mulero-Pázmány et al. (2015)). (Weissensteiner, Poelstra, and Wolf 2015) considered RPAS a less intrusive technique when inspecting the status of nesting sites. In the absence of further experiences to date explicitly addressing animal welfare, (Hodgson and Koh 2016) suggested a series of general recommendations as the basis for a code of good practice, highlighting the adoption of the precautionary principle and respect for aviation standards, the specific training of operators, the appropriate selection of equipment, the cessation of operations in the case of obvious disturbances in the populations studied and the reporting of observations in scientific publications, that allows sharing of knowledge to progressively improve the protocols of operations with RPAS that involve the observation of the wild fauna.

# Environmental management and decision support

Planning in protected areas is reflected through a variety of management programs that are difficult to fit into some of the previously discussed categories. An extensive report based on Christmas Island proposed dropping poisoned baits from RPAS to eradicate feral cats disturbing threatened native species (McCaldin, Johnston, and Rieker 2015). (Cornell, Herman, and Ontiveros 2016) obtained ground truth data by adapting RPAS to take water samples for comparison with hyperspectral measurements of Landsat 8 Operational Land Imager (OLI). (**???**) identified several pollution agents in riparian areas using RPAS imagery. (Fornace et al. 2014) considered mapping enviromental risk factors for predicting zoonotic diseases as part of a extensive epidemiological study carried out in Philippines. Literature citing RPAS for search and rescue activities is profuse and an in-depth revision is beyond the scope of this article, but a recent publication ilustrate several examples where RPAS were succesfully operated to assist rescue teams (Van Tilburg 2017). A google scholar search sorted by relevance using disaster management and drones keywords throws at first place a complete report describing a framework for decision support using RPAS (Maza et al. 2011).

# Discussion

Most of the sources analyzed focus on local-scale conservation projects and feasibility studies of RPAS in the characterization of distribution and abundance of wildlife populations. Literature begins to be equally prolific in monitoring and mapping activities in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, a niche currently occupied by aerial and space platforms for environmental remote sensing. Despite the low number of scientific articles addressing the use of RPAS in the control and surveillance of natural protected areas, it is still one of the issues that more social debate generates and it is not strange to find governmental initiatives or promoted by environmental organizations in the fight against poaching. From the economic point of view, expenses derived from the operation with RPAS are hardly quantifiable. Not all studies consider the effort required for the development of technical and analytical skills of teams. The computational requirements are demanding and certain phases of information processing requires the acquisition of software whose price is generally high. Also, operations with RPAS are not exempt from accidents, which has an negative impact on the budget originally planned. In addition, statistical methods and sampling methods approaching the analysis of data are mostly in its infancy and further research should be accompased.

## Wildlife Monitoring and Management

Protected areas could benefit from a wide variaty of management activities using RPAS. Wildlife census campaigns, usually carried out by going in on foot or by vessel deployment in marine, islands and coastal areas , could be leverage by fixed-wing RPAS mapping capabilities. Moreover, the cost-benefit of RPAS is demonstrated when compared with time-consuming and often dangerous raids conducted by rangers. Follow me capabilities of RPAS constitute a promising advance in animal movement and remote sensing, by having high-resolution aerial imagery from places frequently visited or crossed by electronically tagged species.

## Infrastructure and risk assessment

RPAS have demonstrated their capacity for the technical inspection of industrial premises. Wildlife risk assessment may benefits from such methods, promoting their use for preventive purposes in areas of high incidence of deaths where otherwise high cost manual inspection where applied. As previously discussed, relative low operational cost of RPAS make them an attractive alternative, which may foster such activities. RPAS could also prevent accidents by applying dissuasive measures to avoid the collision of birds in wind farms. Other uses include the revision of natural areas facilities, by scheduling periodic flights. Although discussed later, RPAS are positioned as fundamental tools in the prevention and evaluation of wilfires and they could assist environmental impact assessment in sensitive areas.

## Monitoring and mapping of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems

The integration of classical remote sensing elements developed during last decades in the scope of RPAS open new possibilities in the observation of environmental phenomena at multiple scales. High resolution images will allow the discrimination of plant communities at the species level, observe the evolution of ecosystems in shorter periods of time or more accurately quantify the volume and structure of canopy. Also it will allow attending to urgent needs of mapping in areas affected by natural and anthropic disasters. The ability of computer systems to process massive amount of information is closely linked to such applications.

## Surveillance and support for compliance with laws in natural protected areas

The integration of RPAS in the fight against poaching and illegal fishing in protected areas faces important technical and legal constraints. In the first point, the reviewed literature mention the need to design more efficient live vision systems. The low autonomy of RPAS is especially critical in large natural parks, limiting the area under surveillance. The issues concerning atmospheric conditions have not yet been completely resolved. (Banzi 2014) proposed a sensor based economical feasible anti-poaching alternative, arguing that RPAS fulfilling the suitable specifications are costly, especially in developing countries. However, as technology becomes more accesible, it is expected that main barriers will appear in the legislative and social sphere. In some countries it is forbidden to fly beyond the visual range of the operator, limiting the effectiveness of the inspection in real time. RPAS applied to surveillance of protected areas is also questioned arguing human right breaching (Banzi 2014). Some detractors are skeptical about the ability of RPAS to persuade offenders, who in many cases face situations of greatest need. Probably the success of such initiatives requires a greater consensus among the parties involved and the development of strategies that seek to solve the causes of poaching. Surveillance of illegal logging activities or bonfires in unauthorized areas have great potential and may be easier to implement.

## Ecotourism

A permissive regularization of the use of RPAS in ecotourism activities in natural parks could lead to unpredictable situations. On the one hand, the constant presence of propeller and engine noise, the sensation of invasion or lack of privacy and the visual impact of RPAS on the landscape could negatively affect the tourist experience. It remains to be seen whether it could significantly alter the state of ecosystems. Awareness of the abuse of RPAS for recording wildlife has resulted in a ban on flying for recreational purposes in natural parks in the United States and other parts of the world. As result of potential enviromental impact due to the use of RPAS by tourist in Antarctica, (Leary 2017) reported the partial prohibition of recreational RPAS in coastal areas as part of a more extensive regulation promoted by stakeholders. Such regulation looks reasonable and could be the way forward for other protected areas to adapt the allowed activities with RPAS. It seems obvious to think that in the hands of non-professionals, the risk of accidents and losses would increase. This may lead to disturbing widlife, contamination of water supplies or triggering fires in sensitive areas due to the presence of flammable components. It does not appear that feasibility studies or opinion polls have been published that respond to the issues raised and to the ethical and legal implications derived from their use. Even when the leisure possibilities are wide and recognized, it would be advisable to be cautious in the face of the demand of the ecotourism industry to incorporate RPAS in their activities.

## Impact of RPAS on wildlife

The review of the literature suggests that there are still certain niches that need more attention from the research community. The ethical implications of RPAS in wildlife studies have not yet been adequately weighed since most studies only marginally address the presence or absence of reactions in species in the vicinity of RPAS. Despite the greater degree of awareness, we consider that further trials aimed at quantifying physiological and behavioral changes should be carried out. A set of best practices and recommendations targeting a wider group of wild species could increase the chances of integrating the responsible use of RPAS in conservation and management activities in natural parks. Moreover, some authors mentioned the lack of commercial operators with sufficient expertise to carry out such activities (McEvoy, Hall, and McDonald 2016). Also, an optimal trade-off between benefits and environmental costs should be pursued (Grémillet et al. 2012; Sepúlveda et al. 2010). By designing quieter, non-polluting and safer components, the impact on wildlife could be reduced and its objective observation facilitated. Nonetheless we consider that, as far as further testing be done, RPAS has great potential to replace more invasive monitoring techniques, whose reliability is challenged by the potential to induce conditions of unacceptable stress in wildlife that could ultimately invalidate the results of the research (Z. Jewell 2013, Wilson and McMahon (2006)). This should be taken into account by managers of protected area when reluctant to allow RPAS to be essential part of research and conservation activities.

# Environmental monitoring and decision support

Protected areas are subject to periodic environmental quality control procedures where RPAS could play a major role. Also, RPAS are suitable to assist decision making where rapid response is crucial by offering valuable information at real time to handle natural and man-made disasters. Wildfire is major concern in natural parks and is not rare that RPAS have been put foward to assist in prevention, fighting and evaluation phases. In most cases, such applications have operational requirements which eventually are costly. For instance, sofisticated on-board instruments, gas powered engines for longer endurance and higher payloads or robotics arms and containers designed to assist sampling, hold cargo or deliver assistance. RPAS could leverage wildlife capture procedures by carrying dart guns for chemical immobilization where otherwise manual approaching free-ranging animals is considered dangerous.

# Conclusions

The consolidation of the RPAS as management and research tools in protected areas is closely linked to the technological development of the elements associated with the platform and to the establishment of measures that favorably regulate its use, increasing opportunities in the sector and stimulating innovation in priority conservation areas. There are continually improvements in navigation control and flight autonomy, while we are witnessing the progressive miniaturization and diversification of sensors along with advances in the field of artificial intelligence. This rapidly expanding confluence of factors encourages the emergence of new scenarios with ethical and legal implications. Most governments have reacted by setting constraints that could have a negative impact on the capacity to integrate RPAS into the civilian sphere, despite some progress in this regard. As result, it is difficult to foresee the actions that each country will adopt from now on in an attempt to harmonize the contradictions presented by RPAS, reason why it is probable that the future of the RPAS in protected areas is conditioned fundamentally by political and social factors.

# References

Abd-Elrahman, Amr, Leonard Pearlstine, and Franklin Percival. 2005. “Development of Pattern Recognition Algorithm for Automatic Bird .” *Surv. L. Inf. Sci.* 65 (1): 37.

America, New. 2017. “*World of Drones*.”

Andel, Alexander C. van, Serge A. Wich, Christophe Boesch, Lian Pin Koh, Martha M. Robbins, Joseph Kelly, and Hjalmar S. Kuehl. 2015. “Locating Chimpanzee Nests and Identifying Fruiting Trees with an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.” *Am. J. Primatol.* 77 (10): 1122–1134. doi:[10.1002/ajp.22446](https://doi.org/10.1002/ajp.22446).

Andrew, Margaret E, and Jill M Shephard. 2017. “Semi-Automated Detection of Eagle Nests: An Application of Very High-Resolution Image Data and Advanced Image Analyses to Wildlife Surveys.” doi:[10.1002/rse2.38](https://doi.org/10.1002/rse2.38).

Andrews, C. 2014. “*Wildlife Monitoring: Should Uav Drones Be Banned?*”

Banzi, Jamali Firmat. 2014. “A Sensor Based Anti-Poaching System in Tanzania National Parks.” *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications* 4 (4).

Barnosky, Anthony D, Nicholas Matzke, Susumu Tomiya, Guinevere O U Wogan, Brian Swartz, Tiago B Quental, Charles Marshall, et al. 2011. “Has the Earth’s Sixth Mass Extinction Already Arrived?” *Nature* 470 (7336): 51–57. doi:[10.1038/nature09678](https://doi.org/10.1038/nature09678).

Bayram, Haluk, Krishna Doddapaneni, Nikolaos Stefas, and Volkan Isler. 2016. “Active Localization of VHF Collared Animals with Aerial Robots,” no. 13: 74–75. doi:[10.1109/COASE.2016.7743503](https://doi.org/10.1109/COASE.2016.7743503).

Casella, Elisa, Antoine Collin, Daniel Harris, Sebastian Ferse, Sonia Bejarano, Valeriano Parravicini, James L. Hench, and Alessio Rovere. 2017. “Mapping Coral Reefs Using Consumer-Grade Drones and Structure from Motion Photogrammetry Techniques.” *Coral Reefs* 36 (1): 269–275. doi:[10.1007/s00338-016-1522-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00338-016-1522-0).

Chabot, Dominique, and David M. Bird. 2015. “Wildlife Research and Management Methods in the 21st Century: Where Do Unmanned Aircraft Fit in?” *J. Unmanned Veh. Syst.* 3 (4): 137–155. doi:[10.1139/juvs-2015-0021](https://doi.org/10.1139/juvs-2015-0021).

Chabot, Dominique, and Charles M. Francis. 2016. “Computer-Automated Bird Detection and Counts in High-Resolution Aerial Images: A Review.” *Journal of Field Ornithology* 87 (4): 343–359. doi:[10.1111/jofo.12171](https://doi.org/10.1111/jofo.12171).

Christiansen, Peter, Kim A rild Steen, Rasmus N yholm Jørgensen, and Henrik Karstoft. 2014. “Automated Detection and Recognition of Wildlife Using Thermal Cameras.” *Sensors (Basel).* 14 (8): 13778–13793. doi:[10.3390/s140813778](https://doi.org/10.3390/s140813778).

Christie, Katherine S., Sophie L. Gilbert, Casey L. Brown, Michael Hatfield, and Leanne Hanson. 2016. “Unmanned Aircraft Systems in Wildlife Research: Current and Future Applications of a Transformative Technology.” *Front. Ecol. Environ.* 14 (5): 241–251. doi:[10.1002/fee.1281](https://doi.org/10.1002/fee.1281).

Cliff, Oliver M, Robert Fitch, Salah Sukkarieh, Debra L Saunders, and Robert Heinsohn. 2015. “Online Localization of Radio-Tagged Wildlife with an Autonomous Aerial Robot System.” *Robot. Sci. Syst.*, no. November 2016: 1–9. doi:[10.15607/RSS.2015.XI.042](https://doi.org/10.15607/RSS.2015.XI.042).

Colefax, Andrew P., Paul A. Butcher, and Brendan P. Kelaher. 2017. “The Potential for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to Conduct Marine Fauna Surveys in Place of Manned Aircraft.” *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, June. doi:[10.1093/icesjms/fsx100](https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsx100).

Colomina, I., and P. Molina. 2014. “Unmanned Aerial Systems for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing: A Review.” *ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing* 92 (June): 79–97. doi:[10.1016/j.isprsjprs.2014.02.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.isprsjprs.2014.02.013).

Conabio. 2017. “*Canarias Usará Drones Para Controlar La Pesca Furtiva Y Mejorar Su Inspección*.”

Cook, R. Dennis, and Jerald O. Jacobson. 1979. “A Design for Estimating Visibility Bias in Aerial Surveys.” *Biometrics* 35 (4): 735. doi:[10.2307/2530104](https://doi.org/10.2307/2530104).

Cornell, Dylan, Maryann Herman, and Fernando Ontiveros. 2016. “Use of a UAV for Water Sampling to Assist Remote Sensing of Bacterial Flora in Freshwater Environments.” <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/undergraduate_ext_pub/17/>.

Ditmer, Mark A., John B. Vincent, Leland K. Werden, Jessie C. Tanner, Timothy G. Laske, Paul A. Iaizzo, David L. Garshelis, and John R. Fieberg. 2015. “Bears Show a Physiological but Limited Behavioral Response to Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.” *Curr. Biol.* 25 (17): 2278–2283. doi:[10.1016/j.cub.2015.07.024](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2015.07.024).

Dudley, Nigel. 2008. *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*. IUCN.

Duffy, Rosaleen. 2014. “Waging a War to Save Biodiversity: The Rise of Militarized Conservation.” *Int. Aff.* 90 (4): 819–834. doi:[10.1111/1468-2346.12142](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12142).

Fornace, Kimberly M., Chris J. Drakeley, Timothy William, Fe Espino, and Jonathan Cox. 2014. “Mapping Infectious Disease Landscapes: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Epidemiology.” *Trends Parasitol.*, October, 1–6. doi:[10.1016/j.pt.2014.09.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pt.2014.09.001).

Forum, Policy. 2008. “Toward a Global Biodiversity Observing System,” no. April.

Franco, Antonio Di, Pierre Thiriet, Giuseppe Di Carlo, Charalampos Dimitriadis, Patrice Francour, Nicolas L Gutiérrez, Alain Jeudy De Grissac, et al. 2016. “Five Key Attributes Can Increase Marine Protected Areas Performance for Small-Scale Fisheries Management.” *Nat. Publ. Gr.*, no. November: 1–9. doi:[10.1038/srep38135](https://doi.org/10.1038/srep38135).

Gemert, Jan C. van, Camiel R. Verschoor, Pascal Mettes, Kitso Epema, Lian Pin Koh, and Serge Wich. 2015. “Nature Conservation Drones for Automatic Localization and Counting of Animals.” *Lect. Notes Comput. Sci. (Including Subser. Lect. Notes Artif. Intell. Lect. Notes Bioinformatics)* 8925: 255–270. doi:[10.1007/978-3-319-16178-5\_17](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-16178-5_17).

Gerster/Panos, Georg. 2017. “*Project Uses Drones to Monitor Coastal Erosion in Ghana*.”

Gini, R., D. Passoni, L. Pinto, and G. Sona. 2012. “Aerial Images from an Uav System: 3D Modeling and Tree Species Classification in a Park Area.” *ISPRS - Int. Arch. Photogramm. Remote Sens. Spat. Inf. Sci.* XXXIX-B1 (September): 361–366. doi:[10.5194/isprsarchives-XXXIX-B1-361-2012](https://doi.org/10.5194/isprsarchives-XXXIX-B1-361-2012).

Grémillet, David, William Puech, Véronique Garçon, Thierry Boulinier, and Yvon Le Maho. 2012. “Robots in Ecology: Welcome to the Machine.” *Open J. Ecol.* 02 (2): 49–57. doi:[10.4236/oje.2012.22006](https://doi.org/10.4236/oje.2012.22006).

Hansen, Andreas Skriver. 2016. “Applying Visitor Monitoring Methods in Coastal and Marine Areas – Some Learnings and Critical Reflections from Sweden.” *Scand. J. Hosp. Tour.* 2250 (June): 1–18. doi:[10.1080/15022250.2016.1155481](https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2016.1155481).

Hardin, Perry J, and Ryan R Jensen. 2013. “Small-Scale Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Environmental Remote Sensing: Challenges and Opportunities,” no. October 2014: 37–41. doi:[10.2747/1548-1603.48.1.99](https://doi.org/10.2747/1548-1603.48.1.99).

Hodgson, Jarrod C., and Lian Pin Koh. 2016. “Best Practice for Minimising Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Disturbance to Wildlife in Biological Field Research.” *Curr. Biol.* 26 (10). doi:[10.1016/j.cub.2016.04.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2016.04.001).

Jain, Mukesh. 2013. “Unmanned Aerial Survey of Elephants.” *PLoS One*. doi:[10.1371/ journal.pone.0054700](https://doi.org/10.1371/ journal.pone.0054700).

Jewell, Zoe. 2013. “Effect of Monitoring Technique on Quality of Conservation Science: Ethics and Science in Conservation.” *Conservation Biology* 27 (3): 501–508. doi:[10.1111/cobi.12066](https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.12066).

Juffe-Bignoli, Diego, Neil David Burgess, H Bingham, E M S Belle, M G De Lima, M Deguignet, B Bertzky, et al. 2014. “Protected Planet Report 2014.” *Cambridge, UK UNEP-WCMC*.

King, Lisa M. 2014. “Will Drones Revolutionise Ecotourism?” *J. Ecotourism* 13 (1): 85–92. doi:[10.1080/14724049.2014.948448](https://doi.org/10.1080/14724049.2014.948448).

Koh, Lian Pin, and Serge A. Wich. 2012. “Dawn of Drone Ecology: Low-Cost Autonomous Aerial Vehicles for Conservation.” *Trop. Conserv. Sci.* 5 (2): 121–132. doi:[WOS:000310846600002](https://doi.org/WOS:000310846600002).

Körner, Fabian, Raphael Speck, Ali Haydar, and Salah Sukkarieh. 2010. “Autonomous Airborne Wildlife Tracking Using Radio Signal Strength,” 107–112.

Lancia, Richard A, William L Kendall, Kenneth H Pollock, and James D Nichols. 2005. “Estimating the Number of Animals in Wildlife Populations.”

Leary, David. 2017. “Drones on Ice: An Assessment of the Legal Implications of the Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Scientific Research and by the Tourist Industry in Antarctica.” *Polar Record*, May, 1–15. doi:[10.1017/S0032247417000262](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247417000262).

Leonardo, Miguel, Austin Jensen, Calvin Coopmans, Mac McKee, and YangQuan Chen. 2013. “A Miniature Wildlife Tracking UAV Payload System Using Acoustic Biotelemetry.” *Proc. ASME Int. Des. Eng. Tech. Conf. Comput. Inf. Eng. Conf.*, no. July 2015. doi:[10.1115/DETC2013-13267](https://doi.org/10.1115/DETC2013-13267).

Lhoest, S., J. Linchant, S. Quevauvillers, C. Vermeulen, and P. Lejeune. 2015. “How Many Hippos (Homhip): Algorithm for Automatic Counts of Animals with Infra-Red Thermal Imagery from UAV.” *Int. Arch. Photogramm. Remote Sens. Spat. Inf. Sci. - ISPRS Arch.* 40 (3): 355–362. doi:[10.5194/isprsarchives-XL-3-W3-355-2015](https://doi.org/10.5194/isprsarchives-XL-3-W3-355-2015).

Linchant, Julie, Jonathan Lisein, Jean Semeki, Philippe Lejeune, and Cédric Vermeulen. 2015. “Are Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UASs) the Future of Wildlife Monitoring? A Review of Accomplishments and Challenges.” *Mamm. Rev.* 45 (4): 239–252. doi:[10.1111/mam.12046](https://doi.org/10.1111/mam.12046).

Lisein, Jonathan, Adrien Michez, Hugues Claessens, and Philippe Lejeune. 2015. “Discrimination of Deciduous Tree Species from Time Series of Unmanned Aerial System Imagery.” *PLoS One* 10 (11). doi:[10.1371/journal.pone.0141006](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0141006).

Lobermeier, Scott, Matthew Moldenhauer, Christopher Peter, Luke Slominski, Richard Tedesco, Marcus Meer, James Dwyer, Richard Harness, and Andrew Stewart. 2015. “Mitigating Avian Collision with Power Lines: A Proof of Concept for Installation of Line Markers via Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.” *J. Unmanned Veh. Syst.* 3 (4): 252–258. doi:[10.1139/juvs-2015-0009](https://doi.org/10.1139/juvs-2015-0009).

Margarita Mulero-Pázmány, Miguel Ferrer, Juan José Negro. 2014. “A Low Cost Way for Assessing Bird Risk Hazards in Power Lines: Fixed-Wing Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems” 2.

Mateo, Rubén G., Ángel M. Felicísimo, and Jesús Muñoz. 2011. “Modelos de Distribución de Especies: Una Revisión Sintética.” *Rev. Chil. Hist. Nat.*, 217–240. doi:[10.4067/S0716-078X2011000200008](https://doi.org/10.4067/S0716-078X2011000200008).

Maza, Iv?n, Fernando Caballero, Jes?s Capit?n, J. R. Mart?nez-de-Dios, and An?bal Ollero. 2011. “Experimental Results in Multi-UAV Coordination for Disaster Management and Civil Security Applications.” *Journal of Intelligent & Robotic Systems* 61 (1): 563–585. doi:[10.1007/s10846-010-9497-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10846-010-9497-5).

McCaldin, Guy, Michael Johnston, and Andrew Rieker. 2015. *Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems to Assist with Decision Support for Land Managers on Christmas Island (Indian Ocean)*. October. Australia: V-TOL Aerospace; Department of parks; Wildlife, Western Australia.

McEvoy, John F., Graham P. Hall, and Paul G. McDonald. 2016. “Evaluation of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Shape, Flight Path and Camera Type for Waterfowl Surveys: Disturbance Effects and Species Recognition.” *PeerJ* 4 (March): e1831. doi:[10.7717/peerj.1831](https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.1831).

Mulero-Pázmány Margarita, Negro JJ. 2011. “AEROMAB Small UAS for Montagu’s Harrier’s Circus Pygargus Nests Monitoring.” *AEROMAB Small UAS Montagu’s Harrier’s Circus Pygargus Nests Monit. RED UAS Intenational Congr. Univ. Eng. Seville, Spain. December 2011.*

Mulero-Pázmány, Margarita, Jose Ángel Barasona, Pelayo Acevedo, Joaquín Vicente, and Juan José Negro. 2015. “Unmanned Aircraft Systems Complement Biologging in Spatial Ecology Studies.” *Ecol. Evol.* 5 (21): 4808–4818. doi:[10.1002/ece3.1744](https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.1744).

Mulero-Pázmány, Margarita, Roel Stolper, L. D. Van Essen, Juan J. Negro, and Tyrell Sassen. 2014. “Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems as a Rhinoceros Anti-Poaching Tool in Africa.” *PLoS One* 9 (1): 1–10. doi:[10.1371/journal.pone.0083873](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0083873).

Nugraha, Ridha Aditya, Deepika Jeyakodi, and Thitipon Mahem. 2016. “Urgency for Legal Framework on Drones : Lessons for Indonesia , India , and Thailand.” *Indones. Law Rev.* 6 (2): 137–157.

Pereira, Henrique Miguel, Simon Ferrier, Michele Walters, Gary N Geller, Rob H G Jongman, Robert J Scholes, Michael W Bruford, et al. 2013. “Essential Biodiversity Variables.” *Science (80-. ).* 339 (6117): 277–278. doi:[10.1126/science.1229931](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1229931).

Perroy, Ryan L., Timo Sullivan, and Nathan Stephenson. 2017. “Assessing the Impacts of Canopy Openness and Flight Parameters on Detecting a Sub-Canopy Tropical Invasive Plant Using a Small Unmanned Aerial System.” *ISPRS J. Photogramm. Remote Sens.* 125: 174–183. doi:[10.1016/j.isprsjprs.2017.01.018](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.isprsjprs.2017.01.018).

Pimm, Stuart L, Sky Alibhai, Richard Bergl, Alex Dehgan, Chandra Giri, Zoë Jewell, Lucas Joppa, Roland Kays, and Scott Loarie. 2015. “Emerging Technologies to Conserve Biodiversity.” *Trends Ecol. Evol.* 30 (11): 685–696. doi:[10.1016/j.tree.2015.08.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2015.08.008).

Pomeroy, P., L. O’Connor, and P. Davies. 2015. “Assessing Use of and Reaction to Unmanned Aerial Systems in Gray and Harbor Seals During Breeding and Molt in the UK .” *Journal of Unmanned Vehicle Systems* 3 (3): 102–113. doi:[10.1139/juvs-2015-0013](https://doi.org/10.1139/juvs-2015-0013).

Rodríguez, Airam, Juan J. Negro, Mara Mulero, Carlos Rodríguez, Jesús Hernández-Pliego, and Javier Bustamante. 2012. “The Eye in the Sky: Combined Use of Unmanned Aerial Systems and GPS Data Loggers for Ecological Research and Conservation of Small Birds.” *PLoS One* 7 (12). doi:[10.1371/journal.pone.0050336](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0050336).

Sardà-Palomera, Francesc, Gerard Bota, Carlos Viñolo, Oriol Pallarés, Víctor Sazatornil, Lluís Brotons, Spartacus Gomáriz, and Francesc Sardà. 2012. “Fine-Scale Bird Monitoring from Light Unmanned Aircraft Systems.” *Ibis (Lond. 1859).* 154 (1): 177–183. doi:[10.1111/j.1474-919X.2011.01177.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1474-919X.2011.01177.x).

Sasse, D. Blake. 2003. “Job-Related Mortality of Wildlife Workers in the United States, 1937-2000.” *Wildl. Soc. Bull.* 31 (4): 1000–1003.

Scobie, Corey A., and Chris H. Hugenholtz. 2016. “Wildlife Monitoring with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles: Quantifying Distance to Auditory Detection: UAV Sound and Wildlife Aural Detection.” *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 40 (4): 781–785. doi:[10.1002/wsb.700](https://doi.org/10.1002/wsb.700).

Sepúlveda, Alejandra, Mathias Schluep, Fabrice G. Renaud, Martin Streicher, Ruediger Kuehr, Christian Hagelüken, and Andreas C. Gerecke. 2010. “A Review of the Environmental Fate and Effects of Hazardous Substances Released from Electrical and Electronic Equipments During Recycling: Examples from China and India.” *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 30 (1): 28–41. doi:[10.1016/j.eiar.2009.04.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eiar.2009.04.001).

Soriano, P, F Caballero, and A Ollero. 2009. “RF-Based Particle Filter Localization for Wildlife Tracking by Using an UAV.” *40 Th Int. Symp. Robot.*, 239–244. <http://grvc.us.es/publica/congresosint/documentos/isr_soriano.pdf>.

Stöcker, Claudia, Rohan Bennett, Francesco Nex, Markus Gerke, and Jaap Zevenbergen. 2017. “Review of the Current State of UAV Regulations.” *Remote Sensing* 9 (5): 459. doi:[10.3390/rs9050459](https://doi.org/10.3390/rs9050459).

Szantoi, Zoltan, Scot E. Smith, Giovanni Strona, Lian Pin Koh, and Serge A. Wich. 2017. “Mapping Orangutan Habitat and Agricultural Areas Using Landsat OLI Imagery Augmented with Unmanned Aircraft System Aerial Photography.” *Int. J. Remote Sens.* 38 (8): 1–15. doi:[10.1080/01431161.2017.1280638](https://doi.org/10.1080/01431161.2017.1280638).

Tomlins, G.F., and Y.J. Lee. 1983. “Remotely Piloted Aircraft — an Inexpensive Option for Large-Scale Aerial Photography in Forestry Applications.” *Can. J. Remote Sens.* 9 (2): 76–85. doi:[10.1080/07038992.1983.10855042](https://doi.org/10.1080/07038992.1983.10855042).

USGS. 2014. “*US Geological Survey National Unmanned Aircraft Systems Project*.”

Van Tilburg, Christopher. 2017. “First Report of Using Portable Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones) for Search and Rescue.” *Wilderness & Environmental Medicine*. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1080603217300042>.

Vas, E., A. Lescroel, O. Duriez, G. Boguszewski, and D. Gremillet. 2015. “Approaching Birds with Drones: First Experiments and Ethical Guidelines.” *Biol. Lett.* 11 (2): 20140754–20140754. doi:[10.1098/rsbl.2014.0754](https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2014.0754).

Ventura, Daniele, Michele Bruno, Giovanna Jona Lasinio, Andrea Belluscio, and Giandomenico Ardizzone. 2016. “A Low-Cost Drone Based Application for Identifying and Mapping of Coastal Fish Nursery Grounds.” *Estuar. Coast. Shelf Sci.* 171. doi:[10.1016/j.ecss.2016.01.030](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecss.2016.01.030).

Weissensteiner, M H, J W Poelstra, and J B W Wolf. 2015. “Low-Budget Ready-to-Fly Unmanned Aerial Vehicles: An Effective Tool for Evaluating the Nesting Status of Canopy-Breeding Bird Species.” *J. Avian Biol.* 46 (4): 425–430. doi:[10.1111/jav.00619](https://doi.org/10.1111/jav.00619).

Wich, S. 2017. “*Amazon River Dolphin Project*.”

Wich, Serge, David Dellatore, Max Houghton, Rio Ardi, and Lian Pin Koh. 2016. “A Preliminary Assessment of Using Conservation Drones for Sumatran Orang-Utan (Pongo Abelii) Distribution and Density.” *J. Unmanned Veh. Syst.* 4 (1): 45–52. doi:[10.1139/juvs-2015-0015](https://doi.org/10.1139/juvs-2015-0015).

Wilson, Rory P., and Clive R. McMahon. 2006. “Measuring Devices on Wild Animals: What Constitutes Acceptable Practice?” *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 4 (3): 147–154. doi:[10.1890/1540-9295(2006)004[0147:MDOWAW]2.0.CO;2](https://doi.org/10.1890/1540-9295(2006)004[0147:MDOWAW]2.0.CO;2).

Wulder, Michael A, Ronald J Hall, Nicholas C Coops, and Steven E Franklin. 2004. “High Spatial Resolution Remotely Sensed Data for Ecosystem Characterization” 54 (6): 511–521. doi:[10.1641/0006-3568(2004)054](https://doi.org/10.1641/0006-3568(2004)054).

Zahawi, Rakan A., Jonathan P. Dandois, Karen D. Holl, Dana Nadwodny, J. Leighton Reid, and Erle C. Ellis. 2015. “Using Lightweight Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to Monitor Tropical Forest Recovery.” *Biol. Conserv.* 186 (June): 287–295. doi:[10.1016/j.biocon.2015.03.031](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2015.03.031).

Zaman, Bushra, Austin M. Jensen, and Mac McKee. 2011. “Use of High-Resolution Multispectral Imagery Acquired with an Autonomous Unmanned Aerial Vehicle to Quantify the Spread of an Invasive Wetlands Species.” *Int. Geosci. Remote Sens. Symp.*, 803–806. doi:[10.1109/IGARSS.2011.6049252](https://doi.org/10.1109/IGARSS.2011.6049252).