

Lais Lautenschlager Rodrigues, Ph.D.



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Rio Claro, São Paulo, Brazil

Portuguese – Native speaker

English – Fluent

Spanish – Beginner

I am a Brazilian field ecologist specialized in tropical forest ecosystems and plant-animal interactions. In 2025, I earned a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Miami (USA), where I enhanced my skills in fieldwork, geospatial analysis, camera trapping, animal census, molecular techniques (e-DNA), and statistical analysis. During my academic career, I worked with medium- and large-mammal species and their ecological roles in tropical rainforests, particularly examining anthropogenic impacts on species diversity and conservation challenges across Neotropical landscapes.

Over the years, I have published 14 peer-reviewed articles, three of which were first-authored, in leading journals, including *Biological Conservation*, *PNAS*, and *Ecology*. In addition to my research, I have served as a lead instructor and teaching assistant since 2023 in several undergraduate and graduate courses at the University of Miami (UM) and São Paulo State University (UNESP). I am fluent in Portuguese and English and have academic and professional experience in Brazil, the United States, Colombia, and Uruguay.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Professional Consultant

Feb – June, 2026

Iniciativa Nacional para a Conservação da Anta Brasileira (INCAB-IPÊ) (Brazil)

Camera-trap photo-identification of Lowland tapir individuals across three study sites.

Professional Consultant

2025 – 2026

World Animal Protection (Brazil)

Production of a *technical report* and a *policy brief* on integrating fauna into restoration projects in Brazil.

Teaching Assistantship

2023 – 2025

University of Miami, Miami, FL (USA)

Taught different undergraduate courses in the Department of Biology and Latin American Studies.

Independent Consultant

2017 – 2020

São Paulo State University (UNESP), Rio Claro, SP (Brazil)

Fieldwork technician (graduate students); Managed and analyzed camera trap datasets (photo and video sorting), taxonomic identification of recorded species.

EDUCATION

University of Miami (UM), Department of Biology, Miami, FL, USA

2020 – 2025

Doctor in Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in Biology – PI: Dr. Kenneth Feeley

Project: “*Dietary Ecological Functioning of a Large Herbivore in a Tropical Forest*”

São Paulo State University (UNESP), Department of Ecology, Rio Claro, SP, Brazil

2017 – 2019

Master of Science (MS) degree in Ecology and Biodiversity – PI: Dr. Mauro Galetti

Project: “*Effects of Domestic Livestock and Landscape on the Diversity of Mammals in the Atlantic Forest Remnants*”

COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION

São Paulo State University (UNESP) , Rio Claro, SP, Brazil	2026
Short-term course in Data Management and Analysis – R software	
Geospatial Technology – Certificate obtained by the Department of Geography, University of Miami	2025
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and satellite Remote Sensing – ArcGIS Pro software	
R-Ladies Belo Horizonte – Online Course, Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil	2022
Short-term course in Data Analysis with Tidyverse – R software	
Florestal Package – Online Course, São Paulo, Brazil	2021
Short-term course in Introduction to Geospatial Data – R software	
Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) , Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil	2019
Short-term course in Introduction to Hierarchical Models in Ecology – R software	
São Paulo State University (UNESP) , Rio Claro, SP, Brazil	2019
Short-term course in Introduction to R: data management, visualization, and analysis – R software	
Geoprocessing without borders , Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil	2017
Short-term course about GIS in the analysis of environmental risks – ArcGIS Desktop software	
São Paulo State University (UNESP) , Rio Claro, SP, Brazil	2016
Short-term course in <i>Scientific Photography</i>	
São Paulo State University (UNESP) , Rio Claro, SP, Brazil	2015
Short-term course in <i>Ornithology Studies</i>	
São Paulo State University (UNESP) , Rio Claro, SP, Brazil	2014
Short-term course in <i>Herpetology Studies</i>	
São Paulo State University (UNESP) , Rio Claro, SP, Brazil	2014
Short-term course in <i>Ecology and Seed Dispersal of Bats</i>	
São Paulo State University (UNESP) , Rio Claro, SP, Brazil	2012
Short-term course in <i>Introduction to Bird Ecology</i>	

ACADEMIC AND SCIENTIFIC EXPERIENCE

▪ Publications

14. Regolin, A. L., Collevatti, R. G., Bailey, L. L., Boscolo, D., **Lautenschlager, L.**, Beca, G., Dias, V. B., Galetti, M. (2025). Habitat fragmentation explains the occupancy probability of the largest herbivore in the Neotropical forests. *Biological Conservation*, 311, 111413. [10.1016/j.biocon.2025.111413](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2025.111413)
13. Fortier, R. P., Kullberg, A. T., Aragón, L., Bernal-Escobar, M., Contreras, M. P., Hurtado, C. P., **Lautenschlager, L.**, Feeley, K. J. (2025). Plant Diversity and Endemism of the Sierra Nevada De Santa Marta, Colombia, with Floristic Comparisons to Surrounding Mountains1. *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden*, 110(1), 71-87. [10.3417/2025921](https://doi.org/10.3417/2025921)
12. Kullberg, A. T., Aragón, L., Bernal-Escobar, M., Fortier, R., **Lautenschlager, L.**, Ballantyne, J., & Feeley, K.J. (2024). Rising temperatures will make Miami's street life even more exotic. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 128502. [10.1016/j.ufug.2024.128502](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2024.128502)

11. Kim, S., **Lautenschlager, L.**, Tarazona-Tubens, F. L., Abels, J., Lloret, M., Park, T., Malcolm-Parker, A., Galetti, M., Searcy, C. (2024). Resurrecting plant-animal interactions in the Caribbean can benefit large-fruited plants. *Restoration Ecology*, e14233. [10.1111/rec.14233](https://doi.org/10.1111/rec.14233).
10. Gonçalves, F., Farooq, H., Harfoot, M., Pires, M. M., Villar, N., Sales, L., Carvalho, C., Bello, C., Emer, C., Bovendorp, R. S., Mendes, C., Beca, G., **Lautenschlager, L.**, Souza, Y., Pedrosa, F., ... Galetti, M. (2024). A global map of species at risk of extinction due to natural hazards. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 121(26), e2321068121. [10.1073/pnas.2321068121](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2321068121).
9. **Lautenschlager, L.**, Souza, Y., Villar, N., Galetti, M., & Feeley, K. J. (2024). Communal tapir latrines are foraging sites for tropical forest vertebrates. *Global Ecology and Conservation*, e02950. [10.1016/j.gecco.2024.e02950](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gecco.2024.e02950).
8. **Lautenschlager, L.** & Feeley, K. (2024). Poop is cool! Animal latrines help animals and plants. *Frontiers for Young Minds journal*. 12, 1284583. [10.3389/frym.2024.1284583](https://doi.org/10.3389/frym.2024.1284583).
7. Franceschi, I. C., da Paixão Dornas, R. A., Lermen, I. S., Coelho, A. V. P., Boas, A. H. V., Chiarello, A. G., et al. (2024). Camera trap surveys of Atlantic Forest mammals: A data set for analyses considering imperfect detection (2004-2020). *Ecology*, e4298. [10.1002/ecy.4298](https://doi.org/10.1002/ecy.4298)
6. **Lautenschlager, L.**, Souza, Y., & Galetti, M. (2022). Frugivory and seed dispersal by the Red-footed Tortoise *Chelonoidis carbonaria*. *Acta Oecologica*, 116, 103837. [10.1016/j.actao.2022.103837](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actao.2022.103837).
5. Galetti, M., Gonçalves, F., Villar, N., Zipparro, V. B., Paz, C., Mendes, C., **Lautenschlager, L.**, ... Bovendorp, R. S. (2021). Causes and consequences of large-scale defaunation in the Atlantic Forest. In M. C. M. Marques & C. E. V. Grelle (Eds.), *The Atlantic Forest. History, biodiversity, threats and opportunities of the mega-diverse forest* (pp. 297-324). [10.1007/978-3-030-55322-7_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-55322-7_14).
4. Mendes, C. P., Carreira, D., Pedrosa, F., Beca, G., **Lautenschlager, L.**, Akkawi, P., ... & Galetti, M. (2020). Landscape of human fear in Neotropical rainforest mammals. *Biological Conservation*, 241, 108257. [10.1016/j.biocon.2019.108257](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2019.108257).
3. Nagy-Reis, M., Oshima, J. E. D. F., Kanda, C. Z., Palmeira, F. B. L., de Melo, F. R., Morato, R. G., ... & Lopes, C. M. (2020). NEOTROPICAL CARNIVORES: a data set on carnivore distribution in the Neotropics. *Ecology*, 101(11), e03128. [10.1002/ecy.3128](https://doi.org/10.1002/ecy.3128).
2. Souza, Y., Gonçalves, F., **Lautenschlager, L.**, Akkawi, P., Mendes, C., Carvalho, M. M., ... & Galetti, M. (2019). ATLANTIC MAMMALS: a data set of assemblages of medium-and large-sized mammals of the Atlantic Forest of South America. *Ecology*, 100(10), e02785. [10.1002/ecy.2785](https://doi.org/10.1002/ecy.2785).
1. Sobral-Souza, T., **Lautenschlager, L.**, Morcatty, T. Q., Bello, C., Hansen, D., & Galetti, M. (2017). Rewilding defaunated Atlantic Forests with tortoises to restore lost seed dispersal functions. *Perspectives in ecology and conservation*, 15(4), 300-307. [10.1016/j.pecon.2017.08.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pecon.2017.08.005).
- Accepted for publication:
15. Lautenschlager et al. (2026). *NeoUngulatesDiet*: A Database of Ungulate Diets in the Neotropics. *Ecology*.
16. Lautenschlager et al. (2026). Unveiling the dietary selection of Lowland tapirs (*Tapirus terrestris*) in a tropical rainforest. *Ecology and Evolution*.

- **Teaching Assistant**

Course: *General Biology Laboratory (BIL 151)* 2025
Instructor Dr. Dana Krempels
Teaching Assistant (TA) Fellow from the Department of Biology (University of Miami)

Course: *Evolution and Biodiversity (BIL 160)* 2025
Instructor Dr. Kenneth J. Feeley
Teaching Assistant (TA) Fellow from the Department of Biology (University of Miami)

Course: *Workshop Leaders in Biology II (BIL 382)* 2025
Instructor Dr. Kenneth J. Feeley
Teaching Assistant (TA) Fellow from the Department of Biology (University of Miami)

Course: *General Biology Laboratory (BIL 151)* 2024
Instructor Dr. Dana Krempels
Teaching Assistant (TA) Fellow from the Department of Biology (University of Miami)

Course: *Ecology (BIL 336)* 2024
Instructor Dr. Michelle E. Afkhami
Teaching Assistant (TA) Fellow from the Department of Biology (University of Miami)

Course: *Introduction to Latin American and Caribbean Studies (LAS101-Q)* 2023
Instructor Dr. John Twichell
Teaching Assistant (TA) Fellow from the UMIA (University of Miami)

Course: *Fieldwork Ecology* 2015, 2018
Instructor Dr. Mauro Galetti
Teaching Assistant (TA) from the Department of Ecology and Biodiversity (São Paulo State University)

- **Events - Organization Committee**

22nd Tri-University Latin America and Caribbean Studies Graduate Student Conference 2024
(UM, FIU, FAU) – University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, USA

10th Brazilian Congress of Mastozoology, Águas de Lindóia, SP, Brazil 2019

3rd Workshop of Ecosystem Services, São Paulo State University, Rio Claro, SP, Brazil 2015

- **Presentation in Events**

2nd Defaunation Workshop, Center for Research on Biodiversity Dynamics and Climate Change 2025
Oral presentation: “Desvendando o papel ecológico da anta brasileira através de latrinas comunitárias”

6th Annual Distinguished Fellows Colloquium, Institute for Advanced Study of the Americas (UMIA) 2024
Oral presentation: “Dietary Ecological Roles of Lowland Tapirs in a Tropical Forest”

8th Frugivores & Seed Dispersal Symposium (FSD), Ilhéus, Bahia, Brazil 2024
Oral presentation: “Communal tapir latrines are foraging sites for tropical forest vertebrates”

8 th Frugivores & Seed Dispersal Symposium (FSD), Ilhéus, Bahia, Brazil <i>Oral presentation:</i> “Unveiling the dietary selection of the Lowland tapir (<i>Tapirus terrestris</i>) in a tropical forest” <i>Symposia:</i> “Harnessing nucleic acids to unveil the ecology and evolution of frugivory and seed dispersal”	2024
15 th Annual Graduate Student Symposium, 15 th Annual Graduate Student Symposium <i>Oral presentation:</i> “Communal tapir latrines are foraging sites for tropical forest vertebrates”	2024
13 th International Mammalogical Congress (IMC-13), Anchorage, Alaska, USA <i>Oral presentation:</i> “Lowland Tapir latrines as an alternative food source for vertebrates in the Atlantic Forest”	2023
14 th Annual Graduate Student Symposium, Department of Biology, University of Miami <i>Poster presentation:</i> “Lowland Tapir latrines as an alternative food source for vertebrates in the Atlantic Forest”	2023
Friday Seminar – Biology Graduate Program, Department of Biology, University of Miami <i>Oral presentation:</i> “Dietary ecological functioning of ungulates in a tropical forest”	2021
12 th Annual Graduate Student Symposium, Department of Biology, University of Miami <i>Poster presentation:</i> “Biogeography of mutualistic interactions in island ecosystems”	2021
10 th Brazilian Congress of Mastozoology, Águas de Lindóia, SP, Brazil <i>Oral presentation:</i> “Effects of domestic megafauna and landscape on the diversity of mammals in the Atlantic Forest remnants”	2019
6 th Theoretical Ecology Symposium, University of Campinas (UNICAMP), Campinas, SP, Brazil <i>Poster presentation:</i> “Frugivory and Seed Dispersal by the Red-footed Tortoise (<i>Chelonoidis carbonaria</i>)”	2018

- **Community Outreach Initiatives**

<i>BioReach – Department of Biology Outreach Program – University of Miami</i> Volunteer to teach students about biological concepts in the Ponce de León Middle School, Miami, FL, USA	2023
<i>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – United Nations, Rio Claro, SP, Brazil</i> Volunteer during the event “Knowing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations”	2019
<i>Academic Preparation Course– ATHO, São Paulo State University, Rio Claro, SP, Brazil</i> Contributing to the integration of underprivileged communities through a preparatory course at São Paulo State University, focusing on equipping young adults and adults for admission to Brazilian public universities. Responsibilities included teaching English classes, organizing educational events, and actively participating in the organizing committee.	2011- 2015

- **Non-Governmental Organization Internship**

<i>Karumbé – Centro de Tortugas Marinas, La Coronilla, Uruguay</i> Collaborated with the NGO “Karumbé” in sea turtle research and conservation within Cerro Verde’s protected marine area, Uruguay. Activities included beach monitoring, animal sightings, capture, tagging, rehabilitation, and release.	2014
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- **Fieldwork Assistant**

<i>Michaela Peterson (Ph.D., Vanderbilt University, USA)</i> Monitoring white-lipped peccaries through camera trapping and tracking their tracks in Brazil.	2019
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Vincent Fehr (Ph.D., Aarhus University, Denmark) **2018**
Studying exotic palms and their potential for invasion in the Atlantic Forest in Brazil.

Thomas Arkwright (MSc., University of Copenhagen, Denmark) **2017**
Studying the maned wolf population in a savanna (protected area) in Brazil.

RESEARCH FUNDING and INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

Dean's Summer Research Fellowship – University of Miami **2024**
Title: “Nutrient Fertilization and Plant Recruitment by the Lowland tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*)”
Amount: USD 5,000

Summer Doctoral Research Grant – Graduate School – University of Miami **2024**
Title: “Nutrient Fertilization and Plant Recruitment by the Lowland tapir (*T. terrestris*) in a Tropical Forest”
Amount: USD 5,000

Kushlan Graduate Research Support Award – Department of Biology, University of Miami **2024**
Title: “Nutrient fertilization and plant recruitment by the Lowland tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*)”
Amount: USD 800.00

Lewis and Clark Fund for Exploration and Field Research **2023**
Title: “Dietary Ecological Functioning of Large Mammalian Herbivores in a Tropical Forest”
Amount: USD 4,900

Latin American Student Field Research Award (American Society of Mammalogists – ASM) **2023**
Title: “Dietary Ecological Functioning of Large Mammalian Herbivores in a Tropical Forest”
Amount: USD 1,500

Kushlan Graduate Research Support Award – Department of Biology, University of Miami **2023**
Title: “Comparing Dietary Ecological Functions of Herbivores in a Tropical Forest”
Amount: USD 500.00

CNPq - Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (# 405839/2021-9)
Title: “Defaunation Effects on the Ecological Functions of Plant Communities in Tropical Forests” **2021 – 2023**
PI: Dr. Mauro Galetti
Amount: R\$ 82,500 (USD 16,500 approx.)

■ Fellowships

UMIA/LAS Distinguished Graduate Fellows Program (Ph.D.) **2023 – 2024**
Project: “Dietary Ecological Functioning of Large Mammalian Herbivores in Tropical Forests”
PI: Dr. Kenneth Feeley (Fall 2022 – Fall 2025)
Amount: USD 30,000

Aldridge Graduate Scholarship in Tropical Biology (Ph.D.) **2021 – 2023**
Project: “Dietary Ecological Functioning of Large Mammalian Herbivores in Tropical Forests”
PI: Dr. Mauro Galetti (Fall 2020 – Spring 2022)
Amount: USD 24,950

CAPES (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (MS)) **2017 – 2019**

Project: "Effects of Domestic Livestock and Landscape on the Diversity of Mammals in the Atlantic Forest Remnants"

PI: Dr. Mauro Galetti

CNPQ (*National Council for Scientific and Technological Development*) (BS)

2012 – 2016

Project: "Frugivory and Seed Dispersal by the Red-footed Tortoise (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*)"

PI: Dr. Mauro Galetti
