

LUKE JAMES EVANS

University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

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Gainesville, FL
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I am a quantitative scientist with extensive experience in analyzing large-scale datasets and leading projects in challenging environments. I have completed postdocs at Stanford University, Arizona State, and University of Florida, bringing a wealth of experience in topics ranging from remote sensing to decision science. I have accrued over \$950k USD in grants over the course of my career, acquiring funds from four countries and a mixture of State and Federal agencies, as well as NGOs and private institutions. My research ranges from local to global and from theoretical to applied. I have experience teaching R to a range of academic levels and a strong history of mentoring students. My teaching experience includes remote sensing, statistics, and a wide range of field-based techniques. Having adapted to living and working in varied cultural and geographical landscapes, from the rainforests of northeast Borneo to Gainesville, I will bring a global outlook, and a versatile skill set to the department.

EMPLOYMENT

Jan 2020 – Present

Postdoctoral Researcher - University of Florida

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

PIs – Dr. Brett Scheffers & Dr. Christina Romagosa

Quantifying and determining the invasive species risk posed by the exotic pet trade. Developing tools for both State and Federal partners to combat invasive species introductions and spread both in the Everglades as well as across Florida.

Jan 2019 – Dec 2020

Postdoctoral Researcher - Arizona State University

Center for Global Discovery and Conservation Science

PI – Dr. Greg Asner

Utilizing different types of remote sensing data to understand the effects of human-mediated change on tropical and sub-tropical ecosystems. This takes the form of impacts on floral and faunal biodiversity, spatial ecology, and population dynamics. Most recently working at the intersection of forest carbon and regional biodiversity.

2017 – Jan 2019

Postdoctoral Researcher – Stanford University - Carnegie Institution for Science

Department of Global Ecology

PI – Dr. Greg Asner

Pairing animal movement and occupancy with remote sensing datasets. Utilizing high-resolution habitat data such as LiDAR imagery to understand and conserve endangered species, throughout Sabah. Working under a Rainforest Trust project charged with the creation of a new 400k hectare protected area within the State. Field work included ground validation of remote sensing datasets across different habitats.

2018 – Jan 2019

Technical Manager, Research and Conservation, Malaysia

Danau Girang Field Centre / Sabah Wildlife Department

Provide technical assistance and project supervision to students and staff of the Danau Girang Field Centre. This includes supervision of two PhD students and general assistance on handling of remote sensing data. In addition this position also included providing statistical assistance on a range of projects.

2016 – 2018

Crocodile Conservation Manager, Malaysia

Danau Girang Field Centre / Sabah Wildlife Department

Working at the interface between NGO and governmental conservation strategy. Overseeing state-wide surveys of estuarine crocodiles in Sabah. Project aims to populations within Sabah's major river systems. Assessment will determine the population current status and trends, key components in the identification of non-detriment findings, under CITES.

EDUCATION

2012 – 2016 - Cardiff School of Biosciences, Cardiff University, UK.

Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D)

Supervisors – Prof. Benoit Goossens; Dr. Hefin Jones

Examining the effects of human-crocodile conflict. Focussing on satellite tracking, and population genetics, in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo.

2010 – 2011 - Cardiff School of Biosciences, Cardiff University, UK.

Masters of Research (MRes)

Supervisor – Prof. Benoit Goossens

Masters-level research across the spectrum of biosciences (molecular biosciences, neuroscience, biomedicine, and organisms and environment).

Research project included the examining of population dynamics and habitat partitioning of crocodile size classes in Sabah, Malaysia.

2007 – 2010 - Cardiff School of Biosciences, Cardiff University, UK.

BSc Biology

A range of field and lab skills across 3 years.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Tropical Forest Ecology
- Remote Sensing
- Field work
- Science-policy interface
- Conservation Biology
- Solutions-Based Science

WHITE PAPERS AND DECISION SUPPORT TOOLS

My research has focused on actionable science, with a range of tools and modeling outputs that are being used in active population management and species conservation.

- Evans, L. J., Romagosa, C. R., 2025. Climate adaptation considerations in invasion risk development. Invasion risk decision support tool. Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). **IMPLEMENTED.**
- Evans, L. J., Romagosa, C. R., 2023. Invasion risk decision support tool. Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). **IMPLEMENTED.**
- Figeroa, A. Evans, L. J., Daniel, W., Romagosa, C. R. 2024. Everglades restoration invasion support tool. Office of Everglades Restoration (OERI) – Department of the Interior. **IMPLEMENTED.**
- Evans L. J. Baecher A. Cullen, J., Scheffers, B. R., 2022. Climate futures of current and potential invasives in the Southeast USA. Southeast Climate Adaptation Center (SECASC). **IMPLEMENTED.**
- Evans L. J., Kntayya, S. K., Goossens, B. R. 2021. Statewide crocodile population modeling. Sabah, Malaysia State Government. **IMPLEMENTED.**

STATE MANAGEMENT PLANS - SABAH, MALAYSIA

I have been involved as part of a team that has drafted state-wide action plans for several key endangered species, including:

- Proboscis Monkey – IUCN Red List – Endangered
- Bornean Banteng – IUCN Red List - Endangered
- Clouded Leopard – IUCN Red List – Vulnerable

PUBLICATIONS

- Brodrick, P. G.*, **Evans, L. J.***, Martin, R. E., Chadwick, K. D., Vaughn, N. R., Heckler, J. W., Knapp, D. E., Asner, G. P. (**UNDER REVIEW – JOURNAL OF BIOGEOGRAPHY**). Strategic conservation: integrating forest carbon and biodiversity protection. *denotes joint first author. *Manuscript Available.*
- **Evans, L. J.**, Baecher, J. A., Scheffers, B. R., (**IN PREP**). An integrative approach for robust invasive species risk assessments. *Draft Available*
- **Evans, L. J.**, Orozco-terWengel P., Gardner, P. C., Goossens, B., Reynolds, G, Asner, G. P. (**IN PREP**). Predicting deforestation risk and the road to real-time monitoring. *Draft Available.*
- Fredstone, A.*, Tingley, M.*, Neate-Clegg M., **Evans, L. J.**,.... Scheffers, B., (2025). Reimagining species on the move across space and time. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, 40(7), 929-638.
- **Evans, L. J.**, Baecher, J. A., Scheffers, B. R. (2024). Invasive risk posed by the pet trade. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*. e2825.
- Klinges, D. H., Baecher, J. A., Lembrechts, J. J., Maclean, I. M., Lenoir, J., Greiser, C., Ashcroft, M., Evans, L. J., ...& Scheffers, B. R. (2024). Proximal microclimate: Moving beyond spatiotemporal resolution improves ecological predictions. *Global Ecology and Biogeography*, 33(9), e13884.
- Carlson, R. R., **Evans, L. J.**, Foo, S. A., Grady, B. W., Li, J., Seeley, M., ... & Asner, G. P. (2021). Synergistic benefits of conserving land-sea ecosystems. *Global Ecology and Conservation*, 28, e01684.

- Williams, S. et al. (2020). Conservation planning that incorporates regional-scale landscape connectivity. *Conservation Biology*, 34(4), 934-942.
- **Evans, L. J.**, Goossens, B., Davies, A. B., Reynolds, G., Asner, G. P. (2020). Natural and anthropogenic drivers of Bornean elephant movement strategies. *Global Ecology and Conservation*, 22, e00906.
- **Evans, L. J.**, Asner, G. P., & Goossens, B. (2018). Protected area management priorities crucial for the future of Bornean elephants. *Biological Conservation*, 221, 365-373.
- Love, K., Kurz, D. J., Vaughan, I. P., Ke, A., **Evans, L. J.**, & Goossens, B. (2018). Bearded pig (*Sus barbatus*) utilisation of a fragmented forest–oil palm landscape in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo. *Wildlife Research*, 44(8), 603-612.
- Asner, G. P., et al. (2018). Mapped aboveground carbon stocks to advance forest conservation and recovery in Malaysian Borneo. *Biological Conservation*, 217, 289-310.
- Stark, D. J., Vaughan, I. P., **Evans, L. J.**, Kler, H., & Goossens, B. (2018). Combining drones and satellite tracking as an effective tool for informing policy change in riparian habitats: a proboscis monkey case study. *Remote Sensing in Ecology and Conservation*, 4(1), 44-52.
- **Evans, L. J.**, Goossens, B., & Asner, G. P. (2017). Underproductive agriculture aids connectivity in tropical forests. *Forest Ecology and Management*, 401, 159-165.
- **Evans, L. J.**, Davies, A. B., Goossens, B., & Asner, G. P. (2017). Riparian vegetation structure and the hunting behavior of adult estuarine crocodiles. *PloS ONE*, 12(10), e0184804.
- **Evans, L. J.** (2016). Assessing the impacts of habitat fragmentation and subsequent anthropogenic expansion on the behavioural, nesting and population ecology of the estuarine crocodile, *Crocodylus porosus* (Doctoral dissertation, Cardiff University).
- **Evans, L. J.**, Jones, T. H., Pang, K., Saimin, S., & Goossens, B. (2016). Spatial ecology of estuarine crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) nesting in a fragmented landscape. *Sensors*, 16(9), 1527
- **Evans, L. J.**, Jones, T. H., Pang, K., Evans, M. N., Saimin, S., & Goossens, B. (2015). Use of drone technology as a tool for behavioral research: a case study of crocodilian nesting. *Herpetological Conservation and Biology*, 10(June), 90–98.
- Miller, J., et al., 2014. Dispatch from the field: ecology of ground-web-building spiders with description of new species (Araneae, Symphytognathidae). *Biodiversity Data Journal*. 2: e1076.
- **Evans, L. J.**, Goossens, B. (2011). Population ecology of the estuarine crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) in the lower Kinabatangan River, Sabah. (Master's Thesis, Cardiff University)

PUBLISHED BOOKS

- Kaur-Kler, J., **Evans, L. J.**, Goossens, B. (2019). *Opogi; a Bornean crocodile*. Natural History Publications. Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

SELECT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Evans, L. J., Baecher, J. A., Scheffers, B. R., 2024. An integrative approach for robust invasive species risk assessments. UF Invasion Science Center Conference.

- Evans, L. J., Figueroa, A., Romagosa, C. R., 2024. The use of R shiny in the development of risk tools. University of Florida invasive species risk determination workshop. Expert elicitation workshop.
- Evans, L. J., Baecher, J. A., Scheffers, B. R., 2023. Invasion risk posed by the pet trade. Species on the Move Conference.
- Evans, L. J., Baecher, J. A., Scheffers, B. R., 2023. Invasion risk posed by the pet trade. North American Invasion Species Management Association (NAISMA) Conference.
- Evans, L. J., Baecher, J. A., Scheffers, B. R., 2022. Climate adaptation of invasive species.
- **Evans, L. J.** & Asner G. P. 2017. LiDAR and its utilization in the maintenance of Bornean elephant populations. Heart of Borneo Conference. Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.
- **Evans, L. J.** & Asner G. P. 2017. LiDAR and its application for biodiversity mapping in Sabah. South East Asia Rainforest Research Partnership. Cambridge, UK.
- **Evans, L. J.**, Jones, H., Pang, K., Evans, M. N., Saimin, S., Goossens, B. 2014. Drone technology, a tool for behavioural research; a case study of crocodilian nesting. Borneo Crocodile Forum. Sibul, Sarawak, Malaysia.
- **Evans, L. J.**, Bolongon, G. G., Hearn, A. J., Ambu, L. N., Goossens, B. 2014. Technological successes in the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary. Society for Conservation Biology – Asia 2014. Melacca, Malaysia.
- Goossens, B., **Evans, L. J.**, Guharajan, R., Harris, M., Hearn, A., Liaw, L.P., Othman, N., Guerrero-Sanchez, S., Stark, D. 2014. Wildlife responses to habitat fragmentation and degradation in the Kinabatangan landscape. Presented at Workshop on Kinabatangan Biodiversity Conservation. Batu Putih, Sabah, Malaysia.
- Goossens, B., **Evans, L. J.**, Guharajan, R., Harris, M., Hearn, A., Liaw, L.P., Othman, N., Guerrero-Sanchez, S., Stark, D. 2014. Wildlife responses to habitat fragmentation and degradation in the Kinabatangan landscape. Presented at Third Country Training Programme 2014: Integrated Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Training Course. Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia.
- Goossens, B., **Evans, L. J.**, Guharajan, R., Harris, M., Hearn, A., Liaw, L.P., Othman, N., Guerrero-Sanchez, S., Stark, D. 2014. Wildlife responses to habitat fragmentation and degradation in the Kinabatangan landscape. Presented at Regional Conference on Protected Area and Biodiversity Management in SEA, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.
- **Evans, L. J.**, Rampangajouw, M., Dausip, J., Saimin, S., Goossens, B. 2012. Human-crocodile conflict: increasing understanding through satellite tracking, resource management and education. IUCN-SSC Crocodile Specialist Group Meeting. Manila, Philippines.

GRANTS

RESEARCH GRANTS

I have acquired grants of various sizes and from a range of sources, including governmental and NGO. I have acquired grants totalling over USD\$950,000.

National Park Service - Department of Interior (2025) (co-PI)

- USD\$259,376

Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission (2024) (PI)

- USD\$22,605

US Department of Interior (2023) (co-PI)

- USD\$75,465

Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission (2022) (co-PI)

- USD\$104,302

Columbus Zoo & Aquarium (2015 & 2016) (co-PI)

- USD\$3,000
- USD\$9,448

Chester Zoo (2012-2016) (co-PI)

- ~USD\$20,000 (GBP 12,000)

IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group (2016) (PI)

- USD\$1,000

Crocodile Population State Survey (2016-2019) (co-PI)

- ~USD\$100,000 (ringgit Malaysia (RM)420,000)

Ocean Park (2016-2020) (Major Collaborator)

- ~USD\$400,000 (HK\$ 3,140,517)

Total = ~USD\$735,820

TEACHING INTERESTS

I am interested in teaching a range of topics but have listed a few particular interests below:

Quantitative Ecology
Remote Sensing Ecology
Field Techniques

Spatial Ecology
Climate Change
Field Courses (local and international)

Invasion Science
Conservation Biology

TEACHING & MENTORING EXPERIENCE

Doctoral mentoring

Sai Kerisha Kntayya – PhD (2018-2024) - *Landscape Genetics and Habitat Viability of the Estuarine Crocodile (Crocodylus porosus) in Sabah: Conservation Management of an Apex Predator.*

Richard Burger – PhD (2016-2023) - *Morphological Attributes and Difficulties of Surveying the Reticulated Python, Malayopython reticulatus, Within a Fragmented Landscape*

Masters mentoring

Fraser Woodburn MS student (2018-2019) – *Density Dependent Growth Rates in Green Turtles Chelonia Mydas at Mantanani, Sabah, Malaysia.*

Timmy Garvey – MRes (Masters of Research) student (2015-16) – *Basking site selection and habitat reutilisation in Crocodylus porosus in a lowland riparian floodplain.*

Michelle Sexauer – MS student (2014) - *Anthropogenic disturbances along the Kinabatangan River in Borneo, Malaysia and the distribution and abundance of the salt water crocodile (Crocodylus porosus).*

Undergraduate mentoring

I advised a range of undergraduate students between 2012 and 2024, providing statistical and field-based supervision.

Kieran Love (2014-2016) – *Bearded pig (Sus barbatus) utilisation of a fragmented forest–oil palm landscape in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo.* Resulted in a publication (Love et al. 2018)

WORKSHOPS ORGANIZED AND FACILITATED

March 2024

University of Florida Invasive Species Risk Determination Workshop

I co-organized a one day workshop with over 60 participants. Provided a showcase of in-development risk tools. Additionally, I facilitated collection of calibration data from a diverse pool of stakeholders.

May 2022

Southeast Climate Adaptation Center Invasive Species Workshop

I co-organized a 25 participant workshop over 2-days. The workshop featured interactive app use and real-time data analysis and visualization, allowing participants to see and analyze their data.

MEDIA OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

I have experience engaging with media outlets in a number of ways, with my work being featured in a number of print and digital platforms.

- Local and international newspapers and online news sources (UK, US, and Mongabay)
- A number of television productions from around the world, including Animal Planet production, The Amazon of the East (<https://amzn.to/2IIXkUz>), and Borneo Jungle Diaries (<http://bit.ly/2OFtO5T>).
- Local outreach, engaging local schools and villages, within Malaysia.

SEARCH COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE

Involvement in numerous search committees selecting undergraduates for placement years in Borneo. Involved CV and cover letter reviews and subsequent interviews.

FIELD COURSE TEACHING & FIELD CENTER MANAGEMENT

I have a wide range of experience lecturing over 80 field courses, teaching a variety of topics. I also I had a position of pastoral care for a range of students, and visitors at Danau Girang Field Center. I was also instrumental in the teaching of approximately 8-12 field courses per annum, consisting of both undergraduate and graduate students. In addition to University level group we also taught a variety of school aged children from around the world, although with a focus on students from Malaysia and Singapore.

Field courses came from a wide variety of countries including (but not limited to)

United States:

University of Miami (Ohio) – Graduate Program
Oregon State University– Undergraduate
Portland State University – Undergraduate
University of La Verne – Undergraduate

United Kingdom:

Cardiff University – Undergraduate
University of South Wales – Undergraduate
Aberystwyth University - Undergraduate
Cornwall College – Undergraduate

China:

University of Hong Kong – Mixture of Undergraduate & Graduate

Netherlands:

Leiden University – Mixture of Undergraduate and Graduate

Germany:

Hannover University – Undergraduate

LABORATORY TEACHING

A range of laboratory-based undergraduate and masters-level teaching experience.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS**Regional Vice Chairman of the IUCN-SSC Crocodile Specialist Group (2015-Present)**

Coordination of regional crocodile activity. As a member of the steering committee, playing an active role in reviewing grant proposals.

REVIEWER EXPERIENCE:

Global Change Biology
Frontiers in Forests and Global Change
Frontiers in Ecology and Conservation
Conservation Science & Practice
Journal of Natural History

International Journal of Remote Sensing
Peer J
Journal of Herpetology
Nature Climate Change
Environmental Science and Ecology