

Guest Speaker Quiz

The speaker series presented over the last few weeks has been an incredible insight into the field of ecology. Each speaker has brought a unique perspective to the table, discussing their journeys and experiences getting to where they are today. My main broad take-aways from the series are just how diverse the path to a career in ecology can be, and how different each job position can look. No two speakers are working in the exact same position, nor did they take the same paths of schooling, research, or job experience to reach those positions. As I near the end of my undergraduate degree I find it incredibly comforting and exciting to know there are many paths that can lead me down a career in science, and that it's possible to find the niche in the field where I can best contribute. It was also reiterated throughout the series the importance of community; for building relationships, for learning from each other, and from discovering the routes we may want to pursue in science. Each speaker shared personal stories of past jobs or connections that were integral in helping them pursue their career aspirations, which has made me excited to reach out to more people that inspire me to learn about their own positions and experiences. Personally, my interests lie in science communication and combining research, social science, and conservation applications, so I found it incredibly valuable to hear about the methods our speakers implemented in science communication. Dr. Karlisa Callwood's talk was particularly inspiring, as she discussed the importance of social engagement and incorporating the needs, values, and concerns of local communities in management practices. The space she has created between science communication, social sciences, and research is something I hope to continue learning from as I move forward in my own career.

There were a few vital pieces of information from the series that particularly stood out to me. Firstly, Dr. Hennessey's insights into scientific communication through visual art included advice I felt could directly apply in my own work. She discussed exploring different processes and materials of creation to find those that best suit your own preferences. I have always enjoyed painting and drawing, but Dr. Hennessey's talk re-inspired me to get creative with the materials I use and explore new combinations and techniques when making pieces. This could be as simple as trying different layering techniques of watercolours and pencils. I found this advice really helpful and was able to apply this exploration during our course for the species id guide assignment. I enjoyed making observational drawings of the whelks I was studying and sharing them with my group. Moving forward in my career, I really hope to combine my passions in arts and sciences and will absolutely take this energy for exploration and observation with me as I embark on future projects and create new observational drawings.

Secondly, Emma Atkinson's talk included the advice to find value in practicing both field and computer-based skillsets. This really resonated with me, as someone with interdisciplinary interests it was nice to hear that it's a valuable endeavor to give time to different skills that can support your work in different ways. Through our class the last few weeks, I've been focusing on developing both fieldwork techniques through biodiversity data collection, and computer-based skills on R and Github. I have applied Emma's advice by opening up to learning more computer-based skills and gaining confidence in that aspect of my work. I feel that moving forward, continuing to develop these skills beyond this course will strengthen my understanding of data collection and analyses, and allow me to become a more well-rounded scientist. I also feel that

practicing both field and computer-based aspects will allow me to gain a more complete understanding of the work of my peers as well.

Finally, Dr. Karlisa Callwood discussed her work in the space between social sciences, research, and communications. One point that really stood out to me was the fact that as scientists working in management settings, there may be an inherent distrust of researchers in communities. She suggested ways to overcome this and build a positive relationship with communities included, helping to support the community through engagement, being sensitive to cultural contexts, and being mindful to practice ethical science. In the small scale of our course, in our own classroom, there exist different cultural backgrounds and this advice encourages us to be mindful of the contexts of comments or questions people bring to our group discussions. Understanding that everyone's perspective will be informed by their own background has helped me collaborate more compassionately in this course and has helped me learn from my classmates as well. In the context of my career moving forward I know it will be incredibly important to build community within the projects I work on, especially if I end up working in science communication of some kind. Bringing a willingness to share, build community, and a sensitivity to the context of my work can only help me gain an understanding of my place in a project and how I can best help the communities involved in the work I contribute to.