

# Yale Center for Biodiversity and Global Change

## Spring 2026 Newsletter

### Main News

#### Center work gets front-page feature in largest GIS periodical



The Center's ongoing work on the National Biodiversity Information System (NBIS) has recently been featured on the front page of the Spring 2026 edition of Esri's ArcNews periodical. The article explores the Center's work with Esri and government partners around the world to develop the NBIS as a scalable, geospatial solution for nationwide biodiversity monitoring and data management. We were excited to highlight our partnership with Guyana, in particular, a highly biodiverse country using the NBIS to support their recent bold commitments to biodiversity monitoring and protection.

We are grateful to the ArcNews team for the opportunity to share our NBIS work with the wider GIS community and honored to receive a front page slot!

[Read the online article](#)

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## Map of Life Data Featured in UNESCO Report



We're excited to share that the new UNESCO report on People and Nature in UNESCO-Designated Sites is now live and features Map of Life data! We worked with the UNESCO team to use Map of Life data and tools to generate expected species lists of terrestrial vertebrates, freshwater fish, trees, and butterflies for the more than 2,000 UNESCO-designated worldwide. Our joint analysis found that three-fourths of all known mammal, bird, and freshwater fish species and over one-half of all known amphibian and reptile species can be found in UNESCO-designated sites. These sites seem to be effectively safeguarding both the species and people living within, as the program intended!

Check out the full report and generate your own species lists with the Map of Life Regions tool!

[Read the full report](#)

[Explore Map of Life Regions](#)

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## New Country Partnership Formalized



In February, the Center's partnership team officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) formalizing our collaboration with the National Protected Areas Authority of Sierra Leone (NPAA). Through this agreement, the Center and the NPAA commit to working together to develop a national species observation and planning system for biodiversity conservation. The centerpoint of this collaboration will be the National Biodiversity Information System (highlighted in the Esri ArcNews article above!), applied to support conservation in Sierra Leone's Community Forests and Forest Reserves. We are incredibly excited to work with the NPAA and the rest of our partners in Sierra Leone.

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## Humboldt Extension to the Darwin Core Ratified



Following a multi-year, interdisciplinary effort initiated by the Center, the Humboldt Extension to the Darwin Core has been ratified and a paper detailing the effort and the new terms has been published in *Ecography*.

[Read the paper](#)

[Read an article about the effort](#)

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## Congratulations Dr. Shubhi Sharma and Dr. Richard Li!



We are thrilled to congratulate Dr. Shubhi Sharma and Dr. Richard Li for successfully defending their PhD dissertations this spring!

Shubhi joined the lab in 2020 and defended her dissertation *Mapping Global Biodiversity through Eco-Evolutionary Inference* on February 24th. Shubhi's outstanding thesis won her the 2025/26 John Spangler Prize for Best PhD thesis in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Yale! While in the lab, Shubhi's research has focused on developing statistical models to predict spatial distributions of species, particularly for species with insufficient data for traditional models. Shubhi was awarded the [Tayebati Postdoctoral Fellowship](#) at MIT and we wish her all the best as she moves into her next career phase!

Richard joined the lab in spring of 2019 as a research associate and started his PhD that fall. He defended his dissertation *Human dimensions of uncertainty and bias in global species occurrence data* on May 7th. While in the lab, Richard's research has focused on analyzing trends and patterns in species invasions, understanding niche dynamics of invasive species, and developing workflows to identify and provide correct taxonomic labels to species occurrence points in citizen science databases that are subject to taxonomic uncertainty.

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# BGC in the News

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## YALENEWS

### Wildlife is watching us, too — and changing their behavior in response

Featuring the recent Center-led paper in Science Magazine

[Read the Article](#)



## YALENEWS

### ‘Turning discovery into action’: Yale Planetary Solutions awards grants to 19 projects

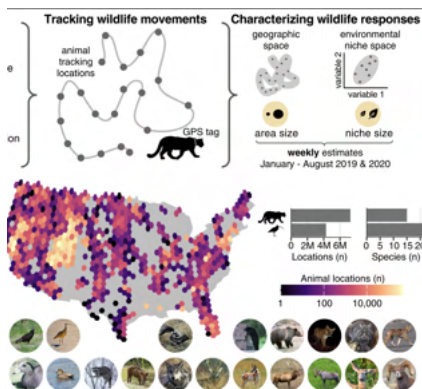
Featuring our recent Exploration Grant award from Yale Planetary Solutions.

[Read the Article](#)

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# Recent Publications

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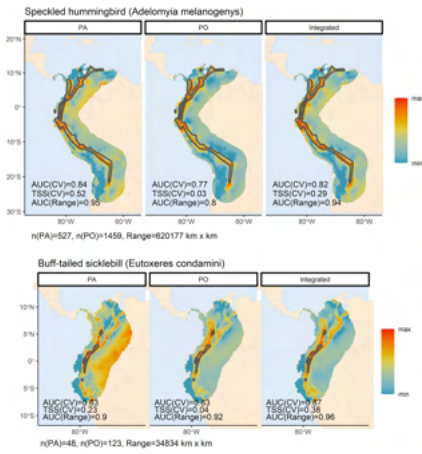


## Interacting effects of human presence and landscape modification on birds and mammals

*Science*

Oliver RY, Yanco SW, Ellis-Soto D, ... , Rutz C, & Jetz W.

[doi.org/10.1126/science.adq3396](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adq3396)



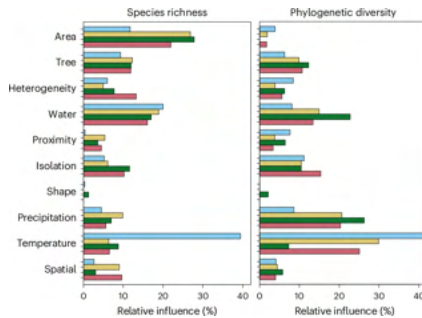
## Model-Based Data Integration Improves Species Distribution Models for Data-Deficient and Narrow-Ranged Hummingbird Species

*Diversity & Distributions*

Jussi Mäkinen, Jeremy Cohen, & Walter Jetz

[doi.org/10.1111/ddi.70157](https://doi.org/10.1111/ddi.70157)

Read an article about this paper on the BGC site!



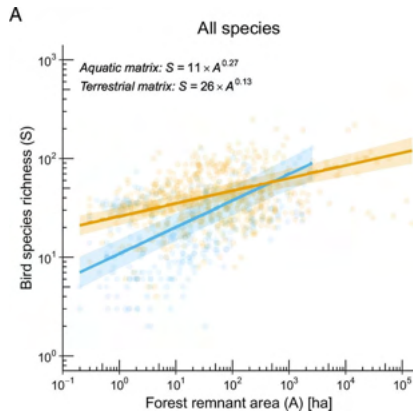
## Promoting avian diversity in cities requires multiple parks with variable features

*Nature Cities*

Frank A. La Sorte, Bertrand Fournier, Jeffrey A. G. Clark, Christopher A. Lepczyk & Myla F. J. Aronson

[doi.org/10.1038/s44284-025-00385-w](https://doi.org/10.1038/s44284-025-00385-w)

Read an article about this paper on the BGC site!



## High-quality surrounding landscapes mitigate avian extirpations from forest remnants

*PNAS*

Anderson S. Bueno, Chase D. Mendenhall, Marina Anciães, ... , & Carlos A. Peres

[doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2521783123](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2521783123)

Find all our recent publications on the [BGC website](https://www.bgc.org/).

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# Other News

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## Conferences and Meetings

### International Conservation Technology Conference

Dr. Meredith Palmer attended the 1st [International Conservation Technology Conference](#), hosted by WILDLABS in Lima, Peru, where she co-hosted a panel discussion on multimodal sensor data integration with Conservation X Labs, Conservation International, and Planet Labs and delivered a presentation on conservation technology capacity building initiatives.



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### Villars Summit

Walter attended the [2026 Villars Summit](#) in Switzerland, an event that brought together stakeholders in biodiversity and climate across sectors. He spoke on a panel about biodiversity and AI and gave final remarks during the Summit's closing panel. Walter also had the opportunity to speak with chief scientists from several global conservation organizations about global biodiversity monitoring and BGC center products.



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# Looking Ahead

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## **World Biodiversity Forum**

*June 14-19, 2026*

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The World Biodiversity Forum will be held this June in Davos, Switzerland. Several members of the BGC Center will be in attendance presenting posters and giving talks.



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Thank You For Reading!



<https://bgc.yale.edu>