

4. Project Title: Conservation and invasive species management: examining concepts, motivations and values across different contexts

Area: Philosophy

Project Supervisor: Dr. Emily Parke

Project Description

The researcher will participate in a larger project the supervisor is working on about the conceptual underpinnings of conservation science, and the motivations and values which drive invasive species management. In New Zealand, these issues arise notably in the context of Predator Free 2050, the ambitious effort to eradicate possums, rats and stoats from New Zealand in order to protect treasured native birds and the ecosystems they inhabit. This project will focus on how the concepts, motivations and values driving invasive species management differ between New Zealand and North America.

Researcher's Work

The primary focus of the researcher's work will be on examining the scientific, social, and philosophical aspects of one or two case studies in North America where invasive species have been (or are being) managed in the interest of protecting native species. The other aspect of the project will be thinking about these case studies in relation to work the supervisor has already done on Predator Free 2050. The researcher and the supervisor will work together in the initial phase to determine the details of the project, guided by the researcher's background and interests in this area. The researcher will (1) read journal articles, book chapters and online sources from philosophy, conservation biology and other disciplines; (2) identify and write summaries of key ideas from those readings; and (3) produce annotated bibliographies. The supervisor will provide initial reading lists; the researcher will also conduct independent research to identify and review further resources by searching online databases of published literature.

Required Skills/Pre-requisites

The researcher should have the potential to (1) conduct independent research using academic databases and other internet resources, (2) efficiently read journal articles and book chapters, and (3) provide clearly written short summaries of them. It would be ideal if the researcher has a major, minor or other coursework in Philosophy, but this is not required. It would also be ideal if the researcher has a major, minor or other coursework in a relevant scientific discipline (such as ecology or conservation biology), but this is not required.

This project is suitable for two students.