

Volume 29

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International Society for Environmental Ethics

NEWSLETTER 2022

Eric Godoy, Newsletter Editor
Corey Katz, Secretary



Advancing the field of environmental philosophy since 1990

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For further engagement with the society, the ISEE Listserv offers a chance to communicate news, information of interest, and announcements in the field of environmental ethics. Submissions to the list can be sent to ISEE-L@listserv1.coloradocollege.edu.

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Anyone wishing to join the list can do so by emailing the secretary at: enviroethics@hotmail.com.

To submit to future newsletters, please email the editor at: enviroethicsnews@gmail.com.

WELCOME

From the ISEE President

Marion Hourdequin

I'd like to start on a note of gratitude: I want to express my thanks to *everyone* who engaged with the International Society for Environmental Ethics this year. Our organization is sustained by our members, by those who participate in ISEE events, and by those who volunteer their time and energies to review abstracts, papers, and award nominations, organize meetings, plan webinars, put together this newsletter, manage our website, track budgets and expenses, and more.

We welcomed two new officers (Katie McShane, VP/President Elect, and Corey Katz, Secretary) and six governing board members in 2022 (Simon James, Kian Mintz-Woo, Markku Oksanen, Yasha Rohwer, Jennifer Welchman, and Anna Wienhues), and it's been a pleasure working with them. As a continuing member of the ISEE Nominating Committee, Danny Shahar deserves special thanks for taking the lead in organizing the ISEE elections for 2022 and 2023, and I'm grateful to our current newsletter editor, Eric Godoy, as well as to Corey Katz for serving as newsletter editor from 2020 to 2021. Simona Capisani continues to play an important role as ISEE's Mentoring Director. Many others have made important contributions to ISEE this past year, including all those who refereed articles for the ISEE Special Issue of Environmental Ethics;

panelists, keynote speakers, and session chairs at ISEE events; and our indefatigable lead organizers for the 2022 ISEE Annual Meeting on Seili Island, in Finland: Laura Puumala and Mikko Puumala. That meeting helped catalyze ongoing conversations and engagement among ISEE members in Europe and beyond.

In addition, our partnership with the journal *Environmental Ethics* has continued, with a fall 2022 special issue featuring work from ISEE events in 2021. We plan a 2023 special issue with contributions from those who presented papers at 2022 ISEE events.

In the year ahead, we will again host sessions at the three meetings of the American Philosophical Association and gather for the 20th ISEE Annual Meeting in Allenspark, Colorado from June 27-30, 2023. The call for papers for the annual meeting is open until mid-January. Please send proposals and share the call widely with others who may be interested!

ISEE's central goal is to develop and sustain welcoming and inclusive spaces for those working in environmental ethics and related areas. ISEE provides opportunities to connect, share ideas, refine work-in-progress, and build networks of support. When I attended an ISEE meeting for the first time many years ago, I found a supportive and thoughtful group of colleagues, eager to support those new to the field as well as more seasoned colleagues, and my goal is to ensure that ISEE offers similar experiences for others. Building

and maintaining an inclusive and supportive community requires ongoing work, and I'm grateful to all of you for your contributions to those efforts. I welcome your feedback on what ISEE is doing well and what we can do better, and I look forward to another exciting year ahead!

From the Editor

Eric Godoy

It is my pleasure to present the first ISEE Newsletter since I accepted the role of editor. I want to express my gratitude for the previous editor, now secretary, Corey Katz, for his patience and for making this transition far easier than it could have been. I recognize that the newsletter serves as an important record of our society: our events and successes. This issue contains news about our annual awards, member kudos, and a new virtual European network of ISEE. The Reflection Pond includes a contribution from a former ISEE president, Philip Cafaro.

I attended my first ISEE event at a Central APA meeting in Chicago 2014. It was my first encounter with a polar vortex – a memorable one for someone raised in Central Florida. The warm reception I received from the ISEE community was a stark contrast with the frigid morning air. I was a grad student and had just scheduled my dissertation defense. The experience presenting to other practicing environmental ethicists bolstered my confidence and improved my project. That's been my experience at every ISEE event since this first one. I'm thrilled to be serving the community today as the newsletter editor.

Please get in touch with any questions, comments, or submission ideas for the next issue. This is your newsletter. Although the editor position has changed, the contact email remains the same: enviroethicsnews@gmail.com.

A special thanks to Ben Hale for sharing his photos, credited where used below.



UPDATES AND REPORTS

Report on the 19th Annual ISEE Meeting

Laura Puumala and Mikko Puumala

This year's ISEE Summer Meeting was held on Seili island in Turku archipelago in Finland. Fitting the meeting venue perfectly, this year's theme was "Perspectives on Environment and Time." Seili, an island molded by the ice age, is still slowly rising from the sea recovering from the retrieved glaciers. It served first as a leper colony from the 17th century onwards and later as a mental institute especially for women until 1962. Now the island functions partly as a tourist destination and partly as a research center studying the effects of our modern times on the Baltic Sea.

Topics included intergenerational ethics, biodiversity, cultural rewilding, environmental conflicts, environmental ethics in the Anthropocene, ethics of outer space, population ethics and experiences of time in relation to nature. Keynotes were given by Professor Catriona McKinnon on blinding future generations and Finnish sci-fi author Emmi Itäranta on environmental imagination of the future. In total, there were 23 presentations, and over 30 conference participants from ten different nationalities. The crowd was joined

together through exceptionally hot Finnish summer days, laidback islander atmosphere, the northern nightless nights, and traditional Finnish pastimes like the sauna.

Local organizing team included Laura Puumala, Helena Siipi, Elisa Aaltola, and Mikko Puumala from the University of



Photo Credit: Ben Hale

Turku, and Kinga Ciereszko from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, as well as Olivia Mörck, an intern at the University of Turku's philosophy unit.

We want to thank ISEE for this amazing opportunity to host the annual summer meeting 2022 in Finland. We also want to thank all the participants, keynotes, organizers, ISEE officers, philosophy unit, and the local staff in Seili island for creating together a wonderful, warm, and friendly conference experience.

ISEE AWARDS

The International Society for Environmental Ethics recognizes scholars in the field annually through various awards. Nominations for these awards are solicited through the ISEE website and listserv.

THE VICTORIA DAVION AWARD FOR INTERSECTIONALITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

To help build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive field of environmental ethics, ISEE seeks to highlight intersectional scholarship in environmental philosophy. This includes, but is not limited to, work that examines linkages between environmental philosophy, feminist and gender studies, critical race theory, Indigenous studies, and disability studies. ISEE aims to support research, teaching, and service that extend the scope of environmental ethics to incorporate perspectives and methods that have been historically marginalized or excluded from environmental philosophy as a discipline, and that address questions of epistemic justice, such as the devaluation of certain forms of knowledge within academic environmental philosophy, barriers to, and opportunities for, developing more inclusive perspectives, and approaches to respectfully collaborating across perspectives and traditions. We seek to honor and advance work that brings different threads of philosophy and environmental thought together.

Awarded to: Dr. Nancy Tuana

This year's Victoria Davion Award for Intersectionality was given to Dr. Nancy Tuana, DuPont/Class of 1949 Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies at Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Tuana has decades of experience engaging key questions at the intersection of environmental and social justice, collaborating across disciplines, and stretching disciplinary boundaries to include perspectives previously excluded or marginalized. Dr. Tuana has done especially important work on coupled epistemic and ethical issues in climate science and climate policy, highlighting critical issues of gender, racial, and socioeconomic justice. Her new book, *Racial Climates, Ecological Indifference: An Ecointersectional Analysis*, is forthcoming with Oxford University Press.

More information about Dr. Tuana, including links to her work, is available on the [ISEE Blog](#).



THE ANDREW LIGHT AWARD FOR PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY

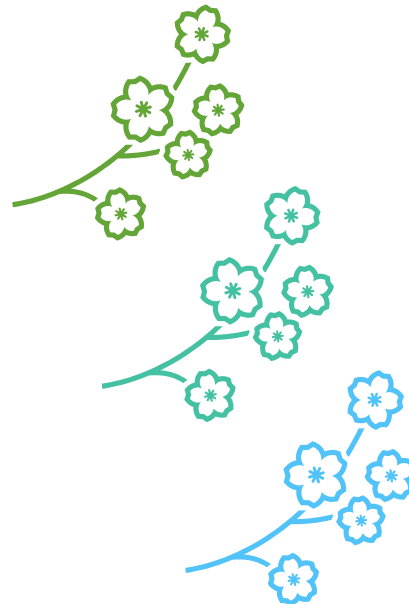
The International Society for Environmental Ethics established an award to promote work in public philosophy and honor contributions to the field by Dr. Andrew Light, who received the inaugural award in his name at our 2017 annual summer meeting. The Light Award recognizes public philosophers working in environmental ethics and philosophy, broadly construed, those who are working to bring unique insights or methods to broaden the reach, interaction, and engagement of public philosophy with the wider public. This may be exemplified in published work or engagement in environmental issues of public importance.



Awarded to: Dr. Kian Mintz-Woo

This year's Light Award winner is Dr. Mintz-Woo, an early career scholar who has demonstrated a sustained commitment to publicly engaged philosophy through public-facing work on climate change, including in the [Climate Footnotes blog](#), a climate-focused art exhibition – [Exhibition CliMatters](#) – in Austria, and a [feature story](#) in the *Irish Examiner* co-authored with Dr. Simona Capisani on talking with children about climate change.

Dr. Mintz-Woo is a permanent lecturer at the Department of Philosophy at University College Cork (Ireland). He is also affiliated with their Environmental Research Institute and with the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis. You can read more about his work [here](#).



ISEE AT THE APA

Please check the ISEE website and Listserv for information on submitting to the ISEE group sessions at annual American Association of Philosophy meetings. Typically, submission for Eastern are due in mid-July, submissions for Central are due in mid-September, and submissions for Pacific are due in early October.

APA EASTERN: BALTIMORE, MD (WITH VIRTUAL COMPONENTS)

January 2022

Session 1

Chair: Levi Tenen (Kettering University)

Pedro Brea (University of North Texas)
“Towards More Fluid Waters”

Simona Mila Capisani (Princeton University)
“The Right to Livability in a Shifting Human Climate Niche”

Piers Stephens (University of Georgia)
“For a More Radical Environmental Pragmatism: Reconstructing William James on Nature, Value, Valuing and Values”

Victoria DePalma (Coastal Carolina University)
“Understanding Ethics as a Climate Change Communication Tool: A U.S. Survey”

Session 2

Chair: Simona Mila Capisani (Princeton University)

Zachary Vereb (University of Mississippi)
“Which Humboldt? Philosophical Views of Nature for Today”

Patrick Sewell (Tompkins Cortland Community College)
“A New Grounding for Animals and Ethics: The Question of Strong Eusociality and Moral Obligation towards Insects”

Levi Tenen (Kettering University)
“A New Threat to Wilderness—SpaceX’s Starlink”

APA CENTRAL: CHICAGO, IL

February 2022

Session 1: Climate Change

Chair: Espen Dyrnes Stabell (Norwegian University of Science and Technology)

Kathrin Van Allmen (University of Zurich)
“Justifying the Responsibility to Reduce Personal Emissions: An Extension of the Argument of Integrity”

Leonard Kahn (Loyola University New Orleans and the United States Naval Academy)
“Ad Bellum Proportionality, Environmental Damage, and Climate Change”

Beba Cibralic (Georgetown University)
“Rethinking Responsibility for Climate Refugees”

Michael Ball-Blakely (University of Washington)
“Climate Change and Green Nationalism”



Photo credit: Ben Hale

Session 2: Environmental Ethics

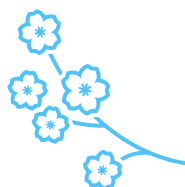
Chair: Khang Tôn (University of California, Davis)

Yunjie Zhang (University of Glasgow) “Is Convergence Between Anthropocentrism and Non-Anthropocentrism that Important? Against Brian Norton’s Hypothesis”

Danny Marrero (Salem State University) “Right Attributions to Rivers: A Latin American Response to the Violence and Injustice Against Ethnic Communities and Future Generations”

Lel Jones (University of California, Davis) “Scanlon and Environmental Blame: Learning from Indigenous Land Ethics”

Farrow Ulven (University of Iowa) “Valuing Biodiversity: Affirming a Metaethics of Life”



**APA PACIFIC: VANCOUVER,
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

April 2022

Session 1

Chair: Marion Hourdequin (Colorado College)

Alina Ahmed (University of Georgia) “Colonial Conservation: A Consequence of Epistemic Injustice and Credibility Excess”

Roberta L. Millstein (University of California, Davis) “Rethinking Leopold’s Argument in Support of the Land Ethic”

Session 2

Joel MacClellan (Loyola University New Orleans) “Axiological Extensionism Defended”

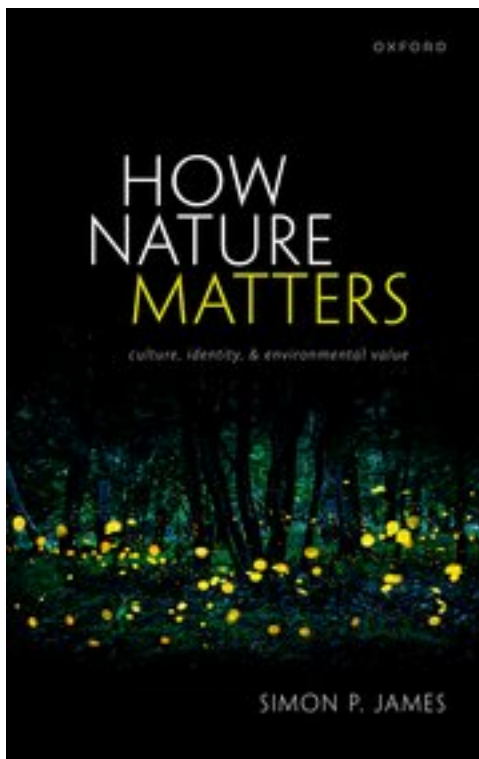
Rachel Bryant (University of Toronto) “Ethical Foundation for Compassionate Conservation”

Nicolas Delon (New College of Florida) “Sports and Games as Model of Interspecies Justice”

NEWS

New Publications

Simon James (Durham University) has published a new book titled *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value*, released by Oxford University Press. In the book, James argues that nature’s value is rooted in a part-whole relationship. This account includes 12 case studies which help explain how nature is valuable, for instance, as part of cultural traditions or identities.



The Harvard Review of Philosophy (Vol 19, Nov. 2022) has published a special issue devoted to “Philosophy and the Environment.” The journal annually interviews philosophers they recognize as influential in contemporary philosophy. This year

they interviewed Holmes Rolston III, J. Baird Callicott and Peter Singer. Contributors also include, ISEE President Marion Hourdequin (Colorado College), Bryan Norton (Georgia Institute of Technology) and Simon James (Durham University). Here is the full content list:

1. Nathan Beaucage, Polina Whitehouse, “Editors’ Introduction”
2. Bryan G. Norton, “Environmental Philosophy at the Edges of Science”
3. Michael Marder, “Is a Philosophy of Nature Still Tenable?”
4. Elisa Aaltola, “Platonic Love of Non-human Nature and Animals”
5. Simon P. James, “Against Relational Value”
6. Serenella Iovino, “Politics and Ecology among Calvino’s Trees: An Exercise in Narrative Scholarship and the Environmental Humanities”
7. Marion Hourdequin, “Intergenerational Ethics, Moral Ambivalence, and Climate Change”
8. Daniel M. Haybron, “In Lieu of an Environmental Ethic: Beauty, Good Lives, and the Preservation of Nature”
9. Nathan Beaucage, Noemi Iten, “An Interview with J. Baird Callicott”
10. Sam Lebson, Justin Wong, “An Interview with Holmes Rolston III”
11. Noemi Iten, Sam Libenson, “An Interview with Peter Singer”

Online Event Series: ISEE European Network Sessions

Linde De Vroey and Talia Shoval

ISEE is looking to expand its involvement beyond the US via online research meetings. As such, we are approaching members who are based in the EU, UK or elsewhere and may be interested in taking part in a new ISEE European Network. This proposal came up in the Business Meeting at the last ISEE Annual Summer Meeting in Turku, Finland. All members at any stage of their academic career are welcome to join the Network.

As part of the Network, we will hold periodic online sessions which will include the following activities:

- **Research:** pre-read sessions aimed at providing members with the opportunity to present and discuss work-in-progress in an informal and supportive environment.
- **Reading Group:** pre-read discussion sessions on recent works in environmental ethics (we may decide on the readings democratically via an e-poll).
- **Community-Building:** the last 15-20 minutes of each session will be dedicated to socializing, networking,

connecting with fellow scholars, sharing experiences, and exchanging knowledge.

The sessions will be held online every other month on Tuesday afternoons between 2pm-3:30pm CET.

The first session was held on Tuesday, November 8th at 2pm-3:30pm CET. The following sessions will be held January 10th, March 3rd, and May 5th - further details will be provided soon.

For those interested in joining the mailing list and receiving updates regarding the Network, please email Linde (lindedevroey@gmail.com) or Talia (Talia.Shoval@ed.ac.uk). We kindly ask members who wish to present their work in progress to send us a paper title and short abstract.

In Memory

Herman Daly (Professor Emeritus University of Maryland), passed away this October. Daly was an important critic of mainstream economics, advocating for limited growth and other important concepts in ecological economics. Member Phil Cafaro wrote a [blog post](#) about his work. It includes links to similar pieces written by some of Daly's colleagues.

THE REFLECTION POND



Ethics in the New Living Planet Report

Philip Cafaro

Earth continues to hemorrhage biodiversity, according to World Wildlife Fund’s latest *Living Planet Report*. Since 1970, for the 32,000 populations of 5,200 vertebrate species they surveyed, average numbers have declined 69%. If these populations are representative (and there is no obvious reason to doubt they are), that means that for every 10 wild birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish on Earth in 1970, only 3 exist today. It is an almost unimaginable loss for such a short period of time.

Of course, the decline in wild vertebrate numbers has also been an immense gain—for people. We have replaced them with us and our economic support systems. While wild vertebrates have declined 69% since 1970, people have increased our numbers by 116%: from 3.7 billion to 8 billion. And we are living

much more luxuriously, on average. As the new *Living Planet Report* puts it:

Over the last 50 years, the human population has doubled, the global economy has grown nearly fourfold and global trade has grown tenfold, together dramatically increasing the demand for energy and materials. Economic incentives have generally favoured expanding economic activity, often with environmental harm, rather than conservation or restoration. (p. 64)

Obviously, to preserve what biodiversity remains and create the “nature positive” societies called for in the report, we would need to scale back human numbers and economic demands. We would have to decrease the size of human economies and increase the percentage of Earth’s lands and seas in protected areas—the former making the latter possible. People would have to accept limits to growth.

Here, though, we reach a different kind of limit: the limited ability of big environmental organizations dependent on foundation funding to question conventional economic thinking. WWF nibbles a bit around the edges of the problem; for example, a section titled “What do we need from economics for transformative change?” advocates “a thorough social cost-benefit analysis” for new infrastructure projects and reducing subsidies for activities that harm biodiversity (p. 87). But it can’t come out and advocate for

reducing the size of a bloated human economy that is sucking the life out of the earth.

*

This inability to discuss limits to growth leads, inevitably, to the report’s anthropocentric ethics. The report expresses the vague hope that greater attention to “values and norms” will help societies address the fundamental causes of biodiversity loss and somehow tame the economic juggernaut causing all the damage. Unfortunately, the report’s authors aren’t able to clearly state any norms for how people should treat wild nature.

this year by the United Nations General Assembly (pp. 60-62). The report simply assumes such a right will benefit biodiversity. “Although not legally binding,” it states, “the UN resolution is expected to accelerate action to address the global environmental crisis, just as UN resolutions on the right to water in 2010 turbocharged progress in delivering safe water to millions of people” (p. 62). Of course, providing safe drinking water to people is important. But our success in doing so for billions more people is directly related to the 83% decline in freshwater vertebrate populations since 1970 lamented in the report. Rights, essentially, are legitimate

Bottom line: if we cannot talk about limits, we cannot think clearly and honestly about the ethical issues with which massive biodiversity loss confronts us.

Nowhere does the report say: “it is wrong to extinguish other species. People should not do it, even when it is profitable.” Nowhere does the report suggest that dividing habitat and resources fairly between people and other species is a matter of justice or recommend norms for doing so. Nowhere does it state that other species have a right to continued existence, free from untimely anthropogenic extinction.

The problem is that advocating such moral principles would commit the authors to limits to growth, which they are unwilling to do. Instead, they emphasize greater attention to *human* rights, particularly the right to “a clean, healthy and sustainable environment,” as proclaimed

claims on limited resources. Limiting these rights to human beings means treating other species as mere means to our ends, to be displaced at our convenience. So the report talks a lot about what biodiversity losses will cost people, but finds it hard to talk about people taking less in order to leave room for other species. Such a framework makes it impossible to acknowledge the zero-sum reality of life on Earth, where organisms compete for limited resources—people very much included.

Bottom line: if we cannot talk about limits, we cannot think clearly and honestly about the ethical issues with which massive biodiversity loss confronts us. In

particular, we cannot ask whether it is unjust to crowd out other species to accommodate more of us and our ever-increasing economic demands.

*

On the back of [Living Planet Report 2022](#), we find the WWF mission statement:

Our Mission is to Stop the Degradation of the Planet's Natural Environment and to Build a Future in which People Live in Harmony with Nature.

Harmony with nature is a noble idea. The UN's Biodiversity Convention also speaks of such harmony as its ultimate goal. But harmony does not exist if *my* note is deafeningly loud while *yours* is barely audible. Harmony does not exist if I increase my

group, the baritones, a million-fold, while we exterminate the basses and the altos, put a few sopranos in cages and a few more on small reservations, and then ask everyone to sing a happy song.

There is no harmony when it is all about us. Ask the baiji dolphin, the nearsighted, echolocating cetacean who lived well for countless millennia in the Yangtze River, driven extinct by the cacophony of too many people.

Phil Cafaro is Professor of Philosophy at Colorado State University and former ISEE President.



Qiqi, the last confirmed baiji (Lipotes vexillifer), who died in 2002. (Photo credit: Roland Seitre, [Institute of Hydrobiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences](#), 30 October 30, 2020. From [Wikimedia Commons](#) and distributed under a [CC by SA 3.0](#))