

Call for Papers - AAG 2023: Avian Anthropocenes

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AAG Annual Meeting, Denver, 23-27 March 2023

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Session organisers: Jonny Turnbull (University of Cambridge) and Charlotte Wrigley (University of Stavanger)

Bird populations around the world are in steep decline; habitat loss and overexploitation threaten many species with extinction. Yet birds have long fascinated humans, and are immensely important to different cultures around the world. For Indigenous Peoples, certain species are often central to their cosmological understanding of the world, integral to the preservation of languages and cultures at risk of extinction. Birds also saturate more secular pastimes, evidenced by the historical practices of falconry, aviaries, and the current popularity of bird watching, and also appear as cultural icons such as Newcastle United's mascot Monty Magpie or the muppet Big Bird. Rapid urbanisation and human population growth since the industrial revolution has meant that many birds now live in close proximity to humans, often depending on anthropogenic activity for survival. Equally, many humans depend on birds for food, finance, companionship, or entertainment. Yet bird-human relations in the Anthropocene can be fraught. Birds are disease vectors for global pandemics like avian influenza, and their carcasses have become an emblematic geologic layer of the Anthropocene. While some birds are hit by planes, others rely on roadkill for food. Some birds are active targets of nature recovery, while others are unwelcomed as 'invasive aliens'. Birds become sentinels for disease outbreaks, are deployed as surveillance infrastructure in the high seas, and their intimate avian lives are livestreamed 24/7 into living rooms around the world.

Avian Anthropocenes looks to unpack these diverse relations and aims to understand the intimate, yet messy connections between the planet's top geologic agents and their feathered 'friends'. We are particularly interested in gathering papers that examine bird-human relations at the interface of nature, culture, and technology. While not a limited set of concerns, papers could answer or speak to the following questions and themes:

- Bird-human relations throughout history
- Sacred birds, and birds in Indigenous cosmologies
- Birds in the Anthropocene, avian extinction and resurrection
- Birds as users of human infrastructures and technologies
- Birds as infrastructure
- Birds as lively capital, commodities, and birds' materialities
- Conservation technologies such as 'nestcams', camera traps, and geotags
- Gender, race, and birding
- Birds as pests, bird control strategies
- Birds on social media, digital birding, and digital birds
- Birds as carriers of zoonotic diseases, including avian influenza
- The relation between wild birds and domestic birds

- Birds sharing spaces with humans: in the sky, in the garden, in the built environment
- Birds in popular culture and representations in media

We welcome submissions from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and encourage creative and experimental approaches to presenting research or art practice. We are interested especially in research that centres birds themselves alongside the cultures in which they are situated. Please indicate whether you would prefer in-person or virtual attendance, and send abstracts of no more than 250 words to jonnyjt@hotmail.co.uk and charlotte.a.wrigley@uis.no by the **31st October**.