

A Race against Extinction



Terrie Williams

Distinguished Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

CURRENT RESEARCH

Understanding the needs of each species to implement solutions

When wolves were reintroduced to the Yellowstone National Park, after a 70 year absence, their presence triggered a trophic cascade that regenerated vegetation, restored other animal populations, and reestablished the behavior of rivers. Carnivores like these play a critical role in holding the ecosystem together, as they determine the growth of plants, prevent the spread of diseases, and maintain our coastlines, forests, and oceans. However, according to International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Wildlife Fund, animal populations, and especially carnivores, worldwide have decreased by 50% in the last 40 years. 25% of all mammals are now endangered; more than half of all mammal populations are in decline. We are, undoubtedly, in a "Race against Extinction." Dr. Terrie Williams, Distinguished Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, partners with zoos and aquariums to address this overwhelming problem by understanding the "biological Achilles heel" of endangered species to predict and expand their capacity to survive. "In my academic lifetime, we have lost river dolphins, rhinos, a species of lion and tiger, and many more," she remarks; "we are literally in the race of our lives. Ultimately, it is the race against animal extinction that will determine the fate of humans."

In a world that is preoccupied with the nano, micro, and mini, Dr. Williams' lab explores the mega and macro biology of BIG. The animals her team studies are some of the largest and at times the fiercest on Earth: the elephants, bears, lions, seals, dolphins and whales. To examine them, Dr. Williams has created the only laboratory in the country with live marine...

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AFFILIATION



University of California, Santa Cruz

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Environmental and Exercise Physiology 1981, Rutgers University

AWARDS

- AAAS/Subaru Science Book and Film Prize (Winner- Young Adult Science Books 2013)
- The Laurence Irving- Per Scholander Memorial Lecturer in Comparative Physiology, 2009
- Wings WorldQuest, Ocean Explorer Award, 2006
- USGS Antarctic Site Designation, Terrie Bluff on Ross Island, Antarctica, 2006
- Discover Magazine 50 Most Important Women in Science, 2002

RESEARCH AREAS

Environment, Ecology, Oceanic, Oceanic

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support the continued research of Dr. Terrie Williams and her team at the University of California, Santa Cruz as they partner with collaborators to win the race against extinction. Donations will help fund the required \$250K/year for any particular wild animal project, supporting personnel, research facilities, fieldwork and expeditions, and facilitating technologies to identify species' needs. Saving species is a team effort; partner with Dr. Williams' team to save our animals and ultimately humankind.