



Long-term Monitoring of a Long-Lived Social Animal in an Arid Environment Yields Some Surprising Results: Lessons Learned From the African Elephant in Namibia

Thursday, Feb 4th
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm ET

Caitlin O'Connell



African elephants live within matriarchal societies, where females live together for life and coming-of-age males leave their natal families to join all-male groups. In the scrub desert of Etosha National Park, Namibia, elephant social behavior and habitat use are influenced by social context, resource abundance, and environmental fluctuations. Data will be presented on factors influencing the stability of dominance hierarchies, the importance of social networks, character stability, long distance communication and movements in the context of both wet and dry years. Ongoing studies on relatedness and climate change will also be discussed.

[Dr. Caitlin O'Connell](#) is an award-winning author and photographer who has been studying elephants in the wild for the last thirty years. After completing her Ph.D. in ecology at the University of California, Davis, she worked as an adjunct professor at Stanford University, and is currently on the faculty at the *Eaton Peabody Lab* at Harvard Medical School studying elephant low-frequency hearing, and is a faculty associate at HUCE, while also overseeing a non-profit foundation ([Utopia Scientific](#)) promoting the importance of science and conservation. Dr. O'Connell co-developed the award-winning Smithsonian documentary, *Elephant King* about her research. She has also authored eight popular books about elephants, and just released her most recent work: [Wild Rituals](#), a look at how other animal traditions, cultures, and communities from around the world are similar to our own.

Hosted by the [Soft Math Lab](#).

Contact: Irina Tolkova

Email: itolkova@g.harvard.edu

To attend, [join Zoom link here](#).
password: "elephant"