

Dr. Shannon Switzer Swanson

POSITION: 3 Years, Assistant Professor, Environmental Studies, CSU San Marcos

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Environment & Resources, Stanford University
June 2022

Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment & Resources
School of Earth, Energy & Environmental Sciences, Stanford, CA

PhD Thesis - *Learning with Fishing Families: How worldviews and lived experience shape fisher livelihoods and marine conservation*

Small-scale fisheries provide livelihoods for over 100 million people worldwide—more than all other ocean sectors combined. At the same time, governing institutions often target those involved in small-scale fisheries for marine conservation efforts, which can lead to conflict. This is especially true in the context of the “Coral Triangle,” a part of the planet cited as being the most marine biodiverse and where my research takes place in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. Across four chapters, my dissertation examines the worldviews and lived experiences of small-scale fishers to show how a changing perception of time influences fishing practices, that the global aquarium trade contributes substantially to resilient fisher livelihoods, and that destructive practices such as blast and poison fishing have a constructive, relational side, which, in part, sustains their use. In sum, this work provides empirical evidence of how fisher ontology (ways of being) and epistemology (ways of knowing) influence marine resource use, which can inform more effective and just marine conservation efforts.

Master of Coastal Environmental Management, Duke University
May 2015

Nicholas School of the Environment, Durham, NC
Advisors: Dr. Xavier Basurto and Dr. Lisa Campbell
Certificates: Community Based Environmental Management; International Development Policy

Master's Thesis – *Taking Stock: Community perception of a mangrove restoration and alternative livelihood program in the Verde Island Passage, Philippines*

Community-based management has a long history in the Philippines, especially when it comes to marine resources. This history is true in the Verde Island Passage (VIP), in the northern Philippines, which is often dubbed the “center of the center” of the world's marine biodiversity. This case study looked at community perception of a mangrove protected area located in the VIP, in the small barangay (village) of Silonay, within

the province of Oriental Mindoro. Using the Community Voice Method (CVM), the research revealed that the community's perception of the current state of Conservation International's mangrove restoration and alternative livelihood program established several years earlier was mostly positive, with the most benefits being attributed to the protection offered by the mangroves from storms, and the least benefits being attributed to increased fish catch. This study represents the first time CVM has been implemented specifically as a program evaluation tool.

B.S. Biological Sciences; B.A. Environmental Studies

University of California, Santa Barbara

June 2005

With High Honors from the College of Letters & Science, Goleta, CA

INSTRUCTION AT CSUSM

Term	Year	Course #	# of Students	Other info
Spring	2025	ENVS 310	45	New Prep
Spring	2025	ENVS 350	46	NA
Spring	2025	ENVS 490	18	NA
Fall	2024	Parental	Leave	NA
Spring	2024	ENVS 310	40	NA
Spring	2024	ENVS 350	38	New Prep
Spring	2024	ENVS 490	26	NA
Fall	2023	ENVS 310	25	NA
Fall	2023	ENVS 490	18	NA
Spring	2023	ENVS 310	28	NA
Spring	2023	ENVS 490	29	New Prep
Fall	2022	ENVS 310	21	New Prep
Fall	2022	ENVS 490	21	New Prep

OTHER TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Independent Study Supervision, ENVS 498C, 2 students

Fall 2023, Spring 2024

Thesis Committee PhD Student, University of British Columbia, 1 student

Fall 2023–Present

Guest Lectures

Global 112 Ocean Imaginaries, Stanford, 3 classes

Spring 2025

Blue Foods for Indonesia Action Lab, Stanford

Spring 2024

ENVS 210: Environmental Research Methods, CSUSM

Spring 2023

Freediving with Aquarium Fishers, Marin Country Day School

Spring 2023

PH 501: Introduction to Public Health, CSUSM

Fall 2022

Invited Speaking Engagements

“Conserving Earth’s Biodiversity and Culture”

Duke Nature Panel for Duke Centennial, Duke University

Apr. 27, 2024

“Alumnae Making Waves: Leaders in Marine Conservation”

Climate Action Panel for Duke Women’s Weekend, Duke University

Mar. 3, 2023

RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP

Refereed Publications

Journals

Swanson, S.S., Gutierrez, E. T. Souza, A.M. Moore, S. Ndobe, J. Jompa, L.B. Crowder (2024). Catching Dory: Aquarium Fish Sales Diversify Coastal Livelihoods in Indonesia.

Ferguson, C.E., Green, K.M., **Swanson, S.S.** (equal authorship) (2022). Indigenous food sovereignty constrained by “time imperialism.” *Geoforum*, 123, 20-31.

Swanson, S.S. & Ardoin, N.M. (2021). Communities Behind the Lens: A review and critical analysis of Visual Participatory Methods in biodiversity conservation. *Biological Conservation*, 262, 109293.

Green, K.M., Selgrath, J.C., Frawley, T.H., Oestreich, W.K., Mansfield, E.J., Urteaga, J., **Swanson, S.S.**, Santana, F.N., Green, S.J., Naggea, J., Crowder, L.B. (2021). How adaptive capacity shapes the Adapt, React, Cope Response to climate impacts: insights from small-scale fisheries. *Climactic Change*, 164 (1), 1-22.

Finkbeiner, E. M., Bennett, N. J., Frawley, T. H., Mason, J. G., Briscoe, D. K., Brooks, C. M., Ng, C.A., Ourens, R., Seto, K., **Swanson, S.S.**, Urteaga, J., Crowder, L.B. (2017). Reconstructing Overfishing: Moving beyond Malthus for effective and equitable solutions. *Fish and Fisheries*, (January), 1–12.

Book Chapters

Pauwelussen, A. & **Swanson, S.S.** (2022). Good Human-Turtle Relationships in

Indonesia:

Exploring Intersecting Legalities in Sea Turtle Conservation. In I. Braverman (Ed.) *Blue Legalities: The life and laws of the Sea*. Routledge.

Oestrich, W.K., Frawley, T.H., Mansfield, E.J., Green, K.M, Green, S.J. Naggea, J., Selgrath, J.C., **Swanson, S.S.**, Urteaga, J., White, T.D., Crowder, L.B. (2019). The impact of environmental change on small-scale fishing communities: moving beyond adaptive capacity to community response. In *Predicting Future Oceans* (pp. 271-282). Elsevier.

Swanson, S.S. (2018). The Married Life (as a marine tourism researcher). In B.A. Porter & H. Schänzel (Eds.), *Femininities in the Field: Tourism and Transdisciplinary Research* (pp. 39-54). Bristol, UK: Channel View Publications.

Non-Refereed Publications

Journals

Swanson, S.S., Moore, A.M., Ndobe, S., Jompa, J. (2021). Yellow coral goby (*Gobiodon okinawae*) trade in Banggai Laut District, Indonesia. *Aquaculture, Aquarium, Conservation & Legislation Bioflux*, 14 (1), 259-273.

Grants

External

Benefits and Barriers: Understanding Social Dimensions of Ocean Access and Marine

Protected Areas Across California's Coastal Counties

June 2025 California Ocean Protection Council \$750,000; Subaward \$28,531

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jennifer Selgrath

Conference and Workshop Presentations

Swanson, S.S. "Destruction and Reconstruction in the Coral Triangle," MARE Conference, Stream 4 Epistemological diversity: Who's knowledge counts? Amsterdam, Netherlands, June 27, 2025.

Swanson, S.S. and Green, K. "Using Visual Participatory Methods to Decolonize Your Conservation Research," American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, Honolulu Hawaii, April 18, 2024.

Swanson, S.S. "Durability and Extinction: Exploring links between time and marine resource use in Sulawesi," CSUSM Committee for International Research Symposium, November 15-16, 2022.

Swanson, S.S. "Catching Dory: Selling aquarium fish supports coastal livelihoods in Indonesia." CSU Council on Ocean Affairs, Science & Technology (COAST) Annual Meeting, October 28, 2022.

Swanson, S.S. “Good Human-Turtle Relationships in Indonesia: Exploring Intersecting Legalities in Sea Turtle Conservation,” P021-Navigating Power in Ocean Conservation, Royal Anthropological Institute: Anthropology and Conservation Virtual Conference, October 25-29, 2021.

Swanson, S.S. “Communities Behind the Lens: A review of visual participatory methods in biodiversity conservation,” Community-Based Conservation, Ecosystem Services & Economics Session, North American Congress for Conservation Biology: Crossing Boundaries, Virtual, July 27-31, 2020.

Swanson, S.S. “Reimagining Destructive Fishing,” On Coral Ethnographic Research: Thinking Concepts, Inheritance, & Speculative Gestures Panel, American Anthropological Association Joint Annual Meeting with the Canadian Anthropology Society: Changing Climates, Vancouver, Canada, Nov 20-24, 2019.

Manuscripts Reviewed

2025. Lin, B. The online marine aquarium finfish trade in the United States. *Conservation Biology*.

2024. Munguti, J. M., Mboya, J. B., Iteba, J. O., Kirimi, J. G., Obiero, K. O., Kyule, D. N., ... & Njonge, F. K. (2024). Status and prospects of the ornamental fish industry in Kenya. *Aquaculture, Fish and Fisheries*, 4(3), e172.

2024. Working towards representation, diversity, and capacity building in conservation: using photovoice to explore justice-driven conservation. *Community, Psychology and Climate Justice*. Springer.

Work In Progress

Swanson, S. S. (In Prep) Durability and Extinction: Exploring links between time and marine resource use in Sulawesi.

Swanson, S.S. & Pauwelussen, A. (In Prep) Relations of Blast and Poison Fishing: Destruction and Reconstruction in the Coral Triangle

Kadir, N.N., Yaqin, K., Priosambodo, D., La Nafie, Y.A., Jamal, M., Istnaeni, Z.D., Moore, A.M., **Swanson, S.S.** (In Prep) Balancing Coastal Livelihoods and Seagrass Conservation: Insights from Gender-Specific Gleaning Patterns.

SERVICE

Department

**Environmental Stewardship Association – Faculty Co-Director
2022-Present**

Support students in conducting beach clean-ups, pollinator garden workdays,

Cougar Thrifts, and other student-led events. Provide guidance on executive leadership structure and functioning. Liaise between ESA leadership and Dept of ENVIS & GEOG faculty.

College

Faculty Development Committee – Member 2023-2025

Reviewed and gave feedback on 4 new and 2 revised RTP Department documents as well as the CHABSS RTP document. Allocated Rocha funds for 2 Arts & Lectures Events.

University

Academic Senate – Senator 2025-Present

Attended and voted in first senate meeting.

CSU Coast Program – Mentor Summer 2025

Mentored 5 CSU students through the CSU COAST Program as they assisted our *Coastal Access in California* research project, administering surveys across the state, completing StoryMaps about our research, and cleaning, entering, managing, and analyzing data.

Professional Membership & Service

Member - Aquatic Macrofaunal Biodiversity and Conservation Research Group, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia 2024-Present

HONORS & AWARDS

Stanford Centennial Teaching Assistant Award 2020

Recognizes outstanding TAs for their service and dedication in providing excellent instruction

Stanford Earth Certificate of Achievement in Mentoring 2020

Nominated by peers and selected by the School of Earth, Energy & Environmental Sciences

National Geographic Adventurer of the Year 2017

Awarded annually to ten people pushing the limits in their respective fields

International Congress of Marine Tourism Student Travel Award \$800 2015

Award covering registration, travel, room and board to present at conference

Nicholas School Commencement Student Speaker

2015

Nominated by students, faculty, and staff to speak at school-wide commencement ceremony

Surfer Magazine Agent of Change

2014

Named one of *Surfer Magazine*'s surfers who is working to protect the world's oceans

News & Documentary Emmy

2012

Appeared in Emmy-winning Nat Geo Promotional Campaign, which aired on NG Channel

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Freelance Conservation Photojournalist & T.V. Host

2006-Present

- Researched and co-hosted a National Geographic documentary, *The Last Drop*, on water conservation in the U.S. Southwest aired on the Nat Geo Channel March 2021
- Published images and writing in National Geographic media outlets, including *Nat Geo Adventure*, *Ocean Education*, and *Traveler Magazine*. Also published in *Hakai Magazine*, *Anthroposphere*, *Santa Barbara Independent*, *Surfer Magazine*, and Patagonia Books
- Conducted research and interviews to write stories on topics ranging from floating ocean robots that sense climate data, to watershed management, to safe and respectful travel in remote areas