

Together for Wildlife

Together for Wildlife HCTF Conservation Fellowship Recipient 2023



Alexia Constantinou

Alexia is a Ph.D. student at the University of Victoria working under the supervision of Dr. Jason Fisher, sponsored by Dr. Joanna Bugar at the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship. She graduated from the University of British Columbia with her BSc in Forest Sciences and MSc in Forestry in the Wildlife Coexistence Lab led by Dr. Cole Burton and co-supervised by Dr. Suzanne Simard. Her research focuses on British Columbia's southern interior fisher population, its decline, and ways to improve fisher habitat by working with First Nations, fire, and industry.

Fisher populations in British Columbia are in a steep decline and are predicted to become extirpated in central BC within the next decade. Using Camera traps throughout portions of their known current range in interior BC, Alexia is working on confirming detections of fishers, as well as their prey and other mustelids. Through this monitoring, Alexia will be able to see what areas the fishers are still inhabiting, where their prey is, and where fishers are no longer inhabiting.

By understanding the population size and distribution of fishers in the southern interior of BC habitat stewardship methods, led by First Nations leaders, can enhance and protect fisher habitat. Fishers and other members of the weasel family are understudied in regards to how landscape-scale fire, human activities and forest harvesting impact them. This project will shed light on the factors contributing to fisher population decline and aid in the decision making process for wildlife management. This project is a part of the larger Mesocarnivore Monitoring Program operated through the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship. Alexia's research directly increases knowledge of species important for food-security, cultural practices like trapping, as well as at-risk species and their distribution and habitat use within traditional lands in the Cariboo Region. This will benefit the First Nations land stewardship and the province as mesocarnivore detections will validate existing habitat models and inform stewardship for fisher conservation and recovery.

Alexia is also an instructor in the Department of Renewable Resources at BCIT, teaching Wildlife Ecology and Management. Her previous work has been at the intersection between forest harvesting, wildlife habitat, and First Nations-led conservation and stewardship. Alexia is the President of the BC Chapter of The Wildlife Society and feels strongly about supporting students and early career professionals in their journey. When she's not teaching or playing with camera traps, you can find her figuring out how to go down rocks and roots quickly (falling) on a bike, with a paddle in hand, or on skis.



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