

BRINGING ANIMAL VOICES TO THE TABLE:
EXPLORING INTUITIVE INTERSPECIES COMMUNICATION AS A METHOD FOR
CONSERVATION AND HUMAN-ANIMAL COEXISTENCE

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Abstract

Despite growing acknowledgement of animal ‘agency’ and ‘consciousness’, more-than-human animals (hereafter ‘animals’) continue to be excluded from decision-making in relevant issues. The barrier that is frequently identified to truly bring animal voices into research, is their inability to speak human language, and human’s limited capacities to understand theirs. Used by animal communicators (ACs) to engage in two-way communications with animals, the method of intuitive interspecies communication (IIC) is a possible response to this barrier.

Using exploratory case studies and reflexive thematic analysis, this work provides detailed, well-documented accounts of cooperative work between ACs, animals, and third-party human stakeholders in issues related to conservation and human-animal coexistence. Three cases were documented in total: one individual and two nested, which included individual mini cases within the larger case. The cases showed IIC being used to achieve greater mutual understanding between humans and animals, as well as animal engagement with prospective interventions that will impact their wellbeing. IIC also eliminated guesswork in project planning; by engaging the animals, they can be asked for input in various conservation and human-animal coexistence issues that arise.

Reflexive thematic analysis illustrated the roles of all animal and human stakeholders, the ethical orientation of the humans involved, the approaches and strategies of the ACs, and the outcomes of IIC-facilitated human-animal engagement. Ultimately, study findings suggest that ACs can work as “bridges” to facilitate animal engagement in conservation and human-animal coexistence issues that affect them.

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Dedications

This thesis is humbly dedicated to those who hear the voices of animals, and to the more-than-human animals who have waited so patiently for this work to make its way into the world.

Table of Contents

Permission to Use Statement.....	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Dedications.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi
List of Abbreviations.....	xii
CHAPTER 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1. Standpoint Statement, Personal Positioning.....	3
1.2. Literature Review.....	4
1.2.1. Conservation and Human-Animal Coexistence	4
1.2.2. Engaging Animals in Research	6
1.2.3. IIC as a Method for Animal Engagement	10
1.2.4. ACs Using IIC to Engage With Animals.....	11
1.2.5. Indigenous Peoples and Communication With Animals	15
CHAPTER 2: Methodology, Methods, and Quality Research	19
2.1. Methodology	19
2.1.1. Reflexivity, Personal Positioning, Ethics and Onto-Epistemological Orientation	19
2.1.2. Case Study as Storytelling.....	20
2.1.3. Thematic Analysis Facilitates Rigour and Systematic Engagement.....	22
2.1.4. Typology and Case Selection Criteria	23
2.2. Establishing Quality.....	26
2.2.1. Trustworthiness of Data	26
2.2.2. Trustworthiness of Thematic Analysis	30
2.2.3. Ethics and Care of Data	32
2.3. Methods	32
2.3.1. Data Collection – Interviews and Case Study Framework	32

2.3.2. Third-Party Participants, and Interview Guide	34
2.3.3. Data Integration to Shape Case Study Narratives	36
2.3.4. Finalizing the Case Studies	37
2.3.5. Thematic Analysis	38
CHAPTER 3: Results - Case Studies.....	41
3.1. Baboon Case	41
3.1.1. Introduction	41
3.1.2. First Meeting	42
3.1.3. The Workshop	42
3.1.4. Individual Case Studies	44
3.1.4.1. Doug’s case	44
3.1.4.2. Jessica’s case	45
3.1.5. Reflections on the Workshop: Outcomes and “20-20 Hindsight”	45
3.2. Elephant Case.....	48
3.2.1. Introduction	48
3.2.2. Consulting With the Elephants	48
3.2.3. Outcomes.....	51
3.3. Vole (and Other Backyard) Cases.....	53
3.3.1. Introduction	53
3.3.2. Individual Cases.....	53
3.3.2.1. Co-creating a wildflower garden with local pollinators	53
3.3.2.2. Ants destroying garden plant roots.....	54
3.3.2.3. Ensuring co-existence between nearby red-tailed hawks and our flock of chickens	54
3.3.2.4. Chipmunks: A client case showcasing alternative outcomes	55
3.3.3. Negotiating With Voles in the Lawn	56
3.3.4. Outcomes of the Vole Case.....	56
CHAPTER 4: Results - Thematic Analysis	58
4.1. Theme 1: ACs as IIC Interpreters and Mediators	59

4.1.1. Summary of AC Roles	59
4.1.2. AC Ethical Orientation	60
4.1.3. ACs as Interpreters	61
4.1.3.1. Example 1 – AC relays baboon’s messages to humans	63
4.1.3.2. Example 2 – AC relays TPHS’ message to the elephants	63
4.1.4. ACs as Mediators	64
4.1.4.1. Example 1 - The AC relays information back and forth between elephants and staff to answer the elephant’s question	65
4.1.4.2. Example 2 – The AC relays information and insights between humans and chipmunks to try to come to an understanding	65
4.1.5. Theme Summary	66
4.2. Theme 2: TPHS as Significant Players and Critical Resources	66
4.2.1. Summary of TPHS Roles and Ethics	66
4.2.2. TPHS Ethical Orientation	67
4.2.3. TPHS Roles in the Cases: As the Initiator of the Intervention, as a Resource for the Animals and the AC, as a Novice Communicator, as the Final Decision-Maker	69
4.2.3.1. TPHS as initiator of the intervention	69
4.2.3.2. TPHS as a resource for ACs and animals	69
4.2.3.3. TPHS as a novice communicator	69
4.2.3.4. TPHS as final decision-maker	70
4.2.4. Theme Summary	70
4.3. Theme 3: Animals as Agents in Issues That Affect Them	71
4.3.1. Summary of Animal Roles	71
4.3.2. Animal Engagement: Accepting or Rejecting a Proposal	71
4.3.2.1. Example 1 - Ants and red-tailed hawks accept ACs requests	71
4.3.2.2. Example 2 - Baboons accept a request from TPHS	72
4.3.2.3. Example 3 - Voles reject AC’s request, accept an alternative solution	72
4.3.3. Animal Engagement: Animals Offer Alternative Solutions, Answer Questions, Analyze the Situation, and Are Willing to Compromise.....	72

4.3.3.1. Example 1 - Elephant refuses AC's suggestion, offers an alternative solution	73
4.3.3.2. Example 2 - Bee and hummingbird answer ACs question	73
4.3.3.3. Example 3 - Chipmunks offer alternative solutions, and are willing to compromise	74
4.3.4. Theme Summary	74
4.4. Theme 4: Approaches and Strategies for ACs to Translate Information, and Engage Stakeholders in Their Respective Roles	74
4.4.1. AC Approaches to the Cases	75
4.4.2. AC Strategies to Communication Using IIC, With Individuals and Groups	76
4.4.3. Theme Summary	77
4.5. Theme 5: Outcomes of ACs Using IIC as a Method	78
4.5.1. Summary of the Outcomes	78
4.5.2. Outcome 1 – ACs Using IIC Prepared Animals for Upcoming Changes, Including Receiving Their Input for Prospective Interventions	78
4.5.3. Outcome 2 – ACs Using IIC With Wildlife Allowed for a Greater Understanding and Acknowledgement of one Another's Needs, Behaviours, and Expectations	79
4.5.4. Outcome 3 - ACs Using IIC Enabled the Altering of one's (Human <i>and</i> Animal) Behaviour to Accommodate the Other Stakeholders (Human <i>and</i> Animal).....	80
4.5.5. Theme Summary	81
CHAPTER 5: Discussion.....	83
5.1. Thesis Findings Alignment With Current Literature	84
5.1.1. Theme 1 Alignment With Current Literature	84
5.1.2. Theme 2 Alignment With Current Literature	85
5.1.3. Theme 3 Alignment With Current Literature	85
5.1.4. Theme 4 Alignment With Current Literature	87
5.1.5. Theme 5 Alignment With Current Literature	88
5.2. Limitations.....	90
5.2.1. Limitations of IIC, and the Realities of Working With Autonomous Beings	90
5.2.2. Limitations With This Research Project	92
5.3. Implications.....	94

5.3.1. Implications for Conservation and HWC	94
5.3.2. Implications of This Research for Indigenous Land Managers	94
5.4. Recommendations, and Future Research	95
5.4.1. Recommendations for Using Case Study Methods and IIC Research.....	95
5.4.2. Future Research	96
CHAPTER 6: Conclusion	98
References	100
Appendix A - Baboon Case.....	107
Appendix B - Elephant Case	130
Appendix C - Vole (and Other Backyard) Cases	144
Appendix D – Case Study Guiding Document	164
Appendix E – Workshop Evaluation Document	171
Appendix F – REB Approval Certificate	174
Appendix G – Animal Communicator Case Study Consent Form.....	179
Appendix H – Participant Case Study Consent Form	184
Appendix I – REB Amendment Application	189

List of Tables

Table 2.1. Case Study Selection Criteria and Rationale 25

Table 2.2. Data Sources for Each Case 27

Table 2.3. Adapted from Yin (2018), “Case Study Tactics for Four Design Tests” 28

Table 2.4. Adapted from Braun & Clarke (2024), “The Six Phases of TA” 38

Table 3.1. Baboon Case Timeline 47

Table 3.2. Elephant Case Timeline 52

Table 3.3. Vole (and other backyard) Cases Timeline 57

List of Figures

Figure 2.1. Voices Represented in the Cases 21

Figure 2.2. Case Study Typology: Subject, Purpose, Approach and Process, based on
Thomas (2021) 24

Figure 2.3. Discussion and Conclusion in the Case Study Framework 34

Figure 4.1. The Roles of the Stakeholders in the Cases 59

Figure 4.2. Visual Representation of the Role of AC as Interpreter in Human-Initiated
Communication 62

Figure A.1. Slide From Workshop Detailing the Steps to Communicating with Animals 115

Figure C.1. “Layers of energy” when Communicating with a Species of Beings 162

List of Abbreviations

AC (animal communicator): professionals who use the method of intuitive interspecies communication (IIC) to communicate with animals

IIC (intuitive interspecies communication): involves detailed, non-verbal and non-physical communication between humans and other animals using a wide range of intuitive capacities (Barrett et al., 2021)

HWC (Human-wildlife coexistence): a sustainable though dynamic state, where humans and wildlife co-adapt to sharing landscapes and human interactions with wildlife are effectively governed to ensure wildlife populations persist in socially legitimate ways that ensure tolerable risk levels (Carter & Linnell, 2016; in Pooley et al., 2021)

MTH animals/beings (more-than-human animals or more-than-human beings): terms that both acknowledge that humans are also animals, but seeks to not establish humanity as the primary experience within a duality (for example in using a term such as “non-human”)

TPHS (third-party human stakeholder): all human individuals who cared for, or lived alongside the animals involved in the respective cases that were not an animal communicator

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

In October 2013, a Pimicikamak community organizer addressed a room full of community members, industry leaders and environmental scientists. He, and a number of other individuals, were attending a public hearing regarding the pending Keeyask Hydro Generation Project on Pimicikamak Cree territory. With concerns regarding the wellbeing of the water ecosystems in the Churchill River, he noted:

“[If the Keeyask Generation Project is approved] Hydro tells us [the sturgeon] are going to decide to move to another habitat. ... [The Elders] say, well, who is the scientist that spoke to a sturgeon? Which sturgeon told these scientists that they are going to decide to move to another habitat?” (Manitoba Clean Environment Commission et al., 2013)

Despite animals (and other beings of the Land) holding a significant stake in the issues and concepts emerging from fields of work such as conservation and human-wildlife coexistence (HWC), they are rarely, if ever, actively involved in decision-making (Bhattacharyya & Slocombe, 2017; Thomsen et al., 2023). Animals are individuals with their own voices and agency, (i.e. interests, perspectives, and desires) (Meijer, 2019; Thomsen et al., 2023) and there is growing acknowledgement of animal consciousness and agency in academia (Andrews et al., 2024; Birch et al., 2022). Given this growth in recognition, many scholars are advocating for animal engagement in research (Buller, 2015; Dowling et al., 2016; van Bommel & Boonman-Berson, 2022); yet most methods being implemented in response do not truly engage the voices of animals. Some scholars such as Hurn (2018) and Thomsen et al. (2023) have identified the inability for animals to speak as humans do as a barrier preventing others from bringing animal voices into research. This thesis explores the method of intuitive interspecies communication (IIC), which is often experienced as two-way non-verbal communication between humans and

more-than-humans (Barrett et al., 2021; Hinz & Barrett, under review; Wijngaarden, 2023a) as a promising response to this barrier.

The intent of the research is to fill a gap in understanding about how animal communicators (ACs) are using IIC to engage with wildlife in the contexts of conservation and HWC. The purpose of this work is to generate, prepare, and present information on AC engagements with wildlife, to help Indigenous land managers determine whether a collaboration with ACs would be beneficial for their work. The author's hope is that this research contributes to greater meaningful engagement with more-than-human voices, helping to make space for animal voices in research and land management policy. This study is exploratory in nature; thus, it is not intended to *prove* that ACs are communicating with animals, but rather to *document* how they are engaging with IIC in their work in the contexts of conservation and HWC.

The original research question, written to address the research intent, was “How are ACs working with wildlife?”. As the study developed, more specific research questions were identified:

- How are ACs, animals, and third-party human stakeholders (TPHS) using IIC to work together to address issues in conservation and HWC?
- What are the ACs and TPHS' ethical orientation/beliefs about animals?
- What are the roles of ACs, animals and TPHS in each case?
- What strategies are the ACs using to facilitate these roles?
- What are some key outcomes of the cases?

To answer the research questions, this project uses a case study approach to document three cases (two nested, one independent), and the data was analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis.

It is important to note that much of the terminology used in this thesis is fraught with connotations and are being actively questioned by scholars for good reason. Terms such as “wild” (Cronon, 1996), “nature” (Castree, 2013), and “stakeholder” (Reed et al., 2024) are topics of debate in many environmental disciplines, while still others might be

uncomfortable with words such as “converse” and “respond” when referencing IIC. It is important to seek precise and accurate terminology in scholarship; however, we are also bound by the limits of the English language, which is anthropocentric in its very nature.

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter One begins with a standpoint statement, and personal positioning to orient the author’s approach to the research, followed by a literature review of conservation and HWC, animal engagement in research, IIC, ACs using IIC, and Indigenous peoples communicating with animals. Chapter Two describes how an Indigenous Research Methodology guided this research, as well as the author’s approach to data collection and analysis methods: case study, and reflexive thematic analysis, respectively. Chapter Two also includes a detailed description of how quality was ensured throughout the entirety of the research process. Chapter Three is a summary of the documented case studies, followed by a timeline of each case. Chapter Four provides a detailed breakdown of the results of the reflexive thematic analysis, in the form of the five themes generated as a result of the analysis. A discussion of the findings can be found in Chapter Five, including the alignment of thesis findings with current literature, limitations, implications, and recommendations, and Chapter Six concludes the thesis with a summary of findings and concluding thoughts. The appendices include the cases in full (Appendices A, B, and C, authored by S. Kuppenbender, and co-authored by the AC, including interviews with both the ACs and TPHS). Subsequent appendices include the case study guiding document (Appendix D), the workshop evaluation document (Appendix E), the REB protocol approval certificates (Appendix F), the AC case study consent form (Appendix G), the participant case study consent form (Appendix H) and the REB amendment application (Appendix I).

1.1. Standpoint Statement, Personal Positioning

Taanishi, Sydney Kuppenbender dishinikashoon, enn faam Michif niya; I am a queer, disabled Métis person born and raised in rural Northern Saskatchewan. I grew up hearing Wesakechak stories and other teachings as a child, stories of ancestors communicating

with animals as they navigated the trials and tribulations of life in the bush. It wasn't until shortly after I began working for Dr. M.J. Barrett researching IIC that I realized those stories were not simply metaphorical. My ancestors could, at one point, communicate directly with all life. My work with IIC in the summer of 2020 cracked any preconceived notions of environmental protection and land-based work wide open; I began asking myself: What if while scientists deduce the well-being of the land based on Western science research methods, we could also ask the beings of the land directly? And they could answer? What could this mean for the mutual flourishing of all beings, especially in the face of global-scale environmental devastation?

My positionality regarding IIC and personal lens make me a suitable, perhaps even ideal, person to document the work of the ACs. I believe that my position in this work as one who: a) understands the significance of worldview on how one experiences and understands reality, and b) who is cautiously supportive, rather than overtly negative or skeptical, has shaped the outcomes of the research. It is immensely difficult – some may say impossible – to conduct research with absolute objectivity. In the field of IIC, having a primary investigator who is sympathetic to the field of IIC builds trust between researcher and participant, encouraging more open sharing and communication. Taking the narrative of the ACs as truth is called taking the “empathic stance”, which orients the researcher to the participants’ meaning-making. Taking this “empathic stance” allows for richer, higher quality data.

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. Conservation and Human-Animal Coexistence

Since the beginnings of human existence, humans and more-than-human animals (hereafter ‘animals’) have shared space and resources, with varying degrees of success. More recently, scholars have begun to label interactions between humans and wildlife as “human-wildlife conflict” (Hill, 2021). This emphasis on conflict has been found to place humans and wildlife in opposition to one another, reinforcing the human-nature divide

(Pooley et al., 2021), which is rooted in an assumed separation between humans and nature, wherein the environment is a “submissive entity that can be controlled to benefit humanity” (Dickinson, 2016).

Embedded in most conservation approaches is an underlying assumption that humans are separate from, and superior to, the natural world (Massarella et al., 2021; Nash, 2014; Wapner, 2014). From the outset, the intention of conservation was to restrict human access to established geographic locations (Brown et al., 2022; Cronon, 1996; Nash, 2014). This intention emerged from a long-standing belief that humans have inherently negative impacts on the landscape, and that limiting human activity would benefit the ecosystem (Brown et al., 2022; Cronon, 1996; Despret & Meuret, 2016).

Despite conservation policy and many attempts to challenge the human-nature divide, human and animal existence continue to be tightly intertwined. From a micro scale (e.g. ants eating the roots of garden vegetables – see Appendix C, pp. 147-149) to a macro scale (e.g. baboons breaking into homes to eat humans’ food – see Appendix A). Humans and animals always have, and always will, continue to encounter and share space with one another.

Just as humans who share space will inevitably encounter conflict, the same can be said of humans and animals sharing space in urban and rural settings – conflict is simply a fact of life (Madden & McQuinn, 2015; in Pooley et al., 2021). Scholars have historically referred to this phenomenon as “human-wildlife conflict”; more recently, scholars are advocating for the phrase to be replaced with “human-wildlife coexistence” (HWC) (Hill, 2021; Pooley et al., 2021). HWC is defined as “a sustainable though dynamic state, where humans and wildlife co-adapt to sharing landscapes and human interactions with wildlife are effectively governed to ensure wildlife populations persist in socially legitimate ways that ensure tolerable risk levels.” (Carter & Linnell, 2016; in Pooley et al., 2021).

The argument for the shift from the word ‘conflict’ to ‘coexistence’, is that the word ‘conflict’ imposes division between humans and animals, while the term ‘coexistence’ leaves room for nuance and complexity in these relationships (Hill, 2021; Pooley et al.,

2021). Further advocacy for this shift in language, is embedded in the reality that ‘conflict’ will always arise between humans and wildlife, and thus ‘coexistence’ with wildlife has become the goal of conservation efforts (Pooley et al., 2021). Some scholars go further, positing that HWC is inevitable and *entangled* with HWC, that the two are mutually inclusive (Hill, 2021; Pooley et al., 2021).

While shifting language and acknowledging the inevitability of conflict is all well and good, a need remains for planned interventions and/or preventative measures to limit and address conflict, such that risks “remain within tolerable limits” (Pooley et al., 2021). A challenge that seems to perplex many scholars, however, is identifying interventions that suit the needs of both humans and wildlife (Pooley et al., 2021; Thomsen et al., 2023). Due to the anthropocentric nature and history of conservation, attempts at HWC often lead to the needs of humans superseding the needs of wildlife, if wildlife needs are even considered at all (Thomsen et al., 2023).

1.2.2. Engaging Animals in Research

Despite animals (and other beings of the Land) holding a significant stake in the issues and concepts emerging from fields of work such as conservation and HWC, they are rarely, if ever, actively involved in decision-making (Bhattacharyya & Slocombe, 2017; Thomsen et al., 2023). Literature regarding this issue consistently points towards two possible causes for this: either 1) human decision-makers do not believe animals have voices, opinions, and the ability to contribute to decision-making, or 2) they are unable to identify a method that would allow animals to engage meaningfully. This section will address these two issues in greater detail.

Despite what many humans might still believe, animals are individuals with their own voices, interests, perspectives, and desires (i.e. agency) (Meijer, 2019; Thomsen et al., 2023). Animals having agency has been highlighted in many studies, which collectively indicate that animals have unique languages (Meijer, 2019), consciousness (Andrews et al., 2024; Birch et al., 2022) and sentience (vertebrates and invertebrates alike) (Balcombe,

2020), as well as their own unique cultures and social structures (Allen, 2019; Whiten, 2021), to name a few.

For many, scholarly debate has moved beyond the question of whether animals have consciousness and agency towards practical questions of how to engage with, and incorporate animal voices into research (Buller, 2015; Dowling et al., 2016; van Bommel & Boonman-Berson, 2022). In acknowledgement of this progress, scholars have emphasized the importance of doing research *with* animals, rather than *on* animals (Barrett et al., 2021; Wijngaarden, 2023a), yet methods that fulfill this intention are few. As Swanson (2017) notes: “It is relatively easy to say that we need to take non-humans more seriously, but it is quite difficult to know what knowledge practices we might use to ask about non-human practices” (p. 85). van Bommel & Boonman-Berson (2022) similarly claim that “[d]espite the growing recognition and theoretical arguments for including the inter-subjectivities of more-than-human participants in conservation research, it remains a methodological challenge in practice.” (p. 137)

The aforementioned methodological challenge is clearly demonstrated in the field of multispecies methods. Many scholars theorize “more-than-human participation” (van Bommel & Boonman-Berson, 2022) or “amplifying animal voice” (Thomsen et al., 2023), and make calls to “listen to the more-than-human as an active voice” (Blenkinsop & Piersol, 2013). Bawaka Country et al. (2013), describes an “ontology of co-becoming” that centers “Country” as a co-author and highlights the necessity of a multi-directional relationship between the authors and Country that shape one another. Co-authored by an Australian Aboriginal Elder, and written on Yolŋu land in Bawaka, they suggest that the human responsibility to care for the Land needs to be guided by this “multi-directional, generative, and beyond-human understanding” of the human and more-than-human relationship, including a deep understanding of all the ways that the Land also cares (Suchet-Pearson et al., 2013, p. 191). Their approach is put into practice by being on the Land, listening, watching, learning, and being in relation with the Land. The authors work to include the voice of the Land, and its presence is represented by detailed descriptions of

the Land while they are on it, including the sights, smells, sounds, and how the people and the Land shape one another.

A relational approach to wildlife management, “kincentric ecology” as presented by Bhattacharyya & Slocombe (2017) is not only a method to be applied to conservation and HWC interventions, but also a call to action for an ontological and paradigmatic shift for those in relevant disciplines. Building from the original conception of “kincentric ecology”, as articulated by Indigenous ethnobotanist Salmón (2000), the authors acknowledge that animals not only have agency, but also are kin, teachers, and deserving of respect. This case study demonstrates an equitable and collaborative multispecies partnership between human caretakers and wild horses in the Nemiah Valley. This ethnographic research captures how wild horses living in the Nemiah Valley are “accorded agency in decision-making and relationships, as well as spiritual relations with people” (p. 9). The implication is that the Tsilhqot'in peoples understand and connect more deeply with the wild horses of the valley, given their long history of living and working alongside one another. The findings ultimately disrupt conventional Western perspectives of land and wildlife management, and conclude that “from kincentric perspectives, humans are less in control of animal populations than conventional approaches to wildlife management suggest” (Bhattacharyya & Slocombe, 2017, p. 3).

In a literature review of conservation research that attempts to engage with animals as participants, van Bommel & Boonman-Berson (2022) transform the definition of “convivial conservation” as they identify the need to engage with intersubjectivity of humans and wildlife. Their interpretation of “convivial conservation” extends beyond the earlier definition by Büscher & Fletcher (2019), to include animal participation in research (van Bommel & Boonman-Berson, 2022). Similar to Bhattacharyya & Slocombe’s “kincentric ecology” (2017) and an “ontology of co-becoming” by Suchet-Pearson et al. (2013), “convivial conservation” requires a deeper recognition of animal agency and human-wildlife entanglement. Uniquely, van Bommel & Boonman-Berson identify three concepts that support inclusion of animal voices: 1) affect, 2) embodiment, and 3) multi-sensory communication. These three concepts are deeply interrelated: “Affect runs through

embodied inter-subjectivities, and embodiment is a key part of multi-sensory communication” (van Bommel & Boonman-Berson, 2022, p. 143).

Taking a broad view, multispecies scholars van Dooren & Rose (2016) apply the concept of “lively ethographies”, a type of storytelling that allows one to “become-witness” to the stories of the beings that one is observing. They present this method and the “becoming-witness” as a mode of knowing, and recognizing, the lives of other species. They argue that becoming-witness is a process of bringing together different types of knowledge and responding to these lives/worlds of others, and that we have a “response-ability” to do so; we are accountable for our actions, and what those actions bring. This type of scholarship encourages readers to consider their personal impact on the lives of other beings, and furthermore to work towards decentering humans from inherent anthropocentrism.

A final example of attempts to include animal voices is illustrated in Despret and Meuret’s (2016) paper. Building on Kohn’s (2013) “ecology of thought”, the authors describe the obligations and teachings shared by shepherds and their flock as both the shepherds learn their new role, and sheep learn a new landscape. Together, shepherds and sheep learn how to work together to successfully step into new ways of being. This means that in their own way, the shepherds formed a flock with the sheep, and began to “talk with them, and for them” (p. 31). This paper demonstrates the value of “co-becoming” together, how living in close proximity to one another can create deeper understanding and appreciation for one another.

Many of these scholars have made much headway engaging with animal voices in their methods, yet in an inevitable phenomenon known as ‘epistemological circularity’ (Hamilton & Taylor, 2017), multispecies methods often “end up reproducing human authority and interspecies inequality in their research practices and accounts” (van Bommel & Boonman-Berson, 2022). This means that despite intentions to challenge the human-nature divide and anthropocentric nature of various academic disciplines, a gap remains in bringing animal voices forward to the metaphorical research table. An issue that seems to entrap scholars in epistemological circularity, identified by scholars such as

Hurn (2018) and Thomsen et al. (2023), is a belief that animals cannot speak as humans do, and thus are limited in their ability to engage in research. While some epistemological circularity is inevitable due to issues of power dynamics and lack of shared languages, the following section will describe IIC as a possible route to reduce epistemological circularity and decrease human influence on narratives that intend to represent animal voices.

1.2.3. IIC as a Method for Animal Engagement

IIC is experienced as two-way non-verbal communication between humans and more-than-humans. It is not based on visual observations or other external physical cues (e.g. sound, smell, etc.), nor is it based on visual observations or other external physical cues (e.g. sound, smell, etc.) but rather through intuitive impressions, which will be described in further detail in this section (Hinz & Barrett, under review).

Scholars have been using different terminology to describe the phenomenon of IIC; one of which was published by Plec (2013), who theorized an “internatural communication”, defined as:

Interaction among and between natural communities and social groups that include participants from what we might initially describe as different classifications of nature... [It] includes the exchange of intentional energy between humans and other animals as well as communication among animals and other forms of life. (pp. 5-6)

More recently, Hurn (2021) uses the phrase ‘psychic communication’, which she defined as:

Nonverbal communication between humans and other-than-human beings through a range of unscientific methodologies including dreams, visions, trance, hallucinations, or even just close intersubjective encounters. (p. 10)

Drawing on the work of professional ACs, Barrett et al. (2021) have defined IIC as a practice that:

Presents [i.e. is experienced] as a detailed, non-verbal and non-physical form of communication between humans and other animals. Drawing on a diversity of intuitive capacities, [IIC] includes the mutual exchange [between humans and other animals] of visceral feelings, emotions, thoughts, mental impressions, embodied sensations of touch, smell, taste, sound, as well as visuals in the mind's eye. While these exchanges can occur while in direct physical proximity to the animal, they can also occur over great distances and without the need for proximal visual, auditory, olfactory, voice or other cues humans normally associate with direct interactive communication. (p. 151)

Building on the definition of IIC, Hinz & Barrett (forthcoming) provide a definition for “Remote IIC”:

Remote intuitive interspecies communication (RIIC) is the human experience of a communication (a relational exchange of information) with an animal who is, despite its physical absence, experienced as present and meaningfully engaged with the human experience. (n.p.)

As a very active field of research, it is important to acknowledge that these definitions are continually being refined and updated as research progresses in the field.

There is a growing group of professionals across the globe who are applying IIC in a variety of contexts, sometimes in the physical presence of the animal, and more often, remotely (Barrett et al, under review). The following section will describe the current research in IIC by ACs in more detail.

1.2.4. ACs Using IIC to Engage With Animals

There is growing academic research studying the work of ACs, or those whose profession focuses on engaging in two-way conversation with more-than-human animals. There have been very few studies involving quantitative research; Erickson's mixed-methods study (2016) involved two ACs completing a standard questionnaire with therapy riding horses regarding any existing mouth pain, as well as some additional questions from the horse's

guardian and the veterans in the therapy riding program. The information received and reported by the ACs were compared to a subsequent dental exam conducted by a veterinarian. Erickson et al. (2016) found the ACs reported the horses' mouth pain with 100% accuracy, and responses to the qualitative questions received and translated by the AC were extremely helpful from the perspective of the horses' guardian and the veterans involved in the therapy riding program.

There is a considerably larger number of qualitative studies in various disciplines. Vittitoe's (2005) doctoral dissertation examined, in a phenomenological study, the essence of being an AC. Building on Vittitoe's research, another study by Erickson (2011) was a parapsychological literature review exploring the 'legitimacy' of telepathic intuitive communication. In a participatory study of an IIC course, Hafen's phenomenological ethnography of communication (2013) interviewed the participants to gauge their reactions and impressions of learning IIC. All participants successfully communicated with another participants' animal companion, and the information gathered from the conversations was verified by their caregivers. A similar paper reflecting on attendance of an IIC course was written by Kulick (2021) after a critical review of ACs a few years prior (Kulick, 2017).

In a more recent phenomenological study, Hinz & Barrett (under review) describe what they call 'intuitive impressions', and the various ways they might present themselves to the ACs during a session. They define 'intuitive impressions' as "moments within the AC's subjective experience that they discern (or at least suspect) to be originating from a source other than themselves or their physical environment, ideally the animal they are intending to communicate with." (p. 10). These intuitive impressions might be experienced by the AC as: images, hearing, tasting, smelling, bodily sensations, emotions, words, or even an 'immediate knowing'. The 'experiential dynamics' of these 'intuitive impressions' include: impressions appearing immediately or with some delay, varying degrees of detail and intensity, impressions disappearing quickly or lingering, impressions appearing alone or in combination, first-person and third-person perspectives, and the experience of these impressions being outside of the AC's control. These findings give the reader a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of IIC, and how it is experienced during a

communication between an AC and the animal. Hinz has two other subsequent papers forthcoming in a three-part series that together document her doctoral research, “The phenomenological structure of remote intuitive interspecies communication as experienced and engaged in by professional animal communicators”.

In a study that explores the practicalities and possible challenges of establishing dialogic multispecies methods in academia, Wijngaarden (2023a) interviews felines by collaborating with ACs. Her work is grounded in the intention of co-creating methodologies which further the acknowledgement and treatment of more-than-human animals as active research participants. Overall, the results of the study suggest that IIC could in fact be used to not only develop methods that access animal perspectives, but also to challenge and confront researcher and reader’s assumptions and expectations of potential answers to the research questions (Wijngaarden, 2023a).

Hörner & Wijngaarden (in press) use IIC as well as various other methods to familiarize themselves with the African Grey Parrot and the storied history of the species. They use a triangulation method between them (the researchers) and two ACs (the interpreters) and the African Grey Parrots (wild and domesticated) to ask five of them a series of questions about their lives, and other deep conversation topics. Despite the ACs working separately, the answers conveyed by the birds were strikingly similar. Both authors reflect on how the project and IIC allowed them to be “more confident and outgoing in trying to interpret and express what is meaningful to the African grey parrots in the project, and what they may want to share with us (humans)” (p. 13).

Beyond academic researchers exploring the practice of ACs, there is a substantial collection of published literature written by ACs themselves. Barrett et al. (under review) reviewed these works to identify recurrent themes across the books. They also conducted an environmental scan of hundreds of English language internet-based websites, collecting data that reflects who ACs are, where they are located, and the different codes of ethics they adhere to as part of their practice.

Beyond published papers documenting work and research related to IIC, there have also been several presentations at academic conferences and gatherings relating to IIC. In a presentation at the SOAS GLOCAL African Assembly on Linguistic Anthropology (AFALA) 2023, Wijngaarden presented IIC that can both develop the intersections between Indigenous and academic worldviews, and as a resource for academics in multispecies research who aim to approach animals as “agency-possessing research participants” (2023b).

Two online symposiums in 2022 and 2023 were hosted by the University of Saskatchewan, titled “International Multispecies Methods Research Symposium”. Academics and professionals were encouraged to present their ongoing work in IIC and IIC-related work. Mathur et al. (under review) are publishing a paper from the two events showing that between the 2022 and 2023 symposia, 63 papers about the study and practice of IIC were accepted to be shared at the events. The different submission types for both years were: 1) Lived experiences of IIC – Personal experiences of engagement with IIC, 2) Conceptual/methodological – Conceptual explorations and methodological considerations, 3) Beyond animals – IIC with species beyond animals, 4) IIC and art – IIC and artistic research and/or artistic practice, 5) Single case analysis – Findings from a single IIC case, 6) Multiple case analysis – Findings from more than one IIC case, 7) Interview/survey – Presentation of interview or survey data.

There were several sessions at the recent “World Biodiversity Forum” (2024) involving IIC. A plenary session presentation by AC Wynter Worsthorne described her projects integrating IIC into conservation and human-animal coexistence (2024). A parallel session titled “Tapping into alternative knowledge systems to transform biodiversity and conservation management” housed four presentations using IIC as a research method. One of these shared a draft plan outlining how a collaborative, exploratory pilot project between researchers, ACs, and beings of the Ocean will use IIC to support ocean biodiversity and conservation in South Africa (Shannon & Worsthorne, 2024).

Despite these academic papers exploring the work and demographics of ACs across the globe, there is a lack of academic research exploring the work ACs have done with wildlife. An explanation for this may be that this area of research is in early stages of exploration, and working with domestic animals, rather than with wild animals, seems to be the prevailing practice for most ACs.

1.2.5. Indigenous Peoples and Communication With Animals

While the modern-Western academic world has only recently begun to explore this phenomenon of communication with animals more seriously, this section illustrates interspecies communication in many forms amongst many Indigenous nations since time immemorial.

The phenomenon of interspecies communication has had many names among many different nations, and individuals may experience this “coming to know” differently. Sepie (2017) refers to a universal “Earth language” in her dissertation “Tracing the Motherline”, where she presents evidence of an ancient form of communication for Indigenous nations across the globe, wherein knowledge can be exchanged between humans and the more-than-human universe. Brearley (2015) similarly describes “Deep Listening”, as the English translation for a word that appears in the Indigenous languages of nations in Australia. Bjørkvold (1992) translates the Swahili word ‘Sikia’, as ‘integrated sensing’, and defines it as “a single complex experience in which one simultaneously sees and hears, pays attention to, notices, understands, and perceives” (Bjørkvold, 1992; in Brearley, 2015, p. 103).

Many academics and Indigenous knowledge keepers have brought these methods forward. Heinberg recounts research with the Hopi, where they were recorded saying that the First People and the more-than-human world “felt as one and understood one another without talking” (1989, p. 65). Chief Powless Jr. (Onondaga Nation) recalls a conversation with a longhouse Elder in which the Elder reminded him that “A long time ago we used to speak with the animals” (2016, p. 75). Still, other Indigenous scholars have made clear statements about the existence of intuitive/spiritual forms of interspecies communication,

reinforcing that their worlds consist of communicative, non-hierarchical relations with more-than-human kin (Cajete, 2000; Cole, 2002; Deloria, 2006; Kawagley, 1990). Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux) (2006) tells of ancestors encountering and communicating with more-than-human animals in various contexts, stating “For many tribes, this phenomenon of interspecies communication has always been present.” (pp. 107-108).

Deloria categorizes more-than-human and human communications into three categories: 1) Animals as a vehicle for the sacred; 2) Animals with information or powers to assist a human, particularly when that individual is in a vulnerable situation; 3) More secular encounters where animals speak the tribal language, often commentating on human activities (Deloria, 2006, p. 108-109). Deloria then makes the argument that all tribal individuals can communicate with more-than-human animals just as their ancestors did; it is simply buried in the collective unconscious. The practice would re-emerge in times of need.

Expanding upon the concept of remembering and reclaiming the capacity to communicate with the Land, Watts (Anishnaabe and Haudenosaunee) (2013) writes a critical piece on decolonization that is a call to action for Indigenous peoples to reclaim traditional frameworks; this extends to all ways of knowing such as creation stories, ceremony, and interspecies communication. Watts argues that colonization has caused Indigenous peoples to mythologize their own cosmologies, including interspecies communication:

It is not that the non-human world no longer speaks but that we begin to understand less and less. [...] we have within us the ability to communicate with the land but our agency as Indigenous peoples has been corrupted within this colonial frame. (p. 32)

Watts then makes the argument that taking these cosmologies as literal will start the process of decolonizing Indigenous peoples’ ways of interacting with traditional frameworks, and thus accessing the “pre-colonial mind” (p. 24).

While Indigenous nations across the globe are remembering the practice of interspecies communication as part of their traditional ways of knowing, most individuals have unique

descriptions of how this ‘coming to know’ occurs. One Elder interviewed by Rose (2013) describes the process as “being told on your mind” (p. 105). Similarly, Mercurieff (Unangan) refers to how knowledge can be spoken ‘in your head’ so long as you ‘drop the mind’ (2017). He further emphasizes that while this phenomenon of intuitive communication has been largely lost, it can be learned presently.

Beyond theorizing about taking traditional knowledge as literal, Elder Joe Copper Jack and his Land and Peoples Relationship Model (LPRM) has enabled respectful, collaborative knowledge-building between Western scientists, Indigenous knowledge keepers, and voices from the Land. The LPRM uses 3 key laws of Yukon First Nations, "respect, care, share", as well as two decision-making tools, "Knowledge Stream Tree" and "No Voice" (Copper Jack, 2022). All components of the model must be used, together, to guide proceedings in a good way (Copper Jack, 2022).

The "No Voice" tool is used to bring in stakeholders who are often left out of land management conversations, including past or future generations of animals or other beings of the Land (e.g. air, water, rocks). Round table proceedings will include these stakeholders with "No Voice" and be given a seat at the table with a symbol representing each stakeholder. During round table meetings, each ‘No Voice’ will have a human appointed to speak for them, and these human representatives will change each meeting. For humans to “speak for” the ‘No Voice’, Elder Copper Jack (2021) says:

You feel and interpret the language around you, whether it be coming from the trees, air, water; each has their own energy language. It’s a different way of communication, as compared to trying to think from your brain. Listen to understand what is being said. (p. 32)

Elder Joe Copper Jack’s work has been influential, and is aiding work being done in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, the province of British Columbia, and the state of Alaska. His work has shaped the work of ACs across the globe, as well as the fields of land management more broadly. Elder Joe Copper Jack has witnessed his work grow even in the

two years since his keynote address at the 2023 International Multispecies Methods Research Symposium hosted by the University of Saskatchewan.

CHAPTER 2: Methodology, Methods, and Quality Research

2.1. Methodology

2.1.1. Reflexivity, Personal Positioning, Ethics and Onto-Epistemological Orientation

Different from Western science, Indigenous Research Methods (IRM) is a way of life as well as an approach to research. There is no separation between religion or spiritual belief, artistic expression, intuitive knowing, and intellectual insight in Indigenous ways of knowing and being (Wilson, 2008). Indigenous ways of knowing are threaded through all aspects of life and presents itself as such within research as well. As Wilson (2008) articulates, a research paradigm is made up of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology. Indigenous ontology is relationships/being in relationship, its epistemology is seeing the world around us as a web of connections and relationships, its axiology is built on relational accountability, and its methodology is a process that adheres to said relational accountability (Wilson, 2008).

Relational accountability, and one's awareness of their role as the researcher, are keystones in the IRM process. While different academics conceive of this process differently, the messaging and overall belief system, as well as the outcome, all remain the same. Wilson (2008) quotes Steinhauer as saying that a researcher must ensure that the three R's - respect, reciprocity, and relationality - are guiding their research (p. 58). Wilson (2008) lists questions to ask yourself as the researcher to check in on your role as the researcher and your relationship with your participants, all of which relate to relationship-building with the topic being researched, the participants involved in the research, and fulfilling ones obligations to oneself, the participants, and all your relations throughout the research process (p. 77).

While an Indigenous methodology was not actively applied in this research, the principles of IRM acted as a guide throughout the various stages of the project, including its onto-

epistemological alignment with the topic. There are several components to the research that were inspired by, and grounded in, IRM, which will be listed in this section.

First and foremost, the research question was identified through discussions with Indigenous land managers, who felt they needed stories of IIC being used effectively (in practice) to explore the possibility of implementing it in their own work. The data was documented in the form of case studies, which follows IRM (see section below for further elaboration on this). The methods for data collection included documenting stories of IIC in a semi-structured format and asking questions relevant to Indigenous land managers. Furthermore, the subject area pertaining to intuitive knowing is something that has always been valued in Indigenous ways of knowing, unlike in Western science, where there has only recently begun a shift towards valuing 'alternative' knowledge systems and ways of knowing.

The author spent time prior to beginning research, during research, and post-research carefully building and maintaining relationships with Indigenous land managers, by keeping them up-to-date, and engaging with them as much as possible without overburdening or asking too much of them in volunteer roles. This engagement with community is synonymous with IRM.

2.1.2. Case Study as Storytelling

Case study design was guided by Thomas (2021) with additional insight and guidance provided by Yin (2018).

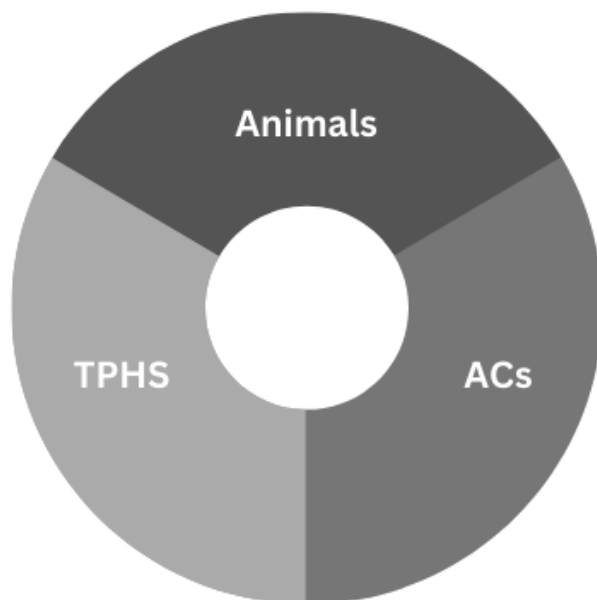
Case study is an in-depth exploration of a particular topic from multiple perspectives (Thomas, 2021). The case study is not itself a method, but a focus (Thomas, 2021). Case study is also a form of storytelling, and storytelling is central to Indigenous ways of knowledge documentation and dissemination. Collecting the data in the form of case studies ensured that this research would be more relevant to the Indigenous communities and individuals accessing the data, given the alignment with the data collected, and community traditions. The case study method was also appropriate given the storied data and helped ensure the first-person voice of the ACs and other participants were

maintained. The nature of the overarching research question, “*How* are ACs working with wildlife?”, requires detailed and narrative-style inquiry, both of which were fulfilled by a case study approach.

For this study, the choice was made to document three cases, rather than seek more diverse perspectives on a single case. Recognizing that not all AC’s work in the same way, having multiple cases provided more diversity of ACs’ perspectives and allowed for more species, thus illustrating the unique and diverse contexts where IIC is being used. Multiple cases also provided a more fulsome data set for thematic analysis. Furthermore, given the nature of the topic and range of (un) willingness of participants to speak about their involvement, there were some limitations on sources of data for each of the cases. Figure 2.1 illustrates the three main voices represented in the case studies.

Figure 2.1.

Voices Represented in the Cases



Case study was an effective method for documenting the data in this research, but it is not a perfect method. While case studies summarize the behaviour of one individual or group involved in the case study, it may not reflect the behaviour of other similar individuals or

entities (Simon & Goes, 2013). Therefore, conclusions can only be drawn regarding the cases themselves, and while the thematic analysis showed that there were commonalities across cases, findings from one case cannot be applied generally towards other ACs in similar circumstances.

2.1.3. Thematic Analysis Facilitates Rigour and Systematic Engagement

Analysis of data collected in this project was guided by Braun & Clarke's version of reflexive thematic analysis (TA) (Terry et al., 2017). According to (Braun & Clarke, 2006), "thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 79). Braun and Clarke have differentiated between two types of TA; one type of TA they refer to as "small q", which maintains at least somewhat of an alignment with positivist (quantitative) theory, or qualitative tools and techniques used in a quantitative framework (Terry et al., 2017), and the other method they have described as 'big Q', where both the tools and techniques as well as the framework are all of the qualitative nature. The author has aligned this project with "big Q" TA, which Braun and Clarke have otherwise called reflexive TA. This analysis method aligns with the project's approach given its recursive nature, and a focus on "a systematic and thorough approach, and even greater depth of engagement, rather than focusing on 'accuracy'" (Terry et al., 2017 p. 20). Furthermore, reflexive TA affords a heavy consideration for researcher biases, and acknowledgement and appreciation for subjectivity within research.

A limitation of TA that has been identified by many scholars, including the author (S. Kuppenbender), is the inclination for TA to collapse into many other qualitative research analysis methods, wherein identifying patterns in, and summarization or generalization of the data is the intended outcome (Terry et al., 2017). These often result in what Braun and Clarke describe as "domain summaries" which typically constitute underdeveloped themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This was addressed by consistently revisiting what the generated themes were conveying, asking: Is this a concept, or a summary? and closely following the six steps for reflexive TA identified by Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke,

2024). Ultimately, this method of analysis allowed for rigour and systematic engagement with the data collected, which is reflected in the findings.

2.1.4. Typology and Case Selection Criteria

Drawing on Thomas (2021), this section outlines first the typology of this study, and then the case selection criteria. The four components of the typology of this case are: subject, purpose, approach, and process. This alignment is important for future researchers to be able to understand the decision-making for the case study structure and focus, and for future researchers to replicate the research if desired. Each component will be described individually in further detail.

Subject: A ‘key case’ provides a particularly good example of something. The cases selected provide particularly good examples of ACs working with TPHS and wildlife, while also summarizing specific circumstances that might arise in conservation and HWC.

Purpose: The purposes of the cases are 1) exploratory and 2) instrumental. They are ‘exploratory’, because little is known about the subject (ACs working with TPHS and wildlife), and the purpose is to establish the “shape” of the subject. They are ‘instrumental’ because the subject is studied with a greater purpose in mind (bringing animal voices into research).

Approach: The documentation of the cases is ‘illustrative’, because it incorporates components of real-life experience (“show, don’t tell”), including voices of animals, ACs, and in some instances, TPHS.

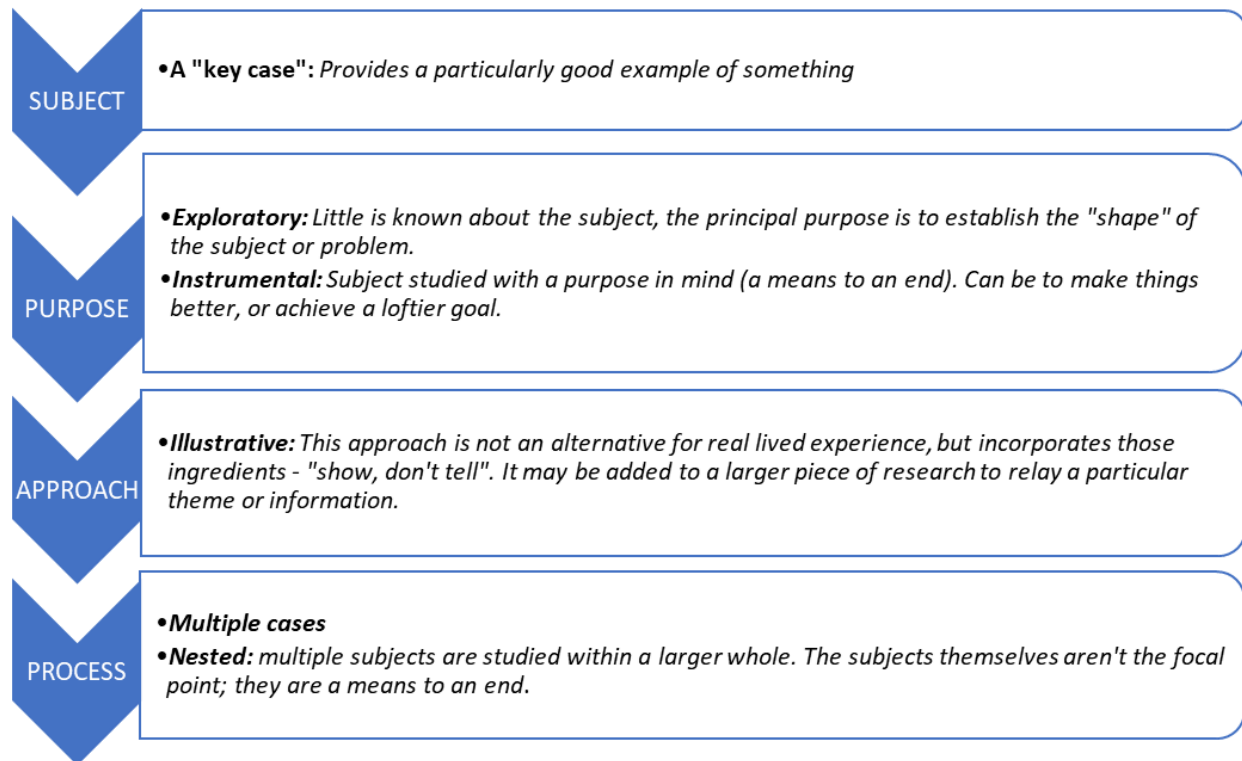
Process: The process of data collection involved ‘multiple’, ‘nested’ cases. ‘Multiple’ means that three cases were documented; two of the three cases (vole and baboon) are ‘nested’, meaning that there are individual mini cases within the larger case, involving issues that are not the focal point of the case but lend further insight into the AC’s methods and approach. Some scholars say that multiple case studies involving multiple participants (i.e. ‘multiple’, ‘nested’ case studies) is a more robust approach to data

collection, thus this decision was made (Mills et al., 2010, and Towgood et al., 2009; in Quintão et al., 2020).”

The conceptual case study structure is represented in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2.

Case Study Typology: Subject, Purpose, Approach and Process, based on Thomas (2021)



Guided by this typology and the research question, case study selection criteria were outlined. These criteria, and the reason they were chosen, are outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1.*Case Study Selection Criteria and Rationale*

Case study selection criteria	Rationale
Case involves an AC communicating with wild animals using IIC as the primary tool to address a problem relevant to land managers (environment or human-animal conflict related)	To ensure the cases addressed priority areas that answered the research question.
Case must be led by an AC with a high level of skill and competence (determined by good reputation, consistent practice, recommendations from other ACs, researcher's intuitive assessment)	To ensure the data was trustworthy
AC adheres to ethical guidelines	AC has integrity and prioritizes the needs of wildlife
AC reports authentic experiences	To ensure the data was trustworthy
Case must be "bounded" (have a beginning, middle, end) as recommended by Thomas (2021)	To ensure that the cases had a consistent structure, for documentation and analysis
Case must be fully completed prior to beginning documentation.	To ensure that the project met the timeline

Animal species was not a criterion for selection. Some "bonus criteria" were added later, which means that these were not essential, but were desirable aspects of a potential case. These criteria included that the case originated in North America, and that there were other human individuals besides the AC that were involved in the case available to be interviewed to add further details. Protocols for data collection are outlined in Chapter 2.3.

The author (S. Kuppenbender) and the author's supervisor (Dr M.J. Barrett) approached the ACs leading the baboon and elephant cases asking if they had any projects they had conducted with wildlife that might fit the case selection criteria. In response to a general call for cases for this study, the AC from the vole case reached out to the author, offering to share some of the cases she was working on, to see if they would fit the case study criteria. All three ACs had several cases to choose from. Final case selection was made based on

the AC's summary of the completed cases they had conducted involving wildlife, and the author and supervisor collectively decided which cases met the case criteria the most closely.

2.2. Establishing Quality

2.2.1. Trustworthiness of Data

Several measures were taken to ensure trustworthy, high-quality data. This section summarizes each of the measures in detail.

Drawing on four common tests in qualitative methods to assess data collection quality, Yin (2018) has established “case study tactics” which allow for application of the tests to case study research. Each test is identified below, including Yin's tactics and how this research addresses each of them (also see Table 2.3 for a summary).

Construct Validity – Multiple Sources of Evidence

Yin's tactics for the “construct validity” test are multiple sources of evidence, participants review draft case study, and establish a chain of evidence.

The concept of incorporating multiple sources of evidence is common in case study research, and even in qualitative studies more broadly. “Triangulation” refers to “the importance of using different sources of data, namely by conducting interviews with multiple participants or multiple archive sources” (Fusch et al., 2018; in Quintão et al., 2020). This is done to gain trust and build methodological rigour in one's research (Shoaib & Mujtaba, 2016; in Quintão et al., 2020).

The AC interviews were the primary sources of data for all three case studies; however, in two cases the ACs also provided additional sources of data (see Table 2.2). The baboon and vole case studies had two and one additional participants interviewed beyond the AC, respectively. The elephant case had no additional participants due to issues with anonymity and the secretive nature of the AC's involvement in the case study in the first

place. Together these data helped to establish a chain of events, and a timeline for each case. How these data were used and integrated into the case study narratives, is described in the “Methods” section (Chapter 2.3.), and the various data sources for each case are listed in Table 2.2. The elephant case had no additional participants due to issues with anonymity and the secretive nature of the AC’s involvement in the case study in the first place.

Table 2.2.

Data Sources for Each Case

Case	Primary source of data	Additional sources of data
Baboon case	AC interviews (n=3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPHS 1 interviews (n=2) • TPHS 2 interview • Original symposium draft of case • Published account of case by another author • PowerPoint slides from workshop
Elephant case	AC interviews (n=2)	N/A
Vole (and other backyard) cases	AC interviews (n=2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPHS interview (besides chipmunk case) • AC transcripts of communication with vole

Some of the additional data were primary sources (TPHS interviews) while others were secondary sources (original drafts/documentation of the cases, interview transcripts, PowerPoint slides); because the cases already occurred and the researcher was not able to be in attendance, these additional sources of data were especially crucial to add to the narrative. Additional sources of data beyond the interviews conducted with the three ACs were sought to further support, strengthen, and elaborate upon the data collected in the interviews, adding to the trustworthiness of the case, and wise use of participants’ time.

The ACs also referred to personal resources such as journal entries or personal correspondence to answer questions, although the author did not always use these resources directly. The additional insights from TPHS were not approached by the author as corroboration of information, but rather as providing additional and unique insight into each case. This is due to the author's choice to accept the AC and participants' information as honest representations of their experiences without skepticism, as many scholars in qualitative research such as ethnography might do, and the case studies are presented as such.

The figure below summarizes the four tests to assess qualitative data, Yin's case study tactics, and how this research fulfills each tactic.

Table 2.3.

Adapted from Yin (2018), "Case Study Tactics for Four design Tests"

Tests	Case Study Tactic	How this research fulfills this tactic
Construct validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use multiple sources of evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The baboon and vole case studies had two and one additional participants interviewed, respectively. The elephant case had no additional participants due to issues with anonymity and the secretive nature of the AC's involvement in the case study in the first place • In addition to interviews, additional sources of data included: AC's personal resources, such as PowerPoint slides or IIC session transcripts/journal entries

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants review draft case study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ACs reviewed multiple drafts, and approved the final draft
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish chain of evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Chain of evidence” for this research is the timeline that is included in the cases, which was established based on input by all participants and cross-checked across the multiple data sources
Internal validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern matching • Explanation building • Address rival explanations • Logic models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “not significant for descriptive and exploratory research” (Quintão et al., 2020) and thus is not explored further.
External validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replication logic for multiple case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See “Typology and Case Selection Criteria” section (Chapter 2.1.4) for the fulfillment of this tactic
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use case study protocol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and used guiding document which included a case study framework for all participant interviews (see Appendix D) • For detailed descriptions of the guiding document and how it was used, refer to the section “Data collection – interviews and case study framework” (Chapter 2.3.1).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop case study database of all material collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful cross-checking of all data in the database to ensure correspondence between data and completed case narratives; provision of full case narratives used for thematic analysis

2.2.2. Trustworthiness of Thematic Analysis

Scholars such as Nowell et al. (2017) have identified trustworthiness criteria for thematic analysis. The fulfillment of these criteria will be described below.

Credibility: is determined “when coresearchers or readers are confronted with the experience, they can recognize it” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; in Nowell et al., 2017). This research addressed the criteria of “credibility” in several ways, including by triangulating data, by peer debriefing with fellow researchers, having ACs review the case study findings, receiving feedback from the thesis committee, and by sharing preliminary findings in various academic contexts (such as at the “World Biodiversity Forum” and with other academics on the research team) that provide space for feedback.

Transferability: “refers to the generalizability of inquiry [...] the researcher is responsible for providing thick descriptions, so that those who seek to transfer the findings to their own site can judge transferability” (Nowell et al., 2017). The case study narratives provided thick descriptions, and details about these cases are included in the thematic analysis and theme descriptions, thus fulfilling the transferability criteria.

Dependability: research that is dependable “is logical, traceable, and clearly documented” (Tobin & Begley, 2004; in Nowell et al., 2017). This research addressed the criteria of “dependability” by using a guiding document which included a case study framework, for data collection to ensure thoroughness of data collected across cases. It also used a known framework (Guskey, 2016) for assessing the impact of engagement with IIC in a workshop context, for the TPHS in the Baboon case. The researcher also kept journal entries which documented the data collection timeline and process (see “audit trails” below).

Confirmability: “establishing that the researcher’s interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached” (Tobin & Begley, 2004; in Nowell et al., 2017).

Understanding why certain decisions were made (i.e. methodological and analytical) is

part of this category as well (Nowell et al., 2017); thus, one can fully understand each choice made in this study by reviewing the previous section, “methodology” (Chapter 2.1.).

Audit trails: “provides readers with evidence of the decisions and choices made by the researcher regarding theoretical and methodological issues throughout the study, which requires a clear rationale for such decisions” (Koch, 1994; in Nowell et al., 2017). Audit trails were maintained throughout the data collection and analysis process, and are free for review at any time.

Reflexivity: is “a self-critical account of the research process, including their internal and external dialogue” (Tobin & Begley, 2004; in Nowell et al., 2017). Part of the reflexive process was fulfilled via the audit trails and journal entries documented by the author, and the other part was by explicitly acknowledging one’s biases, outlined in further detail below.

In the spirit of honouring reflexivity, the author (S. Kuppenbender) outlined some of their personal biases that may have shaped the analytical process. Refer to the “standpoint” section in Chapter 1.1 to review identity-related markers that shape personal bias. Outside of identity, belief and value-based statements that affect the author’s decision-making are as follows:

- Bringing MTH voices into academia is a priority and vision
- Assisting Indigenous land managers in reclaiming traditional practice of engaging with MTH beings is also a priority
- Narrative-based methods (such as storytelling) are powerful tools for data collection and knowledge mobilization
- Two-way communication between humans, animals, and the Land is possible

These biases required the author (S. Kuppenbender) to check in periodically, both with themselves but also with M.J. Barrett throughout the analysis process, to help ensure that the instrumental aim and researcher subjectivity did not inappropriately impact the findings.

2.2.3. Ethics and Care of Data

All interviews were recorded on the computer and with two handheld recorders, and all recordings were backed up onto a password protected OneDrive folder and then all hard copies on the recorders were deleted. While ACs were given the choice to identify themselves in association with the study and the activities they were involved in, to help ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the names of all participants were changed to pseudonyms, and other details such as geographical locations were changed. Furthermore, ACs were instructed not to provide any identifiable information about third-party participants in their case study. The study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board (REB #1333) – see appendices for REB approval certificate, the case study consent form, and the REB amendment application.

2.3. Methods

2.3.1. Data Collection – Interviews and Case Study Framework

Data were collected by S. Kuppenbender in a combination of interviews and pre-existing documentation of the cases, using a case study framework (Appendix D, section 4). This document acted as an interview guide. Interviews were the chosen method as they have been proven to be an effective method in case study documentation (Thomas, 2021). With pre-determined topics and questions, the framework document was designed to provide some structure to data collection, thoroughness of details included in the cases, and to allow for an easier analysis process using reflexive thematic analysis. Once it became clear that third-party contributions were important to include, an interview guide for third-party participants was developed specifically to document perceived outcomes of the workshop in the baboon case (Appendix E).

A total of 12 interviews were conducted via Zoom over a 15-month period. All interviews were recorded, and the length of the interviews varied, as did the format, depending on the role of the human participant being interviewed. With two of the ACs (April and Julia), pre-

data collection meetings were conducted separately (February 1, 2023, and February 12, 2024, respectively), while the other AC (Ashley), preferred to complete the pre-data collection discussions and data collection in the same meeting (February 27, 2023). All interviewees were asked questions in sequence following the framework document, and answers were typed into the document by S. Kuppenbender, in real-time. AC interviews were completed in approximately 3 hours total; one participant opted for 3, 1-hour interviews; all others were completed in one sitting. In all cases, the first version of the case study was drafted upon completion of initial interviews, and then was sent to the AC for feedback. TPHS were not given the option to either document together or answer questions independently; they were asked to meet virtually for an hour and answer a few pre-identified questions.

The entirety of the guiding document was divided into four sections: 1) introduction to the researcher, and to the research, 2) preparations for working together (researcher and participant), 3) how to construct a case study, describing what makes a good case study, and 4) case study content. The fourth section included a detailed interview guide, creating the case study framework with the following parts to the document: 1) case study summary, 2) introduction, 3) methods, 4) outcomes, 5) discussion and conclusion. Each part of the framework contained possible questions that would be asked in each section outlined in detail (see sample below).

Figure 2.3.

Discussion and Conclusion in the Case Study Framework

4f. Discussion and Conclusion (~2.5 pages, or 25% of the paper): This section is meant for you to wrap up any final thoughts about the project. You might, for example, discuss whether your methods were effective, what you might change and what you might carry over in future projects. You might also share any tangible outcomes that came from your conversations with animals or other stakeholders, and your vision for future projects that might carry forward from this project, if applicable.

- *Were your methods effective? Provide details regarding how you know this.*
- *If you were to do this project again, what would you do differently?*
- *If you were to do this project again, what would you keep the same?*
- *Were there any tangible outcomes that came from your research/conversations with animals? With the humans involved?*
- *Were there any unanticipated consequences (positive, negative or neutral) for animals, humans, organizations, ecosystems?*

For both the baboon and vole cases, there were pre-existing versions of the cases written for symposiums or conferences. In both of those cases, S. Kuppenbender reviewed the AC's draft of the case and began filling out the framework independently, prior to the first data collection interview. Any unanswered questions in the framework were highlighted, and additional questions raised upon reviewing the AC's draft were added to the framework document. In the interview, the AC was asked to tell the full story beginning to end, while the interviewer (S. Kuppenbender) would be sure that highlighted and new questions in the framework document were addressed. Additional data provided by the ACs was also used to fill in gaps and included data collected at the time of the event.

2.3.2. Third-Party Participants, and Interview Guide

The unique nature of each case meant that third-party contributions varied from case-to-case. In the elephant case, no third-party participant was interviewed due to issues of anonymity and the secretive nature of the involvement of the AC in this project (reserve staff who involved the AC in the project did not tell their superiors or others involved in the relocation process, out of fear of the loss of their jobs due to the stigmatized nature of IIC). In the baboon case, after the organizer of the workshop was added to the case study

framework, it was clear that the impact and outcomes of the IIC workshop remained uncertain. At this point, researchers created a supplementary interview guide to create a better understanding of the impact of the baboon workshop. This document was used only for the TPHS of the baboon case, where the workshop organizer and one workshop participant were interviewed. The original framework document was used to interview Peter in the vole case, as he was not evaluating a workshop like the TPHS in the baboon case.

The supplementary document, “case study workshop reflection framework” was developed (and approved by REB) based on Kirkpatrick and Guskey’s respective models for evaluation. Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2007) are widely recognized for their four levels of evaluation (Reaction, Learning, Behaviour, Results). Their four-level model for evaluating training inspired Guskey’s model (2016), which as Guskey says, provides more insight into the “why” as well as the “what” of training evaluation. Guskey’s five levels (participants’ reactions, participants’ learning, organizational support and change, participants’ use of new knowledge and skills, student learning outcomes) are in close alignment with Kirkpatrick’s, aside from the added level in the middle, “organizational support and change”, which accounts for the degree of support offered to the participants in applying the learned behaviour.

This project borrowed from both Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2007) and Guskey’s (2016) levels of evaluation to create a set of clustered questions to ask baboon case workshop participants. The intention of these interviews with workshop participants was to provoke deep reflection about the workshop, and its impact on the lives of the participants as well as the baboons in their community. There were five clusters of questions, as per Guskey’s model, all of which built on one another to establish a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the workshop. It should be acknowledged that ideally, workshops or learning evaluations are developed in tandem with the training/workshop/content being delivered, so this evaluation was not as comprehensive as it could have been.

The ACs of both the baboon and vole cases assisted in identifying and contacting potential third-party participants except in the baboon case, where the first third-party participant and the AC's primary contact in the baboon case (Paula), helped contact the second third-party participant. The interviews for third-party participants were much shorter than for the AC's, typically one single one-to-two-hour interview. After each interview, just as with the AC interviews, the data was reviewed and integrated into the case study draft. While integrating Paula's data, a major revision of the case study format was made to account for multiple participant voices, with sub-headings indicating changes in voice. Certain sections were left with only the AC's narrative; for example, when multiple voices were not needed or helpful, or when the third-party participants were not involved in that part of the case. If there had been any discrepancy in the participants' recollections of the case, this would have been indicated; fortunately, this never became an issue.

2.3.3. Data Integration to Shape Case Study Narratives

While accessing and integrating multiple sources of data is ideal for ensuring trustworthy data, there are logistical complications that will arise in the process of integration. In this study, the author was required to cross-compare the data from multiple sources, confirm factual alignment, and incorporate multiple narratives. The author's method for addressing these complications, was by assigning the AC narrative as the primary one, and all other narratives as secondary.

The process of integration of all data for each case involved reviewing and organizing interview data into headings following the framework document, creating a case study narrative. Any data that did not lend to the overall storyline, (i.e. anecdotal information) was omitted. In some instances, details were changed, or had to be omitted, to ensure anonymity of research participants. Additionally, information that did not answer the research question "How are ACs working with wildlife?" was pulled into an "outtakes" heading and not used. Integration of the data began immediately after the data was collected.

2.3.4. Finalizing the Case Studies

The process of determining when each case study was complete was unique in each situation.

For the baboon case, the author reached out to the AC upon integration of data from the data collection interviews to answer some follow-up questions. Upon receiving replies from the AC, S. Kuppenbender and M.J. Barrett realized that additional perspectives were needed to answer some of the outstanding questions. Upon completion of integration of data from the third-party participants, the recordings of the interviews with the AC were reviewed to ensure that the data being used as the backbone of the case study was entirely accurate. At this time, there was simultaneously a process of refining the timeline, and addressing any contradictions in the narrative; given the different iterations of this case study, any discrepancies were identified, and the AC was asked to address the discrepancies (in timeline, or in more minute details of the case). These additional steps were taken in this case to ensure that all critical pieces of data were present and accurately represented, given the longer period of revisions and many iterations of the case. This process proved that yes, the data was accurate, and while no major edits were made, this step was still important, as it provided a fresh perspective on the baboon case and triggered some minor edits to improve clarity and flow. At this point, the author felt comfortable presenting the AC with a first draft, with final clarifying questions for review. A virtual meeting was held to discuss these questions, and at this point the researchers and AC collectively agreed that they were comfortable finalizing the case at this point.

For the elephant case, the first draft came together quickly, then the document got sent back and forth twice between the researchers and the AC, to answer all outstanding researcher questions and to address places that needed more detail. After two rounds of edits, S. Kuppenbender and M.J. Barrett felt comfortable with finalizing the case, and the AC confirmed that she was also content with the state of the document.

For the vole case, the process of finalizing was similar to that of the elephant case, just at a more accelerated pace. After integrating the data from the third-party participant, a draft

was sent to the AC for review with all questions and areas requiring clarification identified. There was a final virtual meeting to answer more detailed questions that could not be answered over email, and then after one final email with some minor questions, all parties agreed that the draft was complete.

2.3.5. Thematic Analysis

Analysis of data collected in this project was guided by Braun & Clarke’s version of reflexive thematic analysis (TA) (Terry et al., 2017). According to Braun & Clarke (2006), “thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79).

Braun and Clarke have established six phases of TA, which are outlined below (Braun & Clarke, 2024). While they are described as linear, the methodologists also acknowledge the recursive nature of the process and that some steps might be repeated or revisited. The following table illustrates how this study applied each of these six phases:

Table 2.4.

Adapted from Braun & Clarke (2024), “The Six Phases of TA”

Phase	Phase description (Braun & Clarke, 2024)	Phase implementation description
Phase 1: Familiarizing yourself with the dataset	Reading and re-reading the data, to become intimately familiar with its content, and making notes on your initial analytic observations, both in relation to each individual data item (e.g. an interview transcript) and to the entire dataset.	This was done post-interviews, by integrating the data into the case studies, getting to know the data closely by constructing case study narratives through the data.
Phase 2: Coding	Generating succinct labels (codes) that capture and evoke important features of the data that might be relevant to addressing the research question. It involves coding the entire dataset, with two or	Started with ‘summary codes’ of the first two cases, to make the amount of data being analyzed more manageable (45+ single spaced pages of summarized data). An example of a summary code is

	more rounds of coding, and after that, collating all the codes and all relevant data extracts, together for later stages of analysis.	“human close to the elephants reached out to AC” to summarize how the AC became involved in the elephant case. Then overarching codes were generated from the summary codes; for example, the code generated from the example summary code was “human-initiated intervention”. The same thing was done with the third case study.
Phase 3: Generating initial themes	Examining the codes and collated data to begin to develop significant broader patterns of meaning (potential themes). It then involves collating data relevant to each candidate theme, so that you can work with the data and review the viability of each candidate theme.	Using the codes generated in the previous phase, preliminary themes were generated, which were slowly refined. Refining the themes involved grouping the narrower themes into larger themes, which eventually became themes and sub-themes. The codes were moved around, with the summary codes remaining underneath to maintain connection to the original data.
<i>At this stage, only two cases were complete; upon first completing phase 3 the researchers realized that an additional case was required to provide a broader view. Upon documenting the third case, phases 2 & 3 were completed independently, and then the results of phase 3 from all cases were compared and integrated together.</i>		
Phase 4: Developing and reviewing themes	Checking the candidate themes against the coded data and the entire dataset, to determine that they tell a convincing story of the data, and addresses the research question. In this phase, themes are further developed, which might involve altering them.	Some strategies used to refine the themes were visual mapping, writing descriptions of the themes and sub-themes, and asking peers to review the outcomes. At times the author needed to check to ensure that the themes were indeed concepts, and not summaries of the data.
Phase 5: Refining, defining and naming themes	Developing a detailed analysis of each theme, working out the scope and focus of each	Writing a description of each theme, with supporting data to illustrate the theme. This led

	theme, determining the ‘story’ of each theme, deciding on a name for each theme.	to clear definitions for key terms that were central to the generated concepts.
Phase 6: Writing up	This final phase involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts, and contextualizing the analysis in relation to existing literature.	This step was ongoing, but was completed in the writing of this thesis.

An important distinction when developing the themes is ensuring they are conceptual, not simply summaries of the data. A data summary, while valuable, does not align with the intention of TA in that they are not fully developed themes. The author continually revisited this distinction to ensure this requirement was being fulfilled. After analyzing the three cases carefully, five themes were generated that collectively answer the research question, “How are ACs working with wildlife?”. These themes are described in further detail in the "Results" section (Chapter Four).

CHAPTER 3: Results - Case Studies

Documentation of the case studies resulted in two nested cases, and one stand-alone case, narrated from the perspective of the person(s) involved. Shortened versions are in this chapter, and the full versions of each case are featured in the appendices.

3.1. Baboon Case

This case is based on interviews with the AC (April), a member of the local conservation society (Paula), and a workshop participant (Doug). Additional secondary sources of data used to finalize the case were written accounts of the case, and PowerPoint slides from the workshop.

3.1.1. Introduction

Conflict between humans and wildlife is common across the African continent, and along the southern coast, baboon-human conflict is especially common. This case takes place in a small community in Mozambique, situated on the edge of a mountainous forest ecoregion. In the 18 months leading up to the beginning of this case, a troop of baboons had begun to exhibit destructive behaviour; they were destroying property, taking food, and for some people (even for people who loved the baboons) this behaviour was ongoing and constant. Meanwhile, certain farmers and other community members were very angry with the baboons, given their perceived destructive and violent behaviour, and had started shooting them. Given this new conflict and violence, the people who cared about the baboons wanted to help them but were getting worried about their own safety. Someone in the community suggested maybe trying an AC, and remembered an organization that worked with baboons in a nearby city. That led to the community reaching out to me, April, to mediate the ongoing discord between human and baboon community members.

3.1.2. First Meeting

I chose to begin addressing this conflict by facilitating a meeting with the human community, initiated and organized by the local conservation society. This first meeting was an opportunity to share concerns about what was going on, not about me giving them solutions. The community members in attendance were genuinely concerned about the safety of the baboons because they were being shot at and killed, by both other angry community members and occasionally by the authorities (one of the methods of baboon population management in Mozambique is culling). The attendees were also concerned about their homes being destroyed, as well as their lifestyle being impacted, which centres around nature-based living (e.g. doors open, picnics outside, etc). Having baboons constantly in their space was restrictive; they were not able to leave their houses, which was negatively impacting their emotional wellbeing. In certain circumstances, the baboons were not taking food, they were just damaging property, which was extra confusing for the humans.

At the end of the meeting, I suggested that we hold a workshop to facilitate more understanding through IIC. The attendees were open to the idea of a workshop, and I was happy that they accepted my suggestion. From my perspective, the community members would be best positioned to address the conflict if they were able to communicate with the baboons.

3.1.3. The Workshop

The conservation society organized and advertised the half-day workshop, which took place about a month after the first meeting. Between 30-40 people attended, including many (about 60%) of the first meeting attendees, as well as more people from the community that hadn't been at the initial meeting. I opened by describing my work with baboons in nearby communities and touched on what baboons need to thrive and be happy. This included details about baboon family structure, and baboon behaviour, such as what a healthy troop is, and their signs of stress.

I then guided attendees in my “being a baboon” meditation exercise, which is a type of shape-shifting experience where they are guided to imagine that their body is changing into a baboon body, and then they experience the daily life of a baboon. Sometimes I refer to this as “tapping into the essence of the baboon”. This exercise was aimed to help attendees learn what it means and feels like to be a baboon, as well as experiencing the use of your intuition. Afterwards, participants were offered space to share their encounters with the baboons, and describe what had been transpiring between humans and baboons in the community. I provided some feedback as to why this conflict might be going on, and gave some practical advice about how to use body language, for example, to address the issues.

I then shared fundamental information about IIC and communicating with animals that I believe are important, such as teachings about the energy of beings and how to communicate using love, respect, and joy. I then taught the basic steps to communicating with an animal, including how to “move into your heart space”, and participants were given some time to practice. There was an opportunity after practicing communicating with the baboons to share what we each had heard.

Given the ongoing animosity between humans and the baboons, the participants felt that the baboons were in danger in the areas they were currently occupying, so they wanted to ask the baboons to stay away from the dangerous areas. This discussion about safe spaces for the baboons triggered another question from participants, “Do we know of any places safe for baboon occupation?”. Using maps provided by a national parks employee as a reference, and looking at the mapped boundaries of human inhabited and farmed areas, we visualized the baboons staying in the area that was protected from human development. We identified which properties they would be welcomed at outside the national park, using the physical fences to show boundaries. We did some meditation to communicate the safe spaces to the baboons as a group, visualizing the baboons staying in these “safe spaces”.

Given that this is a two-way exchange with fellow beings who have their own lives, agendas, and personal interests in mind, I also asked the baboons if they would be able to relocate. If they felt that they were unable to move, for any reason (e.g. they are in their traditional home range and would be in conflict with another troop, that even though we think it's dangerous, they may feel trapped, etc.) we would revise our strategy and seek other possible solutions.

3.1.4. Individual Case Studies

3.1.4.1. Doug's case

One of the workshop participants (Doug) asked me to assist him with two issues he was having with the baboons. The first issue was that he was worried about his dogs chasing the baboons and getting hurt. The second issue was that he had this pear tree in his garden, and while he didn't mind the baboons coming into his yard and eating the pears, in the process they were damaging the tree.

I visited Doug's home. We identified the boundary where the baboons could safely forage and be far enough away from his house so as not to upset the dogs. What we did was use that boundary to ask the baboons to stay on the side of the paddock fence where the pear tree was, by visualizing them staying on "their side" of the fence, because as soon as they came into his personal space, that's when the conflict would happen. We also let the baboons know that they would be safe from the dogs if they stayed outside that boundary, by visualizing the dogs as calm and peaceful on one side of the fence, and baboons on the other side of the fence. Doug communicated with the dogs (who were there) and asked that they remain calm when the baboons were around. He got back to me later and said that the dogs were remaining calm the next time the baboons visited, and the baboons were staying clear of the fence.

I also led Doug in a communication regarding the destruction of the tree, and had him ask the baboons about needing the pears. He came back and he said, "oh my goodness, I just got the question, *but you are not eating the pears, so why can't we eat them?*". He admitted to me that he did not eat the pears because they were always too hard and sour. I

then recommended that he communicate to the baboons that they are welcome to eat the pears, but ask that they protect the tree, by visualizing them gently taking the pears without causing any damage. He contacted me later and said they did gently take the pears without breaking the tree the next time they came back to the yard.

3.1.4.2. Jessica's case

Jessica was a young, recently single mother, who was also an attendee of the workshop. She had always felt safe with the baboons around, and they very seldom tried to get into the house. Over the months leading up to the workshop, however, they had begun breaking windows and pulling window shutters off in an attempt to get inside her house, and she had developed a fear of them. She wanted to know why they were targeting her when she cared for them so much.

When I connected and started the communication with the baboons, I received: 1) a feeling of love towards her and a need for her to understand the stress that they were going through, and 2) that she needed to be stronger within herself and her own boundaries. She admitted that since becoming single, she felt quite fragile and worried about her security.

I showed her how to communicate the physical boundaries of the property to the baboons. She also communicated to them that she understood the issues facing them. I received feedback from her after some time that she was feeling safer, and the baboons had been less destructive. She was grateful, but she had put in the work as well – she worked on her own 'issues' (e.g. internal discomfort and energy field) and saw results.

3.1.5. Reflections on the Workshop: Outcomes and “20-20 Hindsight”

Participants cited outcomes of the workshop as: personal growth, a shift in attitude toward the baboons, and a greater appreciation and empathy towards the baboons and their positive impact on the landscape.

The workshop coordinator, Paula, reflected on the outcome of the workshop, stating that “Participants reported a noticeable change in baboon behaviour; they seemed to be less aggressive, and methods seemed to be working. People were being proactive, taking

responsibility, and there seemed to be a softening on the people's part. Perhaps it's because they had a method to apply, rather than resorting to throwing stones. I think that because the humans softened, the baboons responded positively to that.”

Another workshop participant, Doug, also reflected on the outcomes of the workshop and its impact on the baboons; “I like to think that the baboons are not doing anything differently as a result of the workshop. Rather, I believe that through the workshop, they were suddenly made aware of why they were being met with such aggression. While they continued to seek readily available food after the workshop, it seemed that territorial boundaries had been made clearer”.

From what I heard from Paula some time after the workshop (I don't remember the exact amount of time that lapsed), there were some immediate positive outcomes, particularly regarding a decrease in conflict amongst both parties. Even though the baboons were still visiting the human spaces, the people were being more tolerant and understanding. There seemed to be less anger, like at the community meetings, from the farmers and others who were particularly angry at the baboons. I'm not sure how long the “peace” lasted, however, which I regret, as we did not keep more in touch and plan a follow-up meeting.

Given that it was a one-off workshop, I wanted to do follow-ups, which I believe would have kept the people on board and interested in the work. The world has changed so much with more online opportunities, that nowadays I would create an opportunity for people who were interested to meet regularly on Zoom so that even if they weren't physically living in the community anymore, they could still be involved.

Overall, I have no doubt in my mind that our methods were effective. The work was not one-sided; both sides were contributing. I know the methods were effective because of the information received while communicating with the baboon representative. Of course, the decrease in conflict was the ultimate proof that we were successful in our methods and mission.

Table 3.1.*Baboon Case Timeline*

Date	Event	Outcome
2016-2017	Exponential increase in baboon activity causing conflict	Baboons were being shot by farmers and angry residents. People were becoming fearful and intolerant of baboons
2016-2017	Discussions are ongoing amongst residents about what to do, how to address the ongoing conflict more effectively.	Some folks approach the conservation society with a request that they take action.
October 2017	Paula reaches out to AC (April) to assist with a solution to ongoing conflict.	A meeting between AC and concerned residents was arranged to discuss possible next steps.
Dec 2017	First meeting with the community members	Community members are clearly looking for improvement in the ongoing human-baboon conflict, and a workshop is planned, where AC will provide practical advice and teach IIC as methods to reduce conflict with baboons.
Jan 2018	Workshop takes place	Residents felt more able to understand the baboons and how to work with them to decrease the conflict
Years post-workshop	Initially, some reduction in baboon-human conflict Over time, people became more relaxed, but also less aware of their relationship with the baboons, less conscious of their thoughts, actions, and how they would affect the baboons.	
To date	Intermittent period of baboon-human conflict with new community members moving in/other members moving away	Realization of a need for regular follow-ups to the initial communication workshop.

3.2. Elephant Case

This case is based on interviews with Ashley, the AC.

3.2.1. Introduction

In the spring of 2016, reserve staff were heading up a long-term research program at a wildlife reserve in Malawi (reserve A), which housed a herd of 56 elephants. This reserve had agreed to relocate 18 of the 56 elephants to a different region of the country (reserve B), for the purpose of a historic reintroduction of elephants to that region. The problem was that the staff at reserve A had differing opinions about which 18 to choose based on the elephant family structure and dynamics. There were no natural subgroups to choose from; either way they looked at it there subgroups that would be broken up. Given these complications and uncertainty, one of the reserve staff reached out to me (Ashley) to “hear straight from the elephants’ mouths” which individuals would be willing to relocate to reserve B. The reserve staff who contacted me feared the stigma associated with the field of IIC, and felt it was important to remain quiet about my involvement; thus, no other interviews were possible.

3.2.2. Consulting With the Elephants

I conducted my first “round” of communications in May of 2016, with only Aurora, the matriarch. To prepare for the communication, I opened the picture of Aurora on my computer, and sat in my chair with my eyes closed to centre myself and quieten my mind. Once I connected with her, I explained that I was communicating on behalf of the reserve staff about some very big changes. I sent a mental image of approximately one third of her group of elephants separating from the other two thirds, along with the feeling of this being permanent. With this mental image I sent the sense of new start, a new population, and growing numbers over the years, as well as restoration of an ecosystem. I was also specific about the timing of the intended relocation, letting her know that it was intended to happen in the next three months.

Then I asked her, thinking the words slowly and silently in my mind, “Would you be willing to relocate, given your experience as a leader?”. The researchers had thought that she would be a good candidate to lead the new herd in reserve B, given the unknown territory requiring a matriarch’s experience to navigate and teach the other elephants. She responded with a sense of “No” - she conveyed a strong desire to stay here (reserve A) through a feeling of solidity, like she was rooted to [reserve A] and immovable. This was followed by my inner sense of a mental image of her eldest daughter, Princess - along with the knowing that Aurora felt that Princess might be better suited to lead the new herd. She expressed that she had been mentoring Princess, and this would be a good opportunity for her to step forward into a leadership role.

Once again using silent word thoughts, I asked her, “Who else do you feel should relocate with your daughter?”. She showed me Princess’ small family group of five elephants, including two calves. I saw in my mind’s eye another related group of eleven elephants, including three young males. Lastly, I saw a pair of bulls - an older one and his younger mentee. She shared only this configuration with me, which I then relayed back to reserve staff a few days later. They knew who Aurora meant as the staff was very familiar with the group dynamics in reserve A, and they accepted her preference. The staff also told me what the game capture day would involve in specific terms, so that I could prepare the elephants for that stressful process in our second conversation.

-- 1 month later --

I conducted the second “round” of communications, with Aurora first, then with Princess. First, I informed Aurora that her nominations had been accepted by the humans. I explained that all the elephants’ physical cooperation on capture day was going to be imperative to their choices being honored, because not all humans were on board with - or even aware of - the elephants’ choices. Specifically, I conveyed two sets of visual information to Aurora. In my mind’s eye I imagined her separating from Princess, and moving as far away as she could in the opposite direction, encouraging the elephants not self-selected for relocation to follow her away from Princess. I asked Aurora to vocalize

and call those elephants in her language so that they would understand. She conveyed a sense of acknowledgement.

I then communicated with Princess, the sub-matriarch. I let Princess know about the relocation, and the human reasons for it. She trusted her mother's choice to send her away with sufficient family members for it to not be hugely traumatic in outcome. I then conveyed to Princess the visual, auditory, and emotional aspects of game capture. I imagined myself looking upwards from the elephant perspective at the helicopters circling towards me; I imagined myself running away from the helicopter, and then as an elephant slowing down and curving my travel trajectory to turn towards the helicopter. I asked Princess to call for her small family group to follow her into the firing line, as this was the only way to be assured that they would come with her to the new reserve. I conveyed to her the physical feeling of her darted body becoming heavy and falling asleep, and the feeling of being lifted off the ground by a crane into a big metal box on wheels (transport truck). When the motion of the truck stopped, one side would open and she and the others would be allowed to step onto the earth again into a fenced enclosure, where they would remain for some days and nights to become familiar with their surroundings.

It is important to note that sometimes at this point during a consultation the animals convey a feeling of "this is too much" and a refusal to accept the situation being described. This would cause a negotiation to unfold, which may lead to a different individual being selected. None of this was present here; Princess gave no indication of resistance or sense of being unable to cope with her future realities.

I also conducted a third communication with the herd destined for reserve B, which was more of a "broadcast communication" than a series of multiple individual communications. I explained that they had been selected for relocation by their matriarch, and described what was coming on game capture day. The information I shared, and how I shared it, was similar to my exchange with Princess. The only information that was different was that I asked these elephants to follow Princess towards the helicopter. For everyone but the pair of bulls, I was asking them to go against their instinct and to follow

Princess (the leader-in-training) rather than Aurora. For the two bulls, I asked them to stay isolated as a pair rather than seeking safety in numbers by joining the larger herd running away from the helicopters. Once again, it is important to note that had somebody been resistant, I would have become aware of it; instead, I got a feeling of collective consent.

3.2.3. Outcomes

The day after game capture I heard from reserve staff that it had all gone very well. I was told that from the view in the helicopter, it was visibly obvious how Aurora led the majority of the elephants as far away as she could manage. Princess and her small herd, running in the opposite direction, switched from running away from the helicopter to curving back in a loop towards the helicopter's line of flight, exposing herself and her small group on open ground. This allowed the marksman to easily get clean shots of the tranquilizer darts into those specific elephants. In just a few short hours, the exact 18 individuals nominated were captured and loaded into the transport trucks. They were safely offloaded the next morning, without injury, loss of life or any incident whatsoever.

Table 3.2.*Elephant Case Timeline*

Date	Event	Outcome
April 2016	Contacted with request for assistance from reserve staff	I agreed to participate
April 2016 – same day	Briefing of problem and desired outcomes with reserve staff	I had a roadmap for the upcoming IIC consultation (questions for the elephants AND information to convey to the elephants)
May 2016	First round of IIC's/consultations with "overarching" matriarch elephant, "Aurora" who acted as a representative	Received from communication with Aurora: a) confirmation that she understood the upcoming relocation, and b) suggestions of which 18 elephants to send to the new reserve
May 2016, a few days later	I gave verbal feedback to the reserve staff, to see if they agreed, from a safety or biological point of view, with the 18 candidates	The reserve staff agreed with all 18 candidates suggested for relocation and gave me the go-ahead to proceed with the communications with the other elephants.
June 2016	Communications with 1) Princess, the sub-matriarch of the 18 elephants (selected by Aurora), 2) the two bull elephants to be relocated, as well as 3) a "broadcast communication" to all 18 elephants destined for Reserve B	I received confirmation from Princess, the two bull elephants, and the final 18 self-selected individuals that they were willing to relocate.
June 2016, later	Reserve staff was given feedback from conversations, and they confirmed the requests made by elephants.	Reserve staff agreed to allocate specified 18 elephants for capture and relocation - but made it clear that no special efforts could be made on the ground if those 18 weren't the first and most easily found by the marksmen on capture day.
end of IIC involvement		
July 2016	Moving day	All 18 who were selected were moved successfully
September 2016	New reserve opens with all 18 free-roaming elephants	The reserve staff say that things went well, and elephants were settling just fine.

3.3. Vole (and Other Backyard) Cases

This case is based on interviews with the AC Julia, and her husband Peter. Additional data included a transcript of the communication between Julia and the vole.

3.3.1. Introduction

I (Julia) live in a quickly developing valley, nestled between two mountain ranges in the Rocky Mountain Lower Montane-Foothill Shrubland ecological system. My purpose in this project was to co-create a garden and wild space with the local species that allowed for safer co-existence and an ongoing bargaining process for everyone's needs to be met. I worked with local birds, ants, bees, red-tailed hawks, voles, and others, to negotiate and address conflicts as they arose. I will summarize these various cases in the "individual cases" sections below, and will describe one of the cases in greater detail.

3.3.2. Individual Cases

The following individual cases are shorter examples of how I have worked with wildlife in various circumstances.

3.3.2.1. Co-creating a wildflower garden with local pollinators

I didn't know where to begin in the rehabilitation process of the land to organically create a wildflower garden. After about 6 months of inhabiting the property, I began communicating with the few local bumblebees and hummingbirds that stopped by to understand their specific requirements in a small garden landscape, from plant species to water requirements. I maintained open communications with them and other garden visitors such as butterflies and spiders throughout the gardening season (spring-fall) to ensure their needs were being met and adjusted accordingly.

The information received included, but was not limited to, the following:

- The bumble bee queen asked for a specific type of water bowl with pebbles inside so her children wouldn't drown when getting water.

- The hummingbird shared with me which plants are best for nectar and why; she preferred rocky mountain penstemon (*Penstemon strictus*) and threadleaf giant hyssop (*Agastache rupestris*).

While I have been a gardener for over ten years, I have learned so much about the specific needs of the local wildlife and am happy to accommodate their needs whenever possible.

3.3.2.2. Ants destroying garden plant roots

While most of the garden visitors were welcomed, I encountered a problem with the ants ruining several plants in the garden by destroying their roots. After first using methods like cinnamon and chili powder to deter them with no success, I decided to try communicating with them to see if they'd kindly relocate.

There wasn't a formal communication that occurred, or an exchange with any one individual in particular; I 'talked' into the space, and hoped the message would get across. I asked if the colony would find a new place to live and explained why it was important for them to stop killing my plants. After several days, the ant colony disappeared. I don't know where they went, but they were no longer harming my garden plants.

3.3.2.3. Ensuring co-existence between nearby red-tailed hawks and our flock of chickens

There is a red-tailed hawk family that lives in the trees by my house and is comprised of five individuals: two adults, three yearlings. I was concerned about this family of hawks because they would regularly swoop close to the house and eyeball my hens. While I hadn't lost an animal to them yet, I knew from having lived rurally before that hawks and other predators pose threats to animals like my chickens, kitten and free-range rabbit. When I connected, I tuned into the male adult. I learned that the family has lived here for years and that they don't migrate. After a few moments of what I'd describe as casual conversation, I asked if he and his family could kindly leave the animals that I care for out of their diet.

While at first he gave me the feeling of a side eye sort of impression, as if he were to imply that he wouldn't consider the request, I could feel his consideration energetically (almost

like an attitude or emotional shift, without him saying anything) because I had formally asked him with kindness and respect. Ever since that conversation three years ago, the hawk family no longer comes close to my yard, and I haven't lost a hen or rabbit yet to predation.

3.3.2.4. Chipmunks: A client case showcasing alternative outcomes

The chipmunk case that I conducted for a client awhile ago is the most thorough case that I have documented, but it didn't "end well". The clients informed me that chipmunks in their yard were destroying the underneath of the driveway and the foundation of the house, causing it to crack, which my clients were understandably very concerned about. They were trapping and relocating 40 chipmunks a day for weeks.

When I opened the communication, the chipmunk I connected with said "I could move the ones that are willing to relocate, just give us a few days"; afterwards, there was a noticeable reduction in population. The chipmunk I connected with did warn me that all we were going to be doing by relocating a group of chipmunks was making space for more to take their place, though, which is exactly what happened. He made it clear that there was an imbalance in the ecosystem, and an overpopulation of chipmunks in the area, and that the only natural ways to regulate the chipmunk population was to: 1) encourage more of their natural predators to move into the neighborhood (i.e. owl and fox), or 2) wait for disease to take over.

Unfortunately, my clients were living in a very developed area, and the chipmunks were unsure if the presence of these predators would be welcome in the neighborhood. My clients also were not in a place to wait for disease to balance the population naturally. Despite doing everything they could to find a non-lethal solution, it seemed that there was no other option, so in the end we had to move to the most extremely invasive option, and ask the chipmunks what their preferred method of euthanization was. I think the clients started to put dry ice down the holes. So, I say this case didn't "end well" because there was nothing I could do; there were no other remediation options because there were too many outside influences impacting the outcome.

3.3.3. Negotiating With Voles in the Lawn

In the summer of 2022, there seemed to be a vole family that had moved into the backyard, digging about 100 square feet of holes in our freshly placed lawn. My husband did not want these voles in the lawn, digging it up. For seven weeks, various non-lethal methods were used unsuccessfully to encourage the voles to leave, such as flooding the holes daily, backfilling the holes with dirt, and sprinkling cinnamon powder down the holes, then fresh/dry mint leaves, then garlic and chili peppers. Given the lack of success with these methods, my husband became fed up and suggested taking lethal measures. At this point, in the hopes of avoiding taking lethal measures, I stepped in to try and communicate with the voles to ask them to leave.

I began by conveying to the vole that stepped forward, “I would like to kindly ask you that you relocate your family”. He replied asking where they were supposed to move to. After offering the other side of the fence and a garden bed as possible relocation spots, and the vole rejecting those options, I had to inform him that lethal measures might be taken if we could not find a solution. Finally, I offered that they move to the back of the fenced garden, and gave them three days to relocate, otherwise, it was out of my control.

3.3.4. Outcomes of the Vole Case

Immediately after the communication, I felt like I had betrayed the voles because I confirmed their distrust with humans, and I was unsure if our conversation would be enough to encourage them to relocate. Two days after our communication, however, we noticed the holes in the yard were no longer actively being dug up. I looked around the entire lawn to see if they had moved and didn't see anything. It wasn't until later that day when I realized a new vole colony had taken up residence in a corner of the garden, exactly where I asked the vole leader to take his family. It has been almost two years now, and we have not had any voles dig up our lawn to date.

Table 3.3.*Vole (and other backyard) Cases Timeline*

Date	Event	Outcome
October 2021	My family moves onto our property	I observe conflict that is ongoing between local wildlife and neighbours developing on nearby land
April 2022	I begin planting and co-creating a garden space with local species	There seems to be success with the garden as it grows
April 2022	We lay about 500 sqft of new lawn in our yard	We almost immediately notice mounds of dirt and holes dug up in about 100 sqft of lawn
April 2022	We (my husband and I) try a variety of non-lethal methods to encourage the voles to migrate elsewhere	Methods were not working and we realize that lethal measures may need to be taken
May 2022	I decide to try reaching out to the voles to see if we could negotiate before taking lethal measures. Negotiation occurs, and I suggest they move into a corner of our garden	While initially hesitant, the voles agreed and moved on day 2 of our 3 day agreement to the corner of the garden I identified in our conversation
April 2024 (2 years after the communication)	No other vole colonies have returned to our lawn yet.	

CHAPTER 4: Results - Thematic Analysis

This section outlines the analyzed data to answer the research questions:

- How are ACs, animals, and TPHS using IIC to work together to address issues in conservation and HWC?
- What are the ACs and TPHS' ethical orientation/beliefs about animals?
- What are the roles of ACs, animals and TPHS in each case?
- What strategies are the ACs using to facilitate these roles?
- What are some key outcomes of the cases?

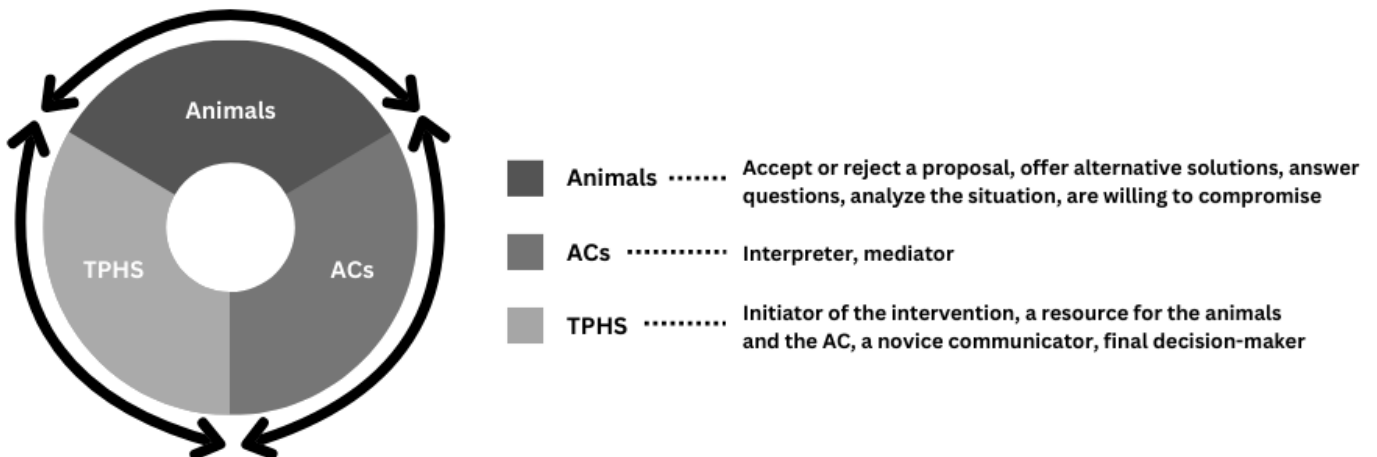
The reflexive thematic analysis identified five themes. The first three are highly developed and finalized, while the last two (particularly theme four) will require further development in future studies.

The first theme, “ACs as interpreters and mediators”, describes how ACs act as interpreters and mediators within the cases, and the ethical orientation that guides their work. The second theme, “TPHS as significant players and critical resources” describes first the ethical orientation of the TPHS individuals within the cases, and then their roles within the cases as the initiator of the intervention, as a resource for the animals and the AC, as a novice communicator, and as the final decision-maker. The third theme, “animals as agents in issues that affect them” illustrates the animals involved in the cases as individuals who can accept or reject a proposal, offer alternative solutions, answer questions, analyze the situation, and negotiate. These themes are illustrated in Fig. 2.1 and Fig. 4.1. The fourth theme, “approaches and strategies for ACs to translate information, and engage stakeholders in their respective roles”, is a summary of the various strategies and approaches described by the ACs that allows them to effectively act as interpreters and mediators, and to make space for animals to engage in the cases. The fifth and final theme, “outcomes of ACs using IIC as a method”, is a description of the outcomes of the cases, from the perspective of the ACs. Together, these themes show how a case involving wildlife might unfold, including the belief systems of the humans involved and their

approach to the cases, the levels of engagement of the animals involved, and the possible outcomes of the cases.

Figure 4.1.

The Roles of the Stakeholders in the Cases



4.1. Theme 1: ACs as IIC Interpreters and Mediators

4.1.1. Summary of AC Roles

This section describes the roles of ACs as interpreters and mediators in the cases, and the ethical orientation that guides them in these roles. Much of the ACs' ethical orientation is intrinsic to their chosen path and approach to the cases. Some strategies that demonstrate their ethical beliefs, include honouring the animals' social dynamics, and seeking to do no harm or as little harm as possible.

The ACs identified their roles in these cases as interpreters, mediators, (and other similar words such as negotiators or “bridges” between the humans and the animals). ACs act as interpreters by receiving information either from the animal via IIC, or in human language from the TPHS, changing the information from one language to another, then relaying it in a format that can be understood by the other party. This might happen multiple times between each party, or only once. The ACs also act as mediators; while they continue to

act as interpreters, they seek and share information back and forth to move the situation towards a resolution or desired outcome. It was difficult to identify small excerpts that demonstrated ACs acting in these roles, as they are largely interwoven throughout each case. Regardless, there are examples of an AC in each role, with a small discussion to ensure a more concrete understanding of AC leadership in this field.

4.1.2. AC Ethical Orientation

The ACs demonstrated shared beliefs that guide their work. Many of these beliefs are intrinsic to the nature of the cases and the ACs' desire to pursue this work in the first place. Statements of ethical orientations often blend with their descriptions of their actions, sometimes making them indistinguishable. ACs demonstrate their ethical orientation by the very nature of the cases and how they unfold; for example, by the ACs working as ACs, this demonstrates their belief that animals can communicate using IIC. Furthermore, ACs engaging animals in the cases shows that they believe that animals deserve to have their opinions heard, and needs met, as well as the fact that animals can engage in the cases.

There are, however, some clear examples of strategies that demonstrate the AC's ethical orientation. Two ACs highlighted the importance of honoring animals' social dynamics when connecting with them, citing examples from their respective cases. In the elephant case, the AC Ashley communicated first with the matriarch of the herd, then with the sub-matriarch upon the matriarch's recommendation. It was after citing this detail, that she highlighted the reasoning behind her decision, stating that "it is important to follow their protocols or social norms to ensure mutual respect and maximum cooperation." Similarly, in the ant case, the AC Julia noted how if she were to do this case again now, she would reach out to the queen of the colony, given what she knows now about ants and their social hierarchy.

Another way that ACs uphold their ethical beliefs in their work, is by seeking to do no harm, or as little harm as possible. This presented itself in a variety of ways. The AC of the chipmunk case outwardly stated that she seeks to pursue the least invasive intervention possible during mediation, and later said that she avoids lethal action if possible. The

entirety of the baboon case involved the AC working with community members to find ways to cause less harm to the baboons when they “trespass” on human property. The AC of the elephant case, upon reflecting on what she might do differently next time, admitted that she prefers to be on-site during an intervention (in this case, the elephant capture) to ease the stress of the animals.

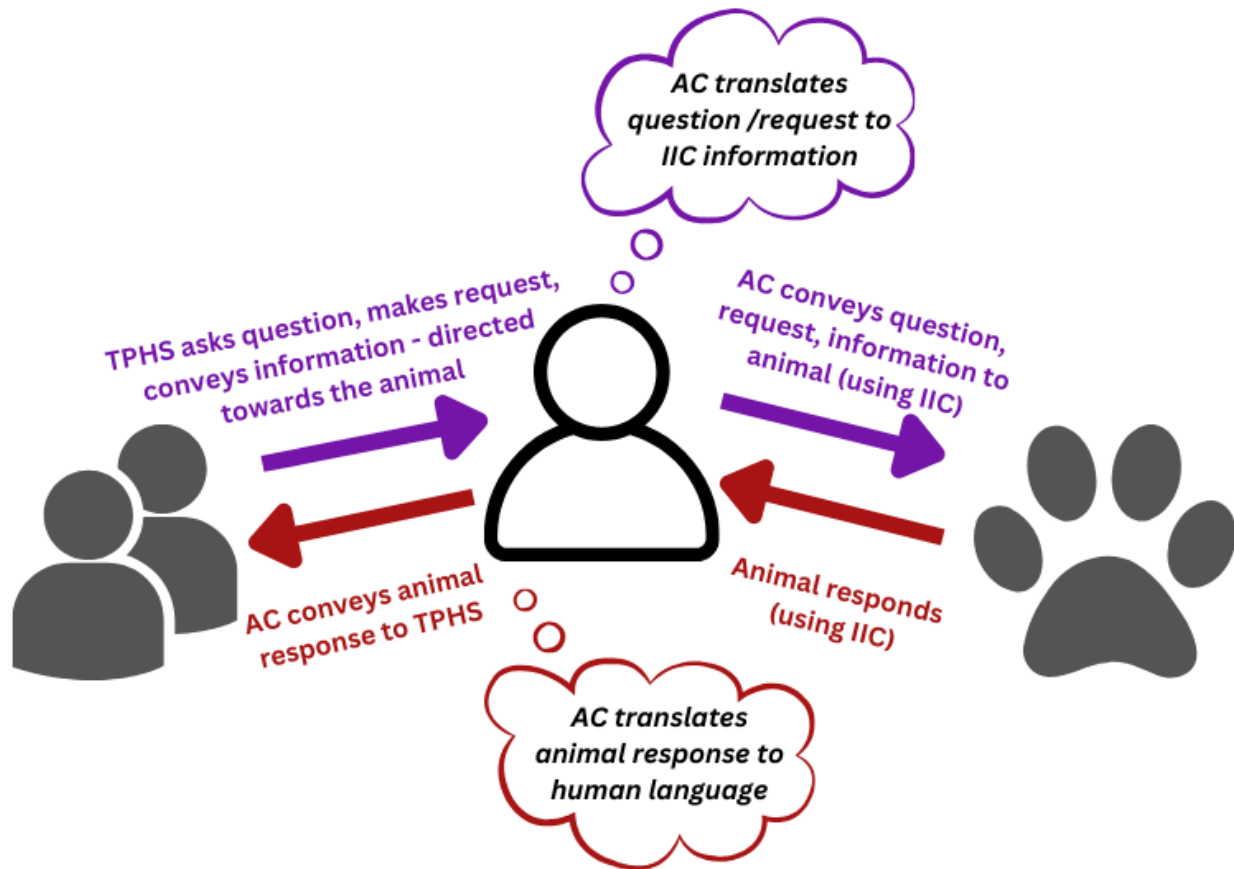
The ACs leading the cases have values and beliefs that are fundamental to the work that they do, and their approach to each case. Their ethical orientations, largely pertaining to the capacity of animals to communicate and engage with human issues, are interwoven through all the cases, and is also reflected in some of the ways they embody their ethical orientation, including honoring animal social dynamics and doing no harm/as little harm as possible.

4.1.3. ACs as Interpreters

ACs act as interpreters between humans and animals in the cases, and play a critical role in facilitating understanding through information sharing between human and animal parties. While the steps are not completely linear and often overlap, a simplified example of a communication starts with: 1) the AC using IIC to send or receive messages from the animals, then 2) the AC works to understand information received from the animals in ways that they themselves can comprehend, and 3) ‘translates’ the information into words that they can then convey to the humans involved. The process for this ‘translation’ is not known and was beyond the scope of this study.

Figure 4.2.

Visual Representation of the Role of AC as Interpreter in Human-Initiated Communication



The role of “interpreter” is not one unique to this field of research; many international gatherings or conferences require the use of interpreters in the effort to facilitate understanding between two human individuals who do not speak the same language. In fact, the word “interpreter” is defined as “someone whose job is to change what someone else is saying into another language” (Cambridge University, 2024a). The difference is that communicating with IIC is not exclusive to spoken/verbal cues, and can be received through other senses, which can be increasingly more difficult to translate to verbal phonetic language. ACs acting as interpreters was inherent in all cases in this research, meaning that this is their primary role when they step into any case-related circumstance.

4.1.3.1. Example 1 – AC relays baboon’s messages to humans

In all cases included in this study, the ACs are acting first and foremost as interpreters between the human and animal stakeholders. The moment the human stakeholders reach out to the AC requesting assistance, the AC takes on the interpreter role, facilitating understanding between both parties. There are several examples from the cases pertaining to the role, particularly in circumstances when one stakeholder asks the AC to relay information to the other party. In the baboon case, for example, the AC was communicating with the baboons alongside the rest of the workshop participants, asking for their insight into the ongoing conflict.

The main messages I was asked to pass along to the humans, via my conversation with the troop representative were a) that they did not feel safe, b) they had a sense of their whole environment changing, and c) they shared a shocking image of a dead baboon hung up and skinned, along with the words “there has been an abomination”. (Appendix A, p. 116)

Upon receiving this information from the baboons, the AC translated it into human phonetic language, then relayed this information to the humans that co-exist with the baboons and who were trying to help them. The baboons had not requested follow-up from the information they shared with the AC; they seemed satisfied that the humans would be receiving these messages.

4.1.3.2. Example 2 – AC relays TPHS’ message to the elephants

The AC role of “interpreter” goes both ways – animals might ask that the AC pass along information to humans, such as in the previous example, and similarly, humans might do the same. For example, in the elephant case, the reserve staff asked that the AC convey their plans for relocation to the elephants. The AC agreed, and first contacted the herd's matriarch, to lay out the facts and intended benefits of this proposed project.

I sent a mental image of approximately one third of her group of elephants separating from the other two thirds, along with the feeling of this being permanent. I conveyed the feeling of great distance and “impossibility” within myself [...]. I

visualized the general idea of one third arriving at this landscape devoid of elephants. With this mental image I sent the sense of new start, a new population, and growing numbers over the years, as well as restoration of an ecosystem. For the latter I sent mental images of native plants growing and other animals being attracted into that area. [...] In the interest of being honest with the animals, I let Aurora know that this was going ahead regardless of her choices. (Appendix B, pp. 132-133)

This section demonstrated ACs in the role of an interpreter. ACs act as interpreters by receiving information either from the animal via IIC, or in human language from the TPHS, changing the information from one language to another, then relaying it in a format that can be understood by the other party. This is represented visually in Figure 4.2.

4.1.4. ACs as Mediators

The previous examples fall under the role of “interpreter” because there is no outcome expected by either party other than simply conveying information/facilitating understanding. Once there is an expected outcome from an intervention or sharing of information, the AC takes on a new role, in addition to being an interpreter: that of a *mediator*. A mediator is “a person whose job is to be a liaison between the people or groups involved in a disagreement, to help them find a solution” (Cambridge University, 2024b). The AC takes on the additional role of “mediator” by “seek[ing] and shar[ing] information from both parties, in a circular-type fashion, that will move us towards the human client’s desired outcome, while maintaining the animal’s best interest at heart” (Appendix C, p. 150).

This definition applies to ACs when there was conflict that required mediation. While ACs do use both the titles of “mediator” and “negotiator” interchangeably throughout their cases, the choice was made to use the word “mediator” exclusively, as the official definition acknowledges the role of a third party, which is a specification that the title of “negotiator” does not require.

4.1.4.1. Example 1 - The AC relays information back and forth between elephants and staff to answer the elephant's question

In the elephant case, Aurora the matriarch expressed her concern to the AC about the land at the new destination reserve, and the AC promised to ask the reserve staff for details and to report back to her. The following is a transcript of the back-and-forth communications to answer this question.

[Aurora] asked, "What is the land like at the destination?" so she could get a sense whether this relocation was a good or bad idea. I told her I would research that and get back to her. [...] In that same feedback conversation with reserve staff, they told me what the landscape was like at the destination reserve, so I could share that with Aurora. [...] Then through images and words, feelings I described the landscape of reserve B, which was slightly different than at reserve A, but the vegetation and food sources were relatively the same. With this information conveyed, I received a feeling of relief from Aurora that there would not be any known life-threatening obstacles to survival in the new place. (Appendix B, pp. 134-136)

In this example, the AC goes back and forth between Aurora and her caregivers, to ensure that her concerns are addressed and that the caregivers are aware of Aurora's concerns as the project goes forward.

4.1.4.2. Example 2 – The AC relays information and insights between humans and chipmunks to try to come to an understanding

In another similar case mediating human-animal conflict, the AC said that her philosophy in approaching cases requiring mediation is to constantly seek and share information from both human and animal stakeholders in a circular-type fashion. Her intention is to "move us towards the human client's desired outcome, while maintaining the animal's best interest at heart" (Appendix C, p. 150). While attempting to problem-solve and find the best solution for both parties, the AC acted as a mediator in the chipmunk case between her human clients and the chipmunks residing in their backyard.

When I opened the communication, the chipmunk I connected with said “I could move the ones that are willing to relocate, just give us a few days”; afterwards, there was a noticeable reduction in population. The chipmunk I connected with did warn me that all we were going to be doing by relocating a group of chipmunks was making space for more to take their place, though, which is exactly what happened. [...] [My clients] did everything they could to find a non-lethal solution to the problem and had given me three weeks to sort everything out. [...] In this case, it seemed that there was no alternative option, so in the end we had to move to the most extremely invasive option, and ask the chipmunks what their preferred method of euthan[asia] was. (Appendix C, pp. 150-151)

It is important to acknowledge that a perfect compromise cannot always be achieved, as highlighted in this excerpt from the chipmunk case. The ACs in these cases seek to reach the best possible outcome for all involved, and yet there may sometimes be external factors outside of their control that impact the success of the intervention. One AC emphasizes her obligation to honour the animals’ sentience and that their desires be adhered to, but also acknowledges that circumstantial constraints may affect her ability to do so.

4.1.5. Theme Summary

This theme demonstrates the central role of ACs in using IIC to facilitate deeper understanding, mediation, and co-existence between human and animal stakeholders in these cases. As interpreters and mediators, the role of ACs is critical in these human-animal conflicts to reach a resolution.

4.2. Theme 2: TPHS as Significant Players and Critical Resources

4.2.1. Summary of TPHS Roles and Ethics

This section will demonstrate, using examples and excerpts from the cases, the TPHS’ roles and ethical orientation towards animals and the significant roles they held in the

cases. The term “third-party human stakeholders” (TPHS) refers to all human individuals who cared for, or lived alongside, the animals involved in the respective cases that were not an AC. In the elephant case, this included reserve staff who cared for the elephants; in the baboon case, this included the community members involved in the workshop; in the chipmunk case, this included the AC’s human clients, and in the vole case and additional cases in the AC’s backyard, this was her husband. The TPHS ethical stance towards animals and their relationship with IIC pre-intervention will be outlined; then, their various roles in the cases will be summarized to demonstrate the significance of the involvement of TPHS in the cases.

4.2.2. TPHS Ethical Orientation

It is difficult to make generalized statements regarding the ethical stance of the TPHS involved in each of the cases, as they all had very different roles and degrees of involvement. It does seem that the trait that is consistent across the cases, however, is that the stakeholders wished to consult with the animals to find a solution that suited everyone, to reach their desired outcome. This section will summarize the ethical orientation of TPHS, by describing their actions prior to engaging ACs in their various circumstances. In all cases, the TPHS attempted other non-IIC related interventions prior to engaging with IIC. In all human-animal conflict cases, TPHS attempted non-lethal measures first to deter animals from continuing to exhibit behaviours that are undesirable to humans.

In the elephant case, the reserve staff attempted to use their knowledge of the social structure of the herd to determine the future matriarch and 17 other individuals to accompany her to the new reserve. There were differing opinions among the staff members, however, and they worried about how their choices might negatively impact the health of the elephants and the outcome of the intervention. The staff’s choice to reach out to an AC to hear from the elephants what they might desire in terms of relocation, and furthermore their decision to honor the elephants’ choices, demonstrates clearly the ethical orientation and values of the reserve staff.

In the baboon case, the community was experiencing heightened degrees of destructive behaviour from one of the local baboon troops. While some community members reciprocated this behaviour with violence, some of the community members decided to attempt to implement a more peaceful solution. Many of them tried to use non-violent solutions to keep the baboons off their property, such as making lots of noise when the baboons were approaching and sealing their homes tightly, it became evident that these measures were not sufficient. Rather than turning to throwing stones or other harmful measures, they turned to the local conservancy organization to assist in other non-violent solutions first. The conservancy reaching out to the AC to mediate a solution between the local humans and local baboons, and furthermore the local humans being willing to engage in a workshop teaching IIC, once again speaks to the ethical orientation of the conservancy as well as the community members who attended the workshop.

In the AC's backyard cases, the AC was largely the one to initiate the use of IIC to solve various dilemmas. In the vole case, however, the TPHS was initially using non-lethal methods to encourage the voles to relocate elsewhere; when these non-lethal measures were not working, the AC offered to step in to use IIC to problem-solve with the voles directly. While the TPHS did not initiate the involvement of the AC entirely independently, the use of non-lethal methods first, coupled with the willingness to defer to the AC to problem-solve speaks to the TPHS' ethical orientation as well as their openness to finding a non-lethal solution.

In the chipmunk case, once again the TPHS using ethical traps to relocate the chipmunks out of their backyard safely, and their desire to find a non-lethal solution with the help of the AC speaks to their ethical orientation. While the solution did turn lethal in this particular case, the TPHS gave the AC a timeline to find a non-lethal solution, and explored multiple possible options prior to turning to the "last resort" option, which was euthanization of the chipmunks.

4.2.3. TPHS Roles in the Cases: As the Initiator of the Intervention, as a Resource for the Animals and the AC, as a Novice Communicator, as the Final Decision-Maker

4.2.3.1. TPHS as initiator of the intervention

TPHS played many roles in the cases, and were integral to the outcomes as well as the initiation of the interventions in the first place. This is because TPHS were consistently the ones to initiate addressing the conflict or circumstance, thus bringing in the AC to use IIC to address the issue. This earned TPHS the role of “initiator of the IIC intervention”.

4.2.3.2. TPHS as a resource for ACs and animals

In most of the cases, TPHS acted as a resource for both the ACs and the animals involved in the cases. They provided detail, insight into the conflict, and labour as well as other miscellaneous tasks that allowed the cases to flow smoothly towards the outcome. For example, in the baboon case, one TPHS provided an image of one of the baboons for the AC to reach out to prior to the workshop, and many individuals from the conservation society that attended the workshop also organized and advertised it. In the vole and other backyard cases, the TPHS was a resource in providing labour for rehabilitating the backyard wild space (clearing unwanted plant species, building natural stone walls, walking paths through the garden), as well as providing information about human-animal conflicts with others in the neighborhood. Finally, in the elephant case, the TPHS provided images of four of the elephants for the AC to communicate with remotely, and were also able to provide details on the landscape at destination reserve B (as requested by AC on behalf of the animal), as well as details about capture day to prepare the elephants for capture and relocation.

4.2.3.3. TPHS as a novice communicator

In the baboon case, the TPHS workshop participants also became novice communicators. Not only were they learning how to implement IIC in various circumstances, but they also attempted to communicate with the baboons directly to ask them questions about the ongoing conflict and to communicate to them where the safe spots were to relocate to.

Participants from the individual cases also communicated with the baboons, for similar reasons, but also to communicate physical boundaries around their property to discourage the baboons from entering their homes. Many participants experienced barriers to using IIC, such as experiencing impatience and frustration, and struggling to trust oneself in what they were receiving.

4.2.3.4. TPHS as final decision-maker

Not only were TPHS the initiators of the interventions, resources, and (sometimes) communicators, but they also had the final say in the outcome of the interventions. Aside from the baboon case, TPHS had a definitive outcome established when conferring with the AC, with a set date by which time the intervention needed to be resolved. In the chipmunk case, the AC was given three weeks to find a way to relocate the chipmunks. In the vole case, the AC was given three days to relocate the voles. In the elephant case, the AC was given a general timeline of three months for the capture and relocation of the 18 elephants.

TPHS also had the final say in agreeing to, or to vetoing, suggested alternatives to the interventions. In the chipmunk case, TPHS were able to reject the chipmunks' propositions to bring in more predators, or to wait for disease to balance out the population. In the elephant case, TPHS approved the individuals the matriarch nominated for relocation.

4.2.4. Theme Summary

This section illustrated how TPHS are significant players and critical resources in the cases, with an ethical orientation that guides their decision-making. This includes how they initiate engagement with ACs to use IIC in their problem-solving, are actively involved in the case including as resources and learning IIC, and are the final decision-makers to guide the case towards the desired outcome.

4.3. Theme 3: Animals as Agents in Issues That Affect Them

4.3.1. Summary of Animal Roles

Animal engagement in research is a novel concept for which scholars have been advocating for some time, but in many cases, they struggle to identify how exactly animals might actively participate in issues that affect them (Swanson, 2017; van Bommel & Boonman-Berson, 2022). This thesis identifies key ways in which animals act as agents in the context of these cases. In the three case studies documented and analyzed, animal engagement occurred at two different levels. The first level of animal engagement is in response to the AC informing them of the circumstances related to the case, and giving the animals the opportunity to accept or refuse the intervention or desired outcome. The second level of engagement is triggered when the animal chooses to, or is asked to respond with more than a “yes” or “no”. This latter level might involve the animal answering a question, compromising, and/or analyzing the situation to provide an alternative solution. This section illustrates these different roles that the animals played, as well as the strategies used by ACs to enable animal engagement in the cases.

4.3.2. Animal Engagement: Accepting or Rejecting a Proposal

In most of the cases, ACs would describe to the animals in detail what was being proposed as an intervention, or the desired outcome, and allowed the animals space to accept or refuse the proposition. The examples below demonstrate how the animals might accept or refuse a proposal.

4.3.2.1. Example 1 - Ants and red-tailed hawks accept ACs requests

When an ant colony was killing her garden plants by eating their roots, the AC Julia asked that they relocate elsewhere, and they did. When her neighbours lost some of the domestic animals in their care to predators, Julia reached out to the red-tailed hawk family in her yard to keep the animals under her care out of their diet, and so far, they have obliged. In these instances, while there was little back-and-forth between the AC and the

animals, the message was sent and seemed to be received and accepted due to the animals' change in behaviour due to the exchange.

4.3.2.2. Example 2 - Baboons accept a request from TPHS

The AC April was assisting a participant from her IIC workshop, Doug, in addressing some heightened conflict on his property. The baboons were eating pears from a tree in his yard, but were destroying it in the process. While communicating with the baboons, Doug heard, "But you are not eating the pears, so why can't we eat them?". He admitted to April that he did not eat the pears as they were too hard and sour; as a compromise, he told the baboons that they are welcome to eat the pears, but asked that they take the pears gently so as to not damage the tree. It seems the baboons accepted this compromise, as from then on, Doug reported that they were gently taking the pears without breaking the tree. While there was no back-and-forth between the communicator and the animal, the human communicated their request regarding changed behaviour, and the animal did exhibit a change in behaviour, leading Doug to assume that the message was received and accepted.

4.3.2.3. Example 3 - Voles reject AC's request, accept an alternative solution

When a vole family moved into the AC's lawn, after several weeks of attempting to deter them, Julia (the AC) asked them to relocate and offered them an alternative safe place to go. After suggesting two different locations which were promptly rejected, Julia suggested a third location for the voles to relocate to, which they did within the 3-day time frame, as requested by the AC. The rejection of the AC's first two recommendations for places to relocate, and then relocating to the third location within the suggested timeframe is an example of the animal rejecting the AC's initial proposal, but then accepting an alternative solution.

4.3.3. Animal Engagement: Animals Offer Alternative Solutions, Answer Questions, Analyze the Situation, and Are Willing to Compromise

While animals are still accepting or rejecting proposals in the following examples, there is also a deeper level of animal engagement in these cases: 1) offering alternative solutions

2) answering questions 3) analyzing a situation, and 4) demonstrating a willingness to compromise.

4.3.3.1. Example 1 - Elephant refuses AC's suggestion, offers an alternative solution

In the elephant case, the AC asked the elephant matriarch, Aurora, if she would be willing and able to relocate to reserve B; she refused, but suggested that her daughter Princess, the sub-matriarch, go in her stead. This is an example of animals refusing the AC's suggestion, but then offering an alternative solution.

I asked [Aurora], once again thinking the words slowly and silently in my mind, "Would you be willing to relocate, given your experience as a leader?" [...] She responded with a sense of "No" - with a gentle firmness in the feeling of it as that silent word arose in my human mind. This was followed by my inner sense of a mental image of her eldest daughter, Princess - along with the knowing that Aurora felt that Princess might be better suited to lead the new herd. She expressed that she had been mentoring Princess, and this would be a good opportunity for her to step forward into a leadership role. (Appendix B, pp. 133-134)

There are several types of engagement here, starting with Aurora's engagement by refusing the suggestion that she relocate as the matriarch at the new reserve, continued with her offering an alternative (nomination of her daughter as matriarch for the new herd at the new reserve in her stead), as well as providing an additional recommendation (nomination of the other 17 individuals to relocate with her daughter).

4.3.3.2. Example 2 - Bee and hummingbird answer ACs question

The AC Julia asked for local inhabitants of her wildflower garden to assist her in developing a space that was best suited for them. The local pollinators made several requests, and as a result she planted specific plants desired by a hummingbird, and built a bee bath for the bees in the area. The local wildlife offering suggestions for how they could be better accommodated in the garden in response to the AC's question is a brief example of animals answering a human's question.

4.3.3.3. Example 3 - Chipmunks offer alternative solutions, and are willing to compromise

A client case study involving chipmunks led to the AC Julia requesting that the chipmunks relocate to the nearby park. While the chipmunks agreed, they warned that given an ecosystem imbalance, their absence would simply leave room for other chipmunks to take their place, which is what happened. The chipmunks offered two solutions for natural population management (introducing more natural predators or letting disease take over), both of which were declined by the human client. Despite attempting to find a non-invasive solution to an ongoing problem, in the end the human client asked the AC how the chipmunks would prefer to be euthanized. The acceptance of the AC's request (to relocate), providing a realistic analysis of the situation (warning that relocation may not have the desired long-term outcome) offering alternative solutions (bring in more predators; wait for disease to take over), and finally demonstrating a willingness to make a compromise in the context of no ideal solution (offered preferred methods of euthanization by the human's request) are all ways that the chipmunks engaged with the case. This is a layered and detailed example of animal engagement. It is also a good reminder of how external factors may prevent IIC from meeting the desired outcome.

4.3.4. Theme Summary

This section outlined the different animal roles in the cases, as individuals who can accept or reject a proposal, offer alternative solutions, answer questions, analyze the situation, and are willing to negotiate. It is important that the animals engaging in these cases is made possible by the ACs making space for that to occur; this phenomenon will be described further in theme four.

4.4. Theme 4: Approaches and Strategies for ACs to Translate Information, and Engage Stakeholders in Their Respective Roles

While significant data represents the various roles of the stakeholders involved in the cases, as represented in themes one, two, and three, other data demonstrates the

strategies employed by the AC, as well as their approaches to the cases, to meet the desired outcome. “Approaches” in this theme refers to the way ACs make space for the various stakeholders and their needs within the cases, and “strategies” refers to ACs’ methodological steps to translating and conveying information from one stakeholder to another. All these approaches and strategies are related to the ACs’ roles as interpreters and mediators within the cases. Due to the nature of the data provided in the case studies, this theme is less well-developed than the first three. Thus, the theme is based on an incomplete list of strategies and approaches used by ACs. The “approaches and strategies” identified in the case studies, are summarized in this section.

4.4.1. AC Approaches to the Cases

The ACs described how they approached the cases with kindness and compassion, with particular focus on the perspective, needs, and impact on the animals involved. The ACs consistently consider the animal's perspective and how a message might be received by the animal. Furthermore, they carefully consider the impact that the information being shared might have on the animals. The AC Julia clearly stated that she prefers to do as little research as possible on the animals involved in the case ahead of time. She feels that “it’s better to know less and see what the animals have to say first. This is to reduce the risk of bias and unconscious manipulation of the information coming through” (Appendix C, p. 159). That being said, these ACs have a lot of knowledge about the animals they are working with already, as they may have worked with them before (elephant case), or they live alongside them and encounter them regularly (vole case and other backyard encounters, and baboon case), or even that they have a background in wildlife biology and that they are familiar with the animals inhabiting their ecosystem (vole case). The ACs also accommodate the animals’ emotional and physical needs, by providing detailed accounts of what the animals should expect during the intervention from the animal perspective. According to the AC Ashley, providing the information in this way helps animals prepare for the unexpected.

The AC Julia described her approach to mediations as a circular motion of sharing and asking for information to facilitate understanding between the parties. She says she will “seek and share information from both parties, in a circular-type fashion, that will move us towards the human client’s desired outcome, while maintaining the animal’s best interest at heart” (Appendix C, p. 150).

4.4.2. AC Strategies to Communication Using IIC, With Individuals and Groups

ACs described different strategies throughout the cases that they might use to effectively convey information to animals when using IIC. First and foremost, the ACs emphasize the importance of obtaining consent from animals prior to engaging in communication.

Consent to communicate with an individual, or consent for an intervention to go ahead as planned, are examples of circumstances where consent from animals beforehand might be necessary. While obtaining consent may look slightly different for each AC, the general idea is consistent. The AC in the baboon case, April, describes the process of getting consent as intuitive. She states that if it feels right to continue, then permission is granted, and if you feel any hesitation, then you may need to wait or ask another member of the animal group to come forward (Appendix A). Julia, the AC of the vole case, similarly describes receiving permission to communicate with an animal by feeling intuitively for a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ (Appendix C). Similarly, the AC of the elephant case, Ashley, says that when connecting with an animal, their “openness and willingness to engage” can be interpreted as permission to continue with their communication (Appendix A). Upon receiving consent from the animals, then engagement using IIC can commence.

Information can be sent or received in various forms when communicating using IIC. Some of these intuitive senses that might be triggered when communicating are: sight/visual cues, sound/auditory cues, verbal/words, smell, emotional, or even just a ‘gut feeling’ or sense of knowing. Another strategy described by the ACs was the importance of using positive language when communicating with animals. This is done by envisioning what you want the animal to do, rather than what you don’t want them to do. Similarly, often a time limit is requested by one of the stakeholders involved in the cases, to concretely know

when follow-up or next steps need to occur. The passage of time is conveyed by envisioning the sun or the moon moving across the sky a set number of times. This strategy is used by the ACs in the vole and elephant cases. In the vole case, for example, the AC Julia described how she communicated to the voles how much time they had to move:

I can give you three days to relocate [...] *In my mind I'm showing the sun coming up and going down, three times to depict each day.* (p. 153)

There are nuances related to communicating with groups of animals versus with individual animals, and the ACs outlined some of the strategies they use for communications with groups of animals. According to the AC Julia, her intention and process is the same when connecting with an individual animal versus with a group of animals; however, often (but not always) an individual animal will come forward on behalf of the group of animals when a connection is made. In the elephant case, the baboon case, the vole case, the chipmunk case, and the red-tailed hawk case, individual animals communicated with the ACs on behalf of the animal collective. In some cases, the ACs reached out to certain individuals directly (elephant, baboon), while in others, ACs reached out to the group more generally and an individual stepped forward on the group's behalf (vole, chipmunk, red-tailed hawk). While the ACs have said that an individual representative usually steps forward to speak on behalf of a group of animals, this is also not always the case. If an individual does not step forward, or if the AC is looking to communicate with a whole group at once for the sake of convenience, they will use the "broadcast message" technique; this is what the AC, Julia refers to as 'communicating with the collective consciousness of the group', such as in the ant case.

4.4.3. Theme Summary

This section included summaries of approaches and strategies used by ACs to translate information and engage stakeholders in their respective roles. While this theme is not as refined as the previous three themes, it still critically demonstrates an established set of techniques that ACs have identified that allow them to engage in the cases as interpreters and mediators, and thus allowing the animals to engage too.

4.5. Theme 5: Outcomes of ACs Using IIC as a Method

4.5.1. Summary of the Outcomes

In this research, ACs used IIC to communicate with animals, acting as interpreters and mediators between TPHS and animals, to reach a desired outcome. Each of the cases included reported outcomes of ACs using IIC as a method to facilitate understanding between TPHS and animals in each of the cases. The term “outcomes” refers to changes that occurred which appear to be a result of ACs using IIC as a method. While outcomes may or may not be directly related to the purposes for the communication or solely related to IIC, they were striking. Outcomes included: 1) allowed animals to be prepared for upcoming changes, including receiving their input for prospective interventions, 2) allowed for a greater understanding and acknowledgement of one another’s needs, behaviours, and expectations, and 3) enabled the altering of one’s (human *and* animal) behaviour to accommodate the other stakeholders (human *and* animal).. This concept highlights that all cases resulted in a change of some kind for the animals and/or the TPHS, whether it be abstract changes such as the AC receiving animal input and animals/TPHS understanding one another, or observable changes in behaviour wherein animals and TPHS are accommodating one another. These outcomes point towards IIC being a promising tool to facilitate more harmonious human-animal co-existence, and more successful conservation interventions in future projects.

4.5.2. Outcome 1 – ACs Using IIC Prepared Animals for Upcoming Changes, Including Receiving Their Input for Prospective Interventions

One of three outcomes that became apparent in the analysis process, is that ACs using IIC with wildlife to connect with animals prepared animals for upcoming changes, including receiving their input for prospective interventions. There are long sections and excerpts from each of the cases demonstrating this finding, and a few are provided in this section.

In the elephant case, the AC was able to prepare the elephants for the upcoming changes, and receive their input on the intervention and how it might proceed. This led to them being informed and prepared for what might happen, and ultimately led to a positive outcome.

Similarly, in the vole case, the AC was able to connect with the voles and ask that they relocate from the lawn to somewhere else in the yard. After some back-and-forth negotiation of a new location for the voles to settle, they agreed on the fenced-in garden. The ability to not only ask that they relocate without driving them out using lethal methods, but also to negotiate an appropriate place for them to settle, is an incredible tool to ensure improved harmony in HWC.

Finally, in the chipmunk case, the AC used IIC to problem solve with the chipmunks. During this process, the AC and the TPHS realized that the issue was bigger than them, and that there would be no quick and easy solution.

In this case, it seemed that there was no alternative option, so in the end we had to move to the most extremely invasive option, and ask the chipmunks what their preferred method of euthan[asia] was. I think the clients started to put dry ice down the holes. So, I say this case didn't "end well" because there was nothing I could do; there were no other remediation options because there were too many outside influences impacting the outcome. (Appendix C, p. 151)

Despite there not being a positive solution to this issue, the ability to engage in a conversation and attempt to find a solution is an incredible tool that seemed to have helped at least the human clients find peace with the solution.

4.5.3. Outcome 2 – ACs Using IIC With Wildlife Allowed for a Greater Understanding and Acknowledgement of one Another's Needs, Behaviours, and Expectations

The second outcome that was generated through this process of analysis, is that ACs using IIC with wildlife allowed for a greater understanding and acknowledgement of one

another's needs, behaviours, and expectations. This once again applies to both humans and animals involved in some of the cases.

On a smaller scale, the AC Julia maintained open communication with the species inhabiting her wildflower garden, which allowed her to make certain accommodations, such as planting specific native plant species and putting out bowls of water, which noticeably increased the amount of wildlife accessing the garden space.

On a larger scale, in the baboon case, the baboons did not seem to alter their behaviour significantly; however, it did seem that they had a greater understanding of why they had been met with fear and aggression before, and they were more respectful of territorial boundaries afterwards. The TPHS who attended the workshop, consistently identified a shift in perspective towards the baboons (and animals more generally) due to the workshop and learning IIC.

The workshop was an integral piece of the puzzle in terms of my understanding and engagement with animals, causing me to consider the baboons in a different light and to empathize with them more. I came to understand that this shift towards empathy would be necessary in terms of intuitive dialogue. I became more willing to engage with the baboons differently, leading to a shift in my approach to addressing conflict with them. (Appendix A, pp. 126-127)

The ability to communicate one's needs, behaviours, and expectations seemed to allow for a more harmonious human-animal co-existence in these cases.

4.5.4. Outcome 3 - ACs Using IIC Enabled the Altering of one's (Human *and* Animal) Behaviour to Accommodate the Other Stakeholders (Human *and* Animal)

The third and final outcome generated through the analysis of this data builds upon the previous outcome. ACs using IIC with wildlife enabled the altering of one's (human *and* animal) behaviour to accommodate the other stakeholders (human *and* animal). The application to both humans and animals is especially powerful; both were found to have altered their behaviour to meet the needs of the other stakeholder throughout these cases.

Every case has at least one, and sometimes several examples of ACs using IIC to facilitate one of the parties changing their behaviour for the benefit of the other.

In the elephant case, the 18 elephants who had agreed to relocate ran away from the herd, and then looped around to run towards the helicopter to ensure the correct 18 were darted, captured and relocated successfully. This is significant, because this behaviour was incredibly counter-instinctive for the elephants, and thus shows the elephants' commitment to move toward the desired outcome.

In the chipmunk, vole, and ant cases, they all relocated elsewhere after the AC's request; in the vole case, some negotiating was required to settle upon a location to relocate to, but was otherwise successful. The red-tailed hawk, upon request, also agreed to not hunt the animals under the AC's care. All of these actions are in direct opposition to the human understanding of animal behaviour, but do illustrate the potential of using IIC to mediate conflicts and support co-operative co-existence.

In the baboon case, after the workshop and establishing boundaries with the baboons, TPHS witnessed a decrease in baboon violence, and the baboons being more respectful of human space. Not only did the baboons alter their behaviour, but in this case, the humans also altered their behaviour to accommodate the baboons. The workshop seemed to have enabled a sense of understanding, and greater tolerance amongst the human stakeholders, leading to less anger, and thus less conflict. TPHS noted a greater sense of control, and less helplessness in having learned IIC, allowing them to feel less scared when the baboons would arrive on their property.

4.5.5. Theme Summary

This section outlined the perceived outcomes of ACs using IIC as a method to address issues in each of the individual cases. The outcomes of ACs using IIC are: 1) allowed animals to be prepared for upcoming changes, including receiving their input for prospective interventions, 2) allowed for a greater understanding and acknowledgement of one another's needs, behaviours, and expectations, and 3) enabled the altering of one's

(human *and* animal) behaviour to accommodate the other stakeholders (human *and* animal). Overall, this theme points towards changes that occurred as a result of the case.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

Despite growing acknowledgement of animal consciousness, sentience, unique languages and cultures (Allen, 2019; Andrews et al., 2024; Balcombe, 2020; Birch et al., 2022; Meijer, 2019; Whiten, 2021), animals continue to be excluded from decision-making in issues that affect them. Scholars have been increasingly advocating for animal engagement, but identifying methods to effectively achieve this persists as a challenge for many (Swanson, 2017; van Bommel & Boonman-Berson, 2022). Some scholars such as Hurn (2018) and Thomsen et al. (2023) have identified the inability for animals to speak as humans do as a possible barrier preventing others from bringing animal voices into research. Thus, a gap remains in meaningful engagement of animal voices in research in a way that foregrounds the animals' voices with limited human interpretation. This research is a promising response to this gap where ACs act as interpreters and translate questions, requests, or information between animals and TPHS using IIC. By engaging animal voices much more directly, the work of ACs signals significant progress toward escaping the trap of epistemological circularity.

This work provides detailed, well-documented accounts of cooperative work between ACs, animals, and TPHS in conservation and human-animal coexistence. While others have documented work between ACs, animals and TPHS in other contexts such as research in social work and veterinary care (Erickson et al., 2016), in animal sanctuary care (Foster & Thiyagarajan, 2012), and a pilot project in HWC (Getten, 2006), they are few. The novel aspect of this research is the combination of all these components together: cooperative work between ACs, animals and TPHS, within the context of conservation and HWC, wherein the full narratives were documented using case study and analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Given the exploratory nature of this research, this thesis is not intended to prove that ACs are communicating with animals, but rather to document how they are engaging with IIC in their work in the contexts of conservation and HWC. Furthermore, in order to accurately

document the cases, the author chose to take the ACs narrated stories as truth, that they were indeed communicating with animals using IIC in the cases they shared. This orientation is known to some scholars as taking an “empathic stance” toward the research subject (Hafen, 2013; Josselson, 1995).

By documenting the cases of ACs working with wildlife, the author learned that ACs were using IIC as a method to engage animals to address issues in conservation and HWC. ACs were engaging with diverse species (mammals, birds, and insects), from diverse geographies (African and North American continents), and under diverse circumstances (in secret, by community or client request, by their own volition).

5.1. Thesis Findings Alignment With Current Literature

Reflexive thematic analysis of the data provided important understanding of the case studies by illustrating the roles of all animal and human stakeholders, the ethical orientation of the humans involved, the approaches and strategies of the ACs, and the outcomes of this human-animal engagement. These are discussed in more detail below, wherein each theme is summarized, then theme alignment with existing IIC literature on ACs is assessed.

5.1.1. Theme 1 Alignment With Current Literature

The first theme illustrated that ACs have a shared ethical orientation that guides their approach to working with animals, and they are acting as interpreters and mediators between the humans and various wild animals involved in these case studies.

Similar to the findings of this thesis, the findings of Barrett et al. suggest that a significant number of ACs have some kind of ethical orientation guiding their work (under review). On a number of their websites (about 25%), ACs state clearly that they adhere to established ethics that guide their conduct as ACs (Barrett et al., under review). Penelope Smith’s (1990) Code of Ethics for Animal Communicators was the most frequently cited.

This thesis is not the first to use “interpreter” to describe the role of ACs when communicating with animals. Erickson (2016) uses “interpreters” to describe the role of ACs in her mixed-methods study on therapy riding horses and veterans. Barrett et al. (2021) were next to use the term, saying that “[ACs] engage deliberately with other animals as social peers and may become important mentors and interpreters for engaging IIC in interspecies research” (p. 5). Most recently, Wijngaarden also used the term to refer to ACs in their triangulated feline study (2023a). There is only one publication using the term “mediator” thus far; in her 2005 doctoral study, Vittitoe quotes ACs she works with as using “mediator” to describe themselves, which was consistent with descriptors ACs used in the case studies.

5.1.2. Theme 2 Alignment With Current Literature

The second theme illustrated that the TPHS also have a shared ethical orientation guiding their approach to the cases, and are significant players and critical resources for the ACs and animals. While few published works articulate in detail the importance of the role of TPHS as this thesis does, many studies do involve TPHS in various capacities, and their roles are acknowledged in the publications. This importance is clearly articulated by Vittitoe, who states “The importance of the [TPHS] is key since the human holds some of the information and energy of the relationship” (2005, p. 113). Other studies such as Hörner & Wijngaarden (in press) actively engaged with TPHS as part of the data collection and triangulation process, further emphasizing the importance of TPHS as significant players and critical resources for ACs and animals throughout the project, as well as the bond TPHS share with the animal participants. There is no current literature that refers to the ethical orientation of the humans associated with IIC research.

5.1.3. Theme 3 Alignment With Current Literature

The third theme illustrated that animals are acting as agents in the context of IIC, by accepting or rejecting a proposal, offering alternative solutions, answering questions, analyzing the situation, and being willing to negotiate. Animals represented in the papers highlighted in this section are answering questions asked by humans using IIC, the same

as in the case studies. The animals' articulation of their likes and dislikes seems to be akin to engaging in a level of analysis, similar to the animal stakeholders analyzing the situations they were presented with in the case studies. For example, Hafen (2013) and Kulick (2021) both recount how the animals were asked questions by workshop participants using IIC, and often provided complex responses, reflecting on their likes, dislikes, and emotional state. Hafen (2013) states:

“Information received varied from descriptions of their favorite toys and activities to images of their backyards or sleeping places. Emotions were almost always present: Animals expressed jealousy of other pets, loneliness for their owners, love and gratitude for their homes, complaints about inattention, identifiable aches and pains or appreciation at being contacted.” (p. 192)

In a mixed-methods study, Erickson (2016) used IIC to ask therapy riding horses some pre-set questions, then some specific questions identified by the veterans that ride them, and the guardians who care for them. Not only were the horses answering personal questions about likes, dislikes, and mouth pain, but they were also giving advice for future veterans and therapy riding horses, providing reassurance to the veterans, and making requests of their own. While these degrees of engagement are not identical to those depicted in this thesis, both seem to demonstrate animals answering questions, analyzing a situation, and providing alternative solutions.

In a soon-to-be published paper involving ACs, TPHS, and African grey parrots, Hörner & Wijngaarden (in press) led a project where ACs interviewed wild and domestic African grey parrots to compare and contrast their life experiences. By answering questions, recalling their life experiences, their role in their respective ecosystems, and making requests for their care, the parrots collectively demonstrated their ability to not only answer human questions using IIC, but to also analyze their situation and provide alternative solutions to their care.

Finally, Wijngaarden's recent paper (2023a) involving ACs triangulating communications with various domestic and wild cats, the ACs were not asking for personal reflections, such

as regarding the cats' likes and dislikes or existing discomfort/pain, but rather were asking more philosophical reflections on the state of human-animal relations more generally. While the paper is not specific in its findings, it would seem that the animals willingly engaged with the questions asked. This general willingness to engage, not necessarily related to an intervention or for any particular purpose but rather for what seemed to be reflections and musings on the world broadly, is an expansion beyond the findings of this thesis.

This third theme, illustrating animal ability to engage in various capacities, points towards the need for scholars in the fields of animal culture and sentience research to consider the possible implications of this thesis' findings. While it is becoming more widely accepted that animals (both vertebrates and invertebrates) exhibit social learning and culture (Allen, 2019; Whiten, 2021) the possibility that animals can engage more deeply suggests a need for research to explore animal consciousness more broadly.

5.1.4. Theme 4 Alignment With Current Literature

The fourth theme illustrated approaches and strategies used by ACs to translate information and engage stakeholders in their respective roles. On many of their websites, ACs note that conducting virtuous work is an important aspect of ethical work in IIC. One of the elements that might contribute to this ethical conduct is to maintain "compassion" towards the animals one is communicating with (Barrett et al., under review). This aligns with the identified approach in this thesis of ACs maintaining kindness and compassion, with a particular focus on the perspectives, needs, and potential impact on the animals involved in the cases.

Animals providing or withholding consent to communicate is highlighted in other studies (Wijngaarden, 2023a) as well as in ACs books (Barrett et al., under review). Wijngaarden (2023a) acknowledges the importance of getting consent from animals claiming that the effectiveness of communications is apparent given the animals' provision, or lack, of consent (see also, Hinz & Barrett, forthcoming).

The forms in which information is sent and received by humans described in this thesis, also appears in other published works (Barrett et al., 2021; Hinz & Barrett, under review; Wijngaarden, 2023a). Often referred to as intuitive impressions (Hinz & Barrett, under review), the embodied non-physical sensations described in these publications are consistent with the experiences of the ACs in the case studies. Some of these senses that might be triggered when using IIC, are: sight/visual cues, sound/auditory cues, verbal/words, smell, emotions, or even just a ‘gut feeling’ or sense of knowing. It is important to note that these sensory impressions may arise despite the physical absence of these sensory triggers (i.e. smelling fast food when there is no fast food present, seeing an image in your mind’s eye of a place you have never been, etc).

The other elements described in this theme, including strategies such as communicating the passage of time, avoiding doing prior research on the subject animal, and the processes for communicating with groups of animals and representative animals stepping forward on behalf of the group, are not described in other academic literature at this time. Hörner & Wijngaarden (in press) claim, in their methods section of their paper, that the ACs communicated with individual parrots as well as with the whole wild flock. They did not describe this process, however, nor did they specify whether the parrot frequently interviewed from the wild flock, “Wild One”, stepped forward as a representative, or whether the ACs reached out to him specifically.

5.1.5. Theme 5 Alignment With Current Literature

The fifth theme, “Outcomes of ACs using IIC as a Method”, defines outcomes as changes that occur which appear to be a result of ACs using IIC as a method. This fifth theme illustrated that by ACs using IIC as a translation and mediation tool for TPHS and animals, it: 1) allowed animals to be prepared for upcoming changes, including receiving their input for prospective interventions, 2) allowed for a greater understanding and acknowledgement of one another’s needs, behaviours, and expectations, and 3) enabled the altering of one’s (human *and* animal) behaviour to accommodate the other stakeholders (human *and* animal). This concept highlights that all cases resulted in a

change of some kind for the animals and/or the TPHS, whether it be changes such as the AC receiving animal input and animals/TPHS understanding one another, or observable changes in behaviour wherein animals and TPHS are accommodating one another.

In Erickson's (2016) study, the outcomes of IIC use included the horses' responses to quality of life questions as well as insights into the therapy riding program. The information from the horses, conveyed by the AC, was reviewed by both the horses' guardian and veterans that ride them in the therapy riding program; the average rating from all who assessed the feedback was 5.75 out of 6 on a Likert scale. Use of IIC also allowed for accurate identification of mouth discomfort or pain, which aligned with a separate veterinary examination.

In their collective project interviewing and learning more about the lives and histories of African grey parrots, Hörner & Wijngaarden (in press) reflected on the fresh perspectives they gained on co-habitation with African grey parrots, both domestic and wild, as a result of insights provided by two ACs. They also noted consistency and alignment in the answers received by the two ACs. Furthermore, both the researchers and the ACs commented on how insights shared often challenged their own pre-existing assumptions and opinions. More broadly, the researchers reflected on how using IIC as a method contributed to "gaining a deeper understanding of animal subjectivity and agency, and experienced it as a powerful instrument towards changing our perspectives and practices in our professional and personal lives with animals" (p. 13).

Wijngaarden (2023a) reported similar results in her research using IIC to interview domestic and wild cats. Wijngaarden and the ACs involved in the interviewing process agreed that using IIC to engage with the cats challenged their pre-conceived notions of the cats, and their ability to engage with deeper, philosophical questions. Like in the study with grey parrots, the researchers and the ACs identified that using IIC to engage with the animals challenged their own pre-existing assumptions of animal capabilities, permanently changing their approach to animals moving forward.

Hafen (2013) reflects on how her phenomenological ethnography of an IIC course is an example of contributions towards “changing our relationship with nature from one of control and dominance to one of cooperation and respect” (p. 201) pointing towards a possible societal shift/change in animal ability. Similarly, Kulick (2021) theorizes at the end of his own reflection on his involvement in an IIC course that by appreciating animals’ capabilities, perhaps we will value them more, and acknowledge the role we play in their collective wellbeing.

Overall, this theme identified changes observed by humans as a result of using IIC to facilitate animal engagement in the cases. Upon outlining the alignment of this research with current literature, it is important to acknowledge that a commonality amongst the identified outcomes of all the IIC and ACs-related research papers, is that the identified outcomes are based entirely on the perception of the humans involved. Many of the researchers and other humans involved in the projects reflect on their own shifted perceptions of animal capacities, which is an important first step, yet changes for animals continue to be missing from the outcomes. See Chapter 5.4, “Recommendations, and Future Research” for further discussion regarding engaging animal voices in future research.

5.2. Limitations

5.2.1. Limitations of IIC, and the Realities of Working With Autonomous Beings

Consistent with any multispecies method, IIC has limitations, some of which can be addressed by altering the ways in which it is applied, and others that are simply a reality of working with autonomous beings. The first limitation of the method of IIC is not in fact a limitation, but a reality for any research or implementation of interventions with fellow autonomous beings. The AC in the elephant case summarized this reality in a simple statement, reminding readers that the ability to communicate human desires to animals using IIC does not mean that they will automatically adhere to them (Appendix B). She

acknowledges this reality, and further elaborates on the importance of honoring the animals' right to self-determination in the following excerpt:

I finished my communication session by sharing with the animals my own feeling of, “We’ve got a plan, you know the plan, thank you for cooperating with the plan; I invite you to behave this way on the day, and also trust that whatever needs to happen will be appropriate to whatever is true for you at that future moment”. It is also important that I, as the animal communicator, *am not personally attached to the plan* or the outcome of it. I don’t want to impose my will onto them when only they can fully know what is best for them [...] I consider it my duty to honour the animals’ sovereign right to self-determination, to the extent that their circumstantial constraints allow their choices to manifest/be realized. (Appendix B, p. 139)

This emphasizes the importance of honouring both the autonomy and self-determination of animals under these circumstances, even when, or perhaps especially when the circumstances are limiting. Despite voluntary participation being a key part of the academic ethical process, it is the ‘bare minimum’ that can be done for animal engagement. Allowing animals the opportunity to accept, or refuse, a proposed intervention is the first step in animal engagement in conservation and HWC.

This point leads to the second limitation of IIC application, as illustrated in the cases. While engaging with animals and consulting them in the decision-making process in land management or human-animal conflict is a novel and groundbreaking approach, these interventions do not actively engage with animal agency to its utmost potential. The decisions to pursue an intervention, and to move forward with the chosen intervention prematurely limit the degree of agency animal stakeholders hold within the cases. For example, in the elephant case, while the elephants were asked which 18 individuals would like to be relocated, it was made clear to the AC (who then conveyed to the elephants) that 18 elephants would be relocated regardless of whether they consented or not. Ideally, stakeholders from all sides would come forward with concerns, at which time the AC could

address concerns equitably. With the cases documented in this project, as well as with many cases using IIC at this time, this is unfortunately not the case.

The baboon case seems to have come the closest to engaging in what van Bommel and Boonman-Berson (2022) call “convivial conservation”, meaning conservation approaches that highlight the importance of “fundamentally engag[ing] with the question of intersubjectivity of humans and all non-domesticated non-human beings that have been targeted by mainstream conservation as ‘nature’ or ‘wildlife’” (van Bommel & Boonman-Berson, 2022 p. 137). After 18 months of increasing conflict and violence between humans and baboons, the humans approached an AC to help conduct some conflict resolution and facilitate dialogue to better understand what was going on. When the AC connected with the baboons, they expressed distress over some gruesome violence that had occurred, as well as some other human-driven issues that were causing difficulties for the troop. Unfortunately, many of these issues were systemic, and not easily solved by a handful of humans in one community. It did, however, facilitate greater understanding and empathy between stakeholders on both sides, allowing a more peaceful coexistence for a time.

In sum, the inability to engage fully in more-than-human participatory research and fieldwork is not an issue that is exclusive to this project; many academics have wrestled with this very issue for decades. Humanity continues to operate in an anthropocentric place wherein the best interest of humans supersedes that of any other species. To get to a place where we are engaging with animal agency and their right to self-determination, the responsibility lands firmly on humans as a species to decenter human priorities in favor of that of other species or to be prepared to negotiate outcomes that suit all parties collectively. While implementation of IIC in conservation and human-wildlife conflict resolution projects brings us closer to engaging with more-than-human participation in the work, there is still a way to go.

5.2.2. Limitations With This Research Project

While there are plenty of things that this research does, there are some things that this research does not do. This research does not, for example, test or prove the legitimacy or

effectiveness of the method of IIC, but rather documents how it is being applied in different situations. Readers may ask upon finishing this thesis: How might one implement this concept of engagement with animals in their respective fields? This research does not outline a model or practical set of steps for readers to move from the concept of engagement with animals to on-the-ground implementation. While this research might provide some ideas or general insights, a model or specific guidance cannot be provided at this time. This work also does not speak for the animals, nor does it provide animals' perspectives and experience of IIC. See the upcoming section "Recommendations, and Future Research" which further elaborates on how to address these gaps.

Despite taking extensive measures to ensure the methods were as rigorous as possible in the research, there remained some unavoidable limitations. The first, and most significant, was that given funding and time constraints, the cases had to be completed prior to the commencement of the research. One was completed within the last two years, while two were completed five or more years ago. This means that the re-telling of the cases relies upon participants' varied documentation methods such as journaling, power points, emails or real-time transcriptions, and the rest was recited by memory. While this is not a completely unusual way of collecting data, it would have been ideal to have personally documented the cases as they unfolded in real-time.

There was also a limitation in terms of the scope of data sources available, particularly in the elephant case. Due to the secretive nature of the involvement of the AC in this project, I could not speak to any of the reserve staff. Those that were involved worried about the optics of their involvement with an AC, and did not share the AC's involvement with the rest of the relocation project team. While the lack of data triangulation in the elephant case does not discredit the narrative or the value of the data, it does reinforce the need for the author to place full trust in the ACs narrative. Thus, we are left to trust the memory of one individual, rather than have others to corroborate or lend further insight into the project. Hopefully in the future, as this field of study develops, such secrecy will not be necessary.

5.3. Implications

5.3.1. Implications for Conservation and HWC

Scholars who study IIC are beginning to identify how it might be useful to animals and humans who engage with them. The findings of the thesis suggest that there are contexts, species, and situations where ACs can work as “bridges” to facilitate animal engagement in issues that affect them. IIC could allow for greater mutual understanding between humans and animals, as well as animal engagement with prospective interventions. The cases also illustrate how IIC can be used to eliminate guesswork in project planning; animals can be asked for input in various issues that arise (see the elephant case in Appendix B, for example). Data and analysis from the cases also demonstrates that greater insight from animals into proposed interventions can lead to more inclusive interventions, given engagement with all stakeholders. As researchers in the field of animal culture have stated, honoring the culture of a species could have positive implications for conservation and HWC (Allen, 2019; Whiten, 2021). It does not seem like a stretch to speculate that honoring the animal’s agency and capacity for decision-making would also have a positive impact on environmental fields of work.

5.3.2. Implications of This Research for Indigenous Land Managers

As was demonstrated in the literature review, many Indigenous nations from across the globe hold traditional knowledge and practices relating to communications with the more-than-human world (Brearley, 2015; Cajete, 2000; Cole, 2002; Deloria, 2006; Heinberg, 1989; Kawagley, 1990; Powless, 2016; Sepie, 2018). While this thesis does not work directly with Indigenous nations to document their own stories of communication with animals, it does demonstrate that: 1) the practice of communicating with animals and other beings of the Land is not limited to Indigenous nations; and 2) IIC is being engaged to problem-solve in conservation and HWC. The purpose of this work was to generate, prepare, and present information on AC engagements with wildlife, so that Indigenous land managers can determine whether a collaboration with ACs is desired (or perhaps even to decide whether re-claiming these methods of communication with animals is desirable).

Ultimately, the implications of this research for Indigenous land managers are yet to be determined. Some of the potential implications are, however, worth noting. First and foremost, this research could normalize methods that challenge deeply entrenched paradigms, and the limits of modern-Western ways of knowing. Normalization of these methods might lead to further exploration of IIC research, and partnerships or collaborations between various stakeholders as a result. Collectively, this normalization of IIC, coupled with an expanded exploration of this work, could lead to further decolonization and diversification of the Academy and fields of work such as conservation and HWC.

5.4. Recommendations, and Future Research

5.4.1. Recommendations for Using Case Study Methods and IIC Research

Use of the case study method in this research was important not only for providing a detailed, holistic picture of the circumstances being documented, but also for providing this data in narrative form. Representing the data this way maintained the voice of the participants being interviewed, and delivered the content in storytelling form, both of which align with Indigenous Research Methodology. Such a presentation style requires careful attention to integrating multiple data sources, while maintaining the voices of multiple participants.

When doing research on IIC, researchers need to carefully consider the meaning of “outcomes” for them, and how they might document case outcomes in their own case study. The AC Ashley (Elephant case) asked the question in her first interview, “What does success in a case study, or an outcome of using IIC, look like for you?”, highlighting the need to address this question in early stages of research.

The question of “outcomes” and “success” arose again in the baboon case. Since a major event in this case was a workshop, and TPHS included workshop participants, a workshop evaluation framework was created. Given that creating an evaluation of a workshop that

had already occurred is not ideal (Guskey, 2016; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2007), if IIC researchers intend to include a workshop for learners of IIC, they are encouraged to design the evaluation ahead of time and evaluate the workshop immediately after it is complete.

5.4.2. Future Research

As an exploratory study, this thesis provides an important basis for understanding how ACs are engaging with wildlife. This also means that there is plenty of opportunity for further research to build upon the findings of this thesis. Potential areas of expansion are listed in this section.

A similar project as the one described in this thesis could be conducted, with the researcher being present or engaged as the cases are unfolding. Similar research questions could be asked, or the principal investigator could focus on particular roles of any of the stakeholders, or even seek to further explore and refine the roles of ACs, TPHS, and animals.

Other research could explore the methods involved in communicating with groups of animals in further detail. Research questions that could be asked include: How do ACs communicate with groups of animals? How is communication with individual animals different than with groups of animals? What happens if a representative does not step forward on behalf of a group of animals?

Often animals are engaged only in the data collection phase, and not in the planning phase or in the follow-up post-data collection. Future IIC research should seek to engage animals as directly as possible, and as consistently as possible throughout the research process. Methods should be designed to track and follow-up on the outcomes from the animal perspective, not only the human perspective. Animal engagement throughout the project would further expand the decentering of human perspective and needs in research.

This research, while attempting to document cases relevant to Indigenous land managers, did not actually engage or document research with Indigenous land managers or

community members. Thus, future projects could document a case involving Indigenous land managers and community members. Most importantly, future research projects focused on Indigenous peoples and IIC must be directly involving, and ideally led by, Indigenous peoples themselves.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

Scholars have been advocating for animal engagement in research for some time. In many cases, these scholars struggle to identify how exactly animals might actively participate in issues that affect them. The method of IIC, which is often experienced as two-way non-verbal communication between humans and more-than-humans (Barrett et al., 2021; Hinz & Barrett, under review; Wijngaarden, 2023a), might be a response to this gap. The intent of this research was to deepen understanding about how ACs are engaging with wildlife, in the contexts of conservation and HWC. The original research question, written to address the research intent, was “How are ACs working with wildlife?” As the study developed, additional, more specific research questions were identified:

- How are ACs, animals, and TPHS using IIC to work together to address issues in conservation and HWC?
- What are the ACs and TPHS’ ethical orientation/beliefs about animals?
- What are the roles of ACs, animals and TPHS in each case?
- What strategies are the ACs using to facilitate these roles?
- What are some key outcomes of the cases?

To answer the research questions, this project used case study methods to document three cases (two nested, one independent) and the data was analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis. The choice to collect data using case study methods was due largely to Indigenous research methodology guiding this work, and the nature of the research intent and question (“*How* are ACs working with wildlife?”) both of which require detail-oriented, narrative-style methods. Reflexive thematic analysis was chosen given its recursive nature, the systematic approach it demands, as well as the heavy consideration and appreciation for researcher biases within the research. Further details on research design-related decisions, including case study typology and ensuring quality and trustworthy data, are outlined in Chapter Two.

Having presented the results of this research in Chapter Four, there are some conclusive statements that can be made at this time. First, ACs have a shared ethical orientation that guides their approach to working with animals, and they are acting as interpreters and mediators between the humans and various wild animals involved in these case studies. Second, the TPHS also have a shared ethical orientation guiding their approach to the cases and are significant players and critical resources for the ACs and animals. Third, animals are being engaged with to address the critical issue in each case, by accepting or rejecting a proposal, offering alternative solutions, answering questions, analyzing the situation, and being willing to negotiate. Fourth, ACs implement a series of strategies and approaches to engage stakeholders in their respective roles in the cases. Finally, by ACs using IIC as a translation and mediation tool for TPHS and animals, it: 1) allowed animals to be prepared for upcoming changes, including receiving their input for prospective interventions, 2) allowed for a greater understanding and acknowledgement of one another's needs, behaviours, and expectations, and 3) enabled the altering of one's (human *and* animal) behaviour to accommodate the other stakeholders (human *and* animal).

IIC as a unique method for engagement with animals seems to enable a deeper sense of understanding, care, and empathy towards animals on behalf of humans. For example, many humans in the baboon case identified a new, deeper sense of empathy and understanding towards the baboons. Similarly, in the vole case, the AC expressed a deeper understanding for the beings in her yard, and a deeper desire to advocate for the voles in the event of future conflicts. While that seems 'touchy-feely', there is something to be said about the trend of depersonalization and the illusion of human control furthering the human-nature divide in the fields of conservation and HWC. Humanity has effectively taken away the individuality or inherent value of animals (and the Land more generally), in the effort to decrease the potential for human individuals to be inconvenienced by the presence of other beings. Perhaps something missing in conservation and HWC is the deeper sense of appreciation for one another, and for the natural instinct of any species to act in the best interest of the self and wellbeing of its own species.

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Appendix A - Baboon Case

Abstract

Conflict between humans and wildlife is common across the African continent, and along the southern coast, baboon-human conflict is especially common. In a small community in Mozambique, baboons had begun to exhibit destructive behaviour such as damaging homes and crops, largely to gain access to food as they have been known to do in other communities across the country. As tensions continued to rise, an animal communicator (AC), April, was brought in to mediate the ongoing discord between the two species. Prior to planning the next step, April met with community members to determine primary concerns on both sides of the conflict. The human community members requested that she host a workshop to help them better co-exist with the baboons.

A workshop was hosted a month later, where the AC guided participants in learning preliminary techniques to connect with the baboons to address the ongoing conflict. After the workshop, peaceful coexistence was restored for a time. Subsequently, the human population changed, and peace and the safe space boundaries were not maintained as had been agreed upon initially, and things fell back to how they were before April intervened. After the workshop, April also met privately with two participants to address specific issues they were navigating with baboons at their homes. These ‘individual cases’ document the unique experiences of Doug and Jessica, who had been experiencing exceptionally high levels of conflict, and who benefited from specialized insight.

Format of the case: *This case study is written in first person narrative from the perspective of the AC (April) with the additional insight from the local conservation society leader (Paula) and a workshop participant (Doug). Bolded headings indicate a shift in narrative voice.*

Introduction

April’s narrative

I used to be quite scared of baboons, mostly due to stories of fear told by other community members in the place I was living where I first began encountering baboons. I began

working to protect the baboons, and later began working as an animal communicator; this was my “journey of initiation” with baboons. I was struck by how baboons were persecuted throughout the country and seen as “damage-causing” animals. They continue to be treated as such, even though they are incredibly intelligent beings. One of the main issues is that they are very attracted by the easy food to be had in people’s houses and gardens. From my perspective, baboons are misunderstood, and many people fear their size and strength.

From what I understood from locals in this small community in Mozambique, life alongside the baboons had been fairly peaceful for decades; there had never been an ‘issue’ (i.e. breaking into houses, destruction of property, taking food, etc.) until about 18 months before the local conservation society decided to contact me. The baboons had begun to destroy property, to take food, and for some people (even for people who loved the baboons) this behaviour was ongoing and constant. Meanwhile, certain farmers and other community members were very angry with the baboons, given their perceived destructive and violent behaviour, and started shooting them. Given this new conflict and violence, the people who cared about the baboons wanted to help them but were getting worried about their own safety. It was at this point that the community realized the urgent need to do something. I am not sure how they heard about my work, but they invited me in October 2018 to address these recent changes in baboon activity, and I agreed to come and meet with them.

Paula’s narrative

Our community is situated on the edge of a mountainous forest ecoregion, an area comprised of tropical and sub-tropical forest. It acts as a sort of buffer along the edge of a national park. We have a local conservation society, and my role at the time was founding member and treasurer. As a community-based organization, we facilitate consultation with national parks or the municipal government. On a day-to-day basis, the conservation society acts as a platform for community members to have a voice. People come to us with an issue, and we take it further to the governing organizations to the best of our ability. My

incentive when I first organized the conservation society was to protect the area we occupy to the best of our ability, along with providing a resource for local people to come to with their environmental concerns.

Leading up to the workshop, there were complaints from community members about the increasing aggression of the baboons. There are two different baboon troops in the area, occupying the west and east sides of the community. The people living right along the national park (the west side) were experiencing more aggression and less fearful behaviour from one troop, while those on the east side were able to chase the second troop away. We wondered, what could be the difference that is triggering this discrepancy? I heard rumors, and while I'm not entirely certain of the details, that baboons had been shot at on the west side of town, and that a dead baboon was hung up to scare the other baboons. I speculate that perhaps these human actions spurred violence from the west side troop.

Despite this outward display of violence from human community members, a lot of the locals were peaceful and wanted to coexist, but were getting worried about their own safety. Some people suggested that the conservation society should do something, but discussions about possible actions to take were not productive. It was at this point that I realized that we needed to try something different. Someone suggested maybe trying an animal communicator, and remembered an organization that worked with baboons in a nearby city. That led to me reaching out to April. She was quickly on board despite being very busy, and we were able to coordinate a visit.

Doug's narrative

My wife and I live on a 2ha plot of land in the same community as Paula; we are bordered by the largest forest in the country on one side, and farmlands on the other side. We have always had encounters with baboons; it is just part and parcel of life in this area. Slowly but surely, however, things continued to get worse. One day I closed the glass French doors on the second floor of the house before I left, and came back to find that the baboons had climbed up onto the roof, broken the glass doors open, and left a lot of damage in their

search for food, including blood on the floors and walls as they had cut the pads of their hands and feet on the broken glass. Another time we were away for the weekend, and the house sitter forgot to close a window. The baboons left a tsunami of destruction, which took days of hard work to bring the house back to normal. At this point we could not leave the land unattended; someone had to be around at all times to keep the baboons at bay. We had become almost imprisoned on our property by the baboons, and many others in the neighborhood were experiencing the same thing. Discussions were ongoing with our neighbours about what we were going to do; meanwhile, the living situation had become unbearable.

The baboon troop size had become frighteningly large, at times 50-70 individuals or more; I imagine that much of this was due to leopard populations (the baboon's natural predators) having been almost completely decimated. It was at this time that April was contacted by Paula and asked to engage with the community. My interest in attending the workshop came from a motivation to do something, regardless of the solution.

I believe the conflict escalated for several reasons; some were human-driven, and others were climate-driven.

Climate has and will continue to play a large part in the human-baboon dynamic. Prior to the workshop, our community was going through a couple years of drought, drying up the forest undergrowth and placing stress upon the baboon troop. One of the stress factors for the baboons was the absence of wild foods to forage. This limited access to food may have been driving baboons to raiding homes and crops more frequently, thus straining an already tense coexistence.

Humans were fueling the conflict by shooting baboons when they became a nuisance. In our community, if you have a farm larger than 10ha and baboons are damaging it, then you are allowed to shoot two baboons per month. There are a couple farms in the area that are in baboon territory and are larger than 10ha. Baboons would raid corn at harvest time, for example, and I know that the farmers were acting upon this law. Before, during, and after

the workshop troop numbers were increasing, which is perhaps why the conflict reached a head. I am not sure about the prevalence of poaching in our neighborhood, but I do believe there were people besides farmers who were legally allowed that were shooting baboons (and it does still happen). I had heard of hunting parties shooting dozens of baboons and selling the carcasses as bushmeat in nearby neighborhoods – if that was going on I'm sure it still goes on. This would, of course, trigger further anger and mistrust from baboons towards humans.

I think it would be too simplistic to attempt to pinpoint just one root cause of the heightened conflict. Rather, there was a perfect storm of circumstances – drought, poaching, and population control ending in violence – all of which came to a head around that time.

Methods

April's narrative

First Meeting

I chose to begin addressing this conflict by facilitating a meeting with the human community, initiated and organized by Paula. This first meeting was an opportunity to share concerns about what was going on, not about me giving them solutions. I did, however, share some standard advice with community members about making homes baboon-proof, along with other practical actions to avoid human-baboon conflict.

There were approximately 15-20 people in attendance at the first meeting. Attendees included members of the local conservation society, a representative from the nearby national park who managed forested lands on the edge of the community, some local smaller-scale farmers (ones who were sympathetic with the baboons), and other residents of the community. The demographic was white, middle-class, wealthier people. The youngest was about 20 and the oldest was in their 70's, with a mean age of 30 – 55 years old. The men-to-women ratio was about equal.

During our first meeting, it became clear that this was not a case of humans hating the baboons and wanting them as far away as possible, unlike some other baboon-related community meetings that I have attended. The community members in attendance were genuinely concerned about the safety of the baboons because they were being shot at and killed, by both other angry community members and occasionally by the authorities (one of the methods of baboon population management in Mozambique is culling). The attendees were also concerned about their homes being destroyed, as well as their lifestyle being impacted, which centres around nature-based living (e.g. doors open, picnics outside, etc). Having baboons constantly in their space was restrictive; they were not able to leave their houses, which was negatively impacting their emotional wellbeing. In certain circumstances, the baboons were not taking food, they were just damaging property, which was extra confusing for the humans. It also would become clearer throughout the workshop that they were risking their lives to get the attention of the humans who had compassion for them.

At the end of the meeting, I suggested that we hold a workshop to facilitate more understanding through IIC (intuitive interspecies communication).

The attendees were open to the idea of a workshop, and I was happy that they accepted my suggestion. I typically address conflict with animals by communicating with them to find out the reason for the situation. I felt it would be the best “next step” to teach these people how to work with their intuition, their natural ability to communicate with animals, especially because they love the baboons. From my perspective, they would be best positioned to address the conflict if they were able to communicate with the baboons. Furthermore, from my experience, intuitive communications tend to be more effective with a group of people working together with the same intentions and aims.

In preparation for the workshop, I sought to identify a representative in the troop to streamline the communication process. Identifying a representative is something I started doing with groups of animals early in my practice. I found it quite difficult to just send a message out to everyone, or to communicate with everyone at once, because (maybe with

bees or ants it might be different) in troops like baboons they are all such individuals. I initiate communication by sending my love and respect out to the whole group, like I am addressing a crowd of humans, then I ask who the representative of the group of animals is. Normally I would get an image of an individual as their way of “stepping forward” and then I have a one-on-one communication with that individual.

Paula sent me a photograph of one of the individuals in the troop, so sometime shortly before the workshop began, I initiated a communication with him, to ask permission to communicate with him, and also to ask if he agreed to be the representative of the troop (I am unclear on the exact amount of time that lapsed between my initial contact with the representative and the beginning of the workshop). He gave me his permission, as well as agreed to act as a representative of his troop. The answer for receiving permission to communicate is an intuitive one. If it feels right to continue, then you have permission. If there is any hesitation or doubt, *then you do not have permission at the time* and may need to wait or ask another member of the troop to come forward.

The Workshop

The conservation society, with Paula as a leader, organized and advertised the half-day workshop which took place in January, about a month after the first meeting. Between 30-40 people attended, including many (about 60%) of the first meeting attendees, as well as more people from the community that hadn't been at the initial meeting. The workshop was held in a private home, in a large sitting room with chairs set up in rows facing the front where I presented, using a slide show and projector. We had some tea and coffee to start, and Paula introduced me and my work. I opened by describing my work with baboons in nearby communities and touched on what baboons need to thrive and be happy. This included details about baboon family structure, and baboon behaviour, such as what a healthy troop is, and their signs of stress.

We then moved outside where we all sat on the ground in a circle, and I led everyone in a grounding meditation to find their heart centre. I have found that focusing on ones' heart centre helps one to become aware of emotions around the situation, and to bring up the

feeling of unconditional love, which is the energy we need to work with in order to effectively communicate with other animals. I then guided attendees in my “being a baboon” meditation exercise, which is a type of shape-shifting experience where they are guided to imagine that their body is changing into a baboon body, and then they experience the daily life of a baboon. Sometimes I refer to this as “tapping into the essence of the baboon”. For me, this is about connecting with the baboon on a level beyond the physical, connecting with the pure spirit of the baboon, rather than the physical body. It could be described as connecting with the higher being of the baboon.

Once you connect with your own heart centre, and become aware of the feeling of the unconditional love you have for the being you are connecting with, you feel a shift in energy when you have established this connection. For me it feels like a complete inner calm a peace that removes all anxieties and worries at that specific moment. A feeling of pure connection that is hard to put into words. It is once you feel that, when the communications start to flow. These processes were aimed to help attendees learn what it means and feels like to be a baboon, as well as experiencing the use of your intuition.

Afterwards, participants were offered space to share their encounters with the baboons, and describe what had been transpiring between humans and baboons in the community. I provided some feedback as to why this conflict might be going on, and gave some practical advice about how to use body language, for example, to address the issues.

I then shared fundamental information about IIC and communicating with animals that I believe are important, such as teachings about the energy of beings and how to communicate using love, respect, and joy. I also shared some tips and tricks on how to get the right message across, such as using positive language – asking the animals to “do this” instead of “don’t do that”, for example, while visualizing and sending positive mental images. Being conscious of your own fears while you are communicating is another key to effective communication, and transforming negative and fearful thoughts/energy. When a fear comes to mind, consciously recognizing it then seeing it transform into something positive can shape the outcome for the better.

I then taught the basic steps to communicating with an animal, including how to “move into your heart space”. The process I followed included the steps of instruction outlined in Figure A.1. below.

Figure A.1.

Slide From Workshop Detailing the Steps to Communicating with Animals



The easiest way to “send absolute unconditional love” is to think of a person or being whom you love no matter their behaviour, how they look or their relationship towards you. Feel the quality of that love and send it out to the individual you wish to communicate with. “Feeling your heart connection” is a method of focusing on the space where your physical heart is situated, where you acknowledge and focus on the love you have for Nature and other species.

Proximity is not necessary to have a successful communication session, because one is able to communicate with an animal being who lives on the other side of the world. We were working over a distance, although in the space of the troop's home range, so although the animals were physically nearby, they could not be seen or heard. In our case, being at a distance but in their homelands, made the baboon energy feel very present and focused.

Once I had guided the participants into the communication process, they spent time focusing by themselves and writing down the information they received from the troop representative, whose photograph was projected onto the screen. Focusing on the one baboon as the representative of the troop, participants were directed to ask, "what can we do to solve this?"

While the participants were communicating with the baboon representative, I was as well. I tuned in to the baboon representative first, but despite being given permission to communicate and agreeing to be the representative of his troop, I didn't get much information from him. So, I then sent a message out to the whole troop, asking if they had information to share, and asking them the same question about addressing the conflict.

I got a sense of urgency to address this conflict, as well as relief that someone was listening/approaching them. The main messages I was asked to pass along to the humans, via my conversation with the troop representative were a) that they did not feel safe, b) they had a sense of their whole environment changing, and c) they shared a shocking image of a dead baboon hung up and skinned, along with the words "there has been an abomination". This image was very shocking to me because as far as I know, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples from Mozambique do not consume baboons (Indigenous peoples in the country recognize that baboons are so close to humans that they are like family, considering them to be medicine people or shamans) so consuming baboons is taboo. While I did not know for sure that the baboon had been poached and skinned for consumption, that was my interpretation, and thus adding to my shock.

Once everyone had finished the communication session, we came together to discuss intuitive messages received by participants, and myself, about the impacts felt by the baboons. Many of the messages that I, and other participants received were similar:

- Less wild space/less safe space
- More tree felling/deforestation
- A new power sub-station built
- An expansion of the urban sprawl, specifically the growth of an informal human settlement nearby.

The first message of less safe space was more of a feeling than that it was physical knowledge based on participant's observations of change in the landscape. The remaining information shared by the baboons was also in the knowledge system of the residents, as they had personally seen the development grow around them.

It was at this time during the workshop that I decided to bring up the issue of the skinned baboon; I was nervous to ask the community members, especially knowing that consumption of baboon is taboo in Mozambique, but I felt compelled to bring it forward. The conversation that ensued provided confirmation of the information I had received from the baboons. The workshop participants responded that they knew that baboons were being poached for food in the forest, mostly by foreigners coming in from central Africa for work. Some had overheard discussions of poaching in public spaces, and a national parks worker who monitored the area had found snares in the forest. As we discussed this, it seemed clearer to me (both logically and intuitively) that the baboon's aggression had been exacerbated by the poaching of baboons. I asked the participants, what can we do? What can people do? The national parks worker said they would make it a priority to investigate more thoroughly in the communities where the poaching was happening. I felt that the spotlight illuminating the poaching issue is one positive outcome from this workshop. Once we finished discussing the messages received, I shared what can be done in one's communication practice, to help minimize further confrontation. For example, as soon as you hear the baboons, you meet them in your physical space (such as outside in

your backyard) and be big and stand your ground. When they come, send out love, and accept them as they are, and remember their baboon essence, remind them where their home is. This works, but you must be consistent.

Given the ongoing animosity between humans and the baboons, the participants felt that the baboons were in danger in the areas they were currently occupying, so they wanted to ask the baboons to stay away from the dangerous areas. I explained that in animal communication you can't just ask an animal to "stop doing something"; there needs to be an alternative, and the message must be framed positively. If I were to ask the baboons to "go away from the dangerous spots", I would see in my mind's eye the place where they are, and picture them moving away to a safe location that I would again visualize. For example, I would tell them that there is a safe place in the forest, and would ask them to go there by sending them a visual of the location. I would also need to let them know why their current location was dangerous, (i.e. because some of the humans have guns and want to hurt you. We love you and want you to be safe).

This discussion about safe spaces for the baboons triggered another question from participants, "are there spaces that we think are safe, knowing that poachers are setting snares in uninhabited parts of the forest where there was abundant food and space?" (i.e. places we would have previously considered to be "safe")? In other words, do we know of any places to be safe for baboon occupation? Workshop participants agreed that we can't just ask the baboons to go to a place and assume it is safe, and that we would have to investigate to be sure. The parks worker provided some maps based on research they had conducted on the troop's home ranges. Using the maps as a reference and looking at the mapped boundaries of human inhabited and farmed areas, we visualized the baboons staying in the area that was protected from human development. We identified which properties they would be welcomed at outside the national park, using the physical fences to show boundaries. We did some meditation to communicate the safe spaces to the baboons as a group, visualizing the baboons staying in these "safe spaces".

Given that this is a two-way exchange with fellow beings who have their own lives, agendas, and personal interests in mind, I also asked the baboons if they would be *able to* relocate. If they felt that they were unable to move, for any reason (e.g. they are in their traditional home range and would be in conflict with another troop, that even though we think it's dangerous, they may feel trapped, etc.) we would revise our strategy and seek other possible solutions. We would need to have their agreement for the suggestions we are offering to have positive effect.

I felt very good after the workshop, and I think the other people did too, feeling like they had tools to use when the baboons were on their property (staying on the fence line, sending out unconditional love, establishing and visualizing physical boundaries like fence lines, establishing energetic boundaries, standing your ground calmly). Even just having the IIC method seemed to bring them comfort. From my experience communicating with wild animals, being aware of the situation often relieves the situation – it could be energetic, that when they feel they are being listened to, they will “back off”. In this case, I felt good knowing that the baboons had been given the opportunity to be heard, and the humans had the opportunity to listen and implement change.

Individual Case studies

Besides working towards general solutions in the baboon-human interactions on a community level, the workshop also provided the opportunity for residents to share and communicate with the baboons regarding their individual difficulties and conflicts with them. In the two instances documented here, the workshop was coupled with some individualized follow-up guidance from April.

Doug's Case

One of the workshop participants (Doug) asked me to assist him with two issues he was having with the baboons. He was a young guy with dogs; the first issue was that that he was worried about his dogs chasing the baboons and getting hurt. The second issue was that he had this pear tree in his garden, and while he didn't mind the baboons coming into his yard

and eating the pears, in the process they would break the tree completely. He was very upset about that.

I visited Doug's home. We identified the boundary where the baboons could safely forage and be far enough away from his house so as not to upset the dogs. The identified boundary was a paddock fence; not tall enough to keep animals out, but it was a physical and visual boundary. What we did was use that boundary to ask the baboons to stay on the side of the paddock fence where the pear tree was, by visualizing them staying on "their side" of the fence, because as soon as they came into his personal space, that's when the conflict would happen. We also let the baboons know that they would be safe from the dogs if they stayed outside that boundary, by visualizing the dogs as calm and peaceful on one side of the fence, and baboons on the other side of the fence. Doug communicated with the dogs (who were there) and asked that they remain calm when the baboons were around. As far as I know, he followed my teachings visualized them being calm and quiet when the baboons were around, just as I had, and reassuring them with a feeling of safety so long as they remained calm. I explained to him that the dogs were reacting to his fear of the baboons, so I showed him how to stay calm, and that the dogs would follow his lead. He got back to me later and said that the dogs were remaining calm the next time the baboons visited, and the baboons were staying clear of the fence.

I also led Doug in a communication regarding the destruction of the tree, and had him ask the baboons about needing the pears. He came back and he said, "oh my goodness, I just got the question, *but you are not eating the pears, so why can't we eat them?*". He admitted to me that he did not eat the pears because they were always too hard and sour. I then recommended that he communicate to the baboons that they are welcome to eat the pears, but ask that they protect the tree, by visualizing them gently taking the pears without causing any damage. He contacted me later and said they did gently take the pears without breaking the tree the next time they came back to the yard.

Jessica's Case

Jessica was a young, recently single mother, who was also an attendee of the workshop. She lived in an off-grid cottage on the edge of the forest. She had always felt safe with the baboons around, and they very seldom tried to get into the house. Over the months leading up to the workshop, however, they had begun breaking windows and pulling window shutters off in an attempt to get inside her house, and she had developed a fear of them. She wanted to know why they were targeting her when she cared for them so much.

When I connected and started the communication with the baboons, I received two things. One was a feeling of love towards her and a need for her to understand the stress that they were going through. The baboons communicated there was a need to show her the damage humans were doing to their family. The impression I felt was that the baboons knew that the people who cared would find a way to help. The second piece of information I received from them, was that she needed to be stronger within herself and her own boundaries. She admitted that since becoming single, she felt quite fragile and worried about her security.

I showed her how to communicate the physical boundaries of the property to the baboons. She also communicated to them that she understood the issues facing them. Together we visualized them foraging safely in her garden and staying out of her house. We visualized her as strong and capable, her house being fixed and feeling secure and her and her children feeling protected and safe.

I received feedback from her after some time that she was feeling safer, and the baboons had been less destructive. She was grateful, but she had put in the work as well – she worked on her own ‘issues’ (e.g. internal discomfort and energy field) and saw results.

Reflections on the workshop: Outcomes and “20-20 Hindsight”

Paula’s narrative

Prior to the workshop, those less violent, baboon-loving folks used noise to keep the baboons away (e.g. clapping hands, yelling, etc). We (the workshop participants) were in contact for up to a month post-workshop, and there was a positive response to the results

of the new methods learned. Participants reported a noticeable change in baboon behaviour; they seemed to be less aggressive, and methods seemed to be working. People were being proactive, taking responsibility, and there seemed to be a softening on the people's part. Perhaps it's because they had a method to apply, rather than resorting to throwing stones. I think that because the humans softened, the baboons responded positively to that.

I was not skeptical before bringing in April, but I was unsure how the community would respond to the conservation society bringing in an AC. Reflecting on the actions taken to protect both the humans and the baboons of our community, I am glad we decided to do something different. We tend to do the same thing over and over, and we reached a point where we asked, what are our other options? Employing IIC methods was a completely new arena and way of thinking for us. I was happy with the outcome, and as a conservation society, I would want to do it again, and since there's been so much growth in the area, I think we should do it again. One lesson I learned was the importance of conducting follow-up sessions. We intended to host a follow-up session a few months after the initial workshop, but life got in the way, and this never happened. Regardless, now might be a good time to do a follow-up.

We didn't have a lot of contact with April post-workshop, and I live further away from those who live right on the forest border. I initiated the workshop but wasn't part of supporting afterwards. Perhaps if I was experiencing more conflict I would have reached out, but there wasn't a need for me. I also may have pushed more for a follow-up if I was experiencing more conflict, yet again there wasn't a request from others for a follow-up either.

Inspired by Kirkpatrick and Guskey's models for evaluation of training, a clustered question method was used to allow for Paula to provide more detailed feedback and reflection on the training.

Cluster 1: Reactions

Reflecting on the workshop itself, the content was enjoyable and relatable, because it correlated directly with the issues we were facing as a community. It was nice being in a

group of people who were also genuinely interested in the workshop and looking to change the situation with the baboons.

Cluster 2: Learning

April's method is about unconditional love. You beam that out when you see them, love them, but are also firm in your boundary. Imagine it's like a bridge between you and the baboons. Once you feel that the connection has been established, you establish this is my home, not yours. In a situation where it's the whole troop, you stay very present in your body, in yourself, so that you can be energetically large. Stay calm, present, and strong. Once you've done the communication, even if they are moving quickly, it is important that you stay in that present moment and awareness.

Cluster 3: Barriers

My neighborhood does not experience a lot of conflict with the baboons, as they do not pass through very often, and are not very destructive when they do pass through. Given this lack of conflict, I have not needed to use IIC very frequently with baboons, and thus have not encountered barriers to using it.

Cluster 4: Use of New Knowledge

After the workshop, I was inspired, eager to change my behaviour, and curious about this new concept of IIC. I would have wanted more support to feel confident in using IIC at home. I found that the hardest obstacle is to trust yourself, that what you are sending out and hearing is true and accurate. Even to this day, as much as I follow the steps I was taught, I do not feel very confident. I may have wanted a proper 2-3 days of IIC training with April, to get more practice and build confidence.

Cluster 5: Outcomes

The workshop made me appreciate the ecological and energetic significance of baboons and their native habitat. They are very special, and people don't give them credit for their importance in the landscape. I have also educated myself more on baboons and their

behaviour as a result of the workshop. I have found that having a higher consciousness attracts more like-minded people.

It is hard to say whether I have witnessed a shift in baboon behaviour since the workshop. We had a huge mass of wildfires that came through the area in 2017, leading to baboon troops being disrupted and displaced. Perhaps this, among other factors, has caused them to visit our community less frequently. Having said that, in reference to the troops that continue to inhabit the area have been a lot less destructive than they were previously, according to other community members. Who knows what the reason for that is, but the locals have said that they have witnessed a behaviour change.

I have certainly felt a shift in my own attitude towards the baboons as a result of the workshop. By experiencing what it is like to be a baboon, I have felt more connected to their ecology, and knowing more about them makes me feel more honored to have them in the landscape. If there was a situation where they were coming onto my property more, I would use more IIC to see what they have to share with us. Learning this method has allowed me to grow as a person and continues to inspire me, allowing a whole other way to open up to the natural world.

Doug's narrative

Cluster 1: Reactions

The AC workshop was enjoyable, as was the content delivered. It was new information, but I had a relationship with the concept and thus it was not completely outside of my paradigm. April was passionate and knowledgeable as well, which was engaging. I remember thinking that I wanted more, but it became apparent that there is only so much theory you can learn about IIC, and only through application does it become tangible. The more you do it the better you can get at it. The methods taught to me were applicable to the conflict we were experiencing at home, too, which was fantastic.

Cluster 2: Learning

I remember learning two major lessons in the training. First, that nature does not recognize negative phrasings and approaches. Using a phrase like, “don’t come here” when communicating with an animal only leads to “come here” being articulated. This is because there is no way to envision an animal NOT coming here. We were taught instead to envision in the mind’s eye where the animal should go instead of “here”. The second lesson learned is that engagement should come from the heart centre. It took me many years to really understand what that means. I think there were times that I may have, but I likely just got lucky.

Cluster 3: Barriers

The greatest barrier preventing me from implementing IIC were personal factors: impatience and my quickness of temper. These emotions were heightened, partially due to feeling imprisoned by the onslaught of the baboon troop. As soon as the frustration would come up, and the “red emotions” would come up, then there’s a barrier to me communicating leading to personal static. Despite these barriers, I felt supported because I had direct communication with April, as well as with Paula after the workshop.

Cluster 4: Use of new knowledge

I did not feel prepared to apply IIC after the workshop, but that was because of the confusion of the “new”. It didn’t have to do with the information or presentation, but I learn by doing, as well as through observation. I believe I was as prepared as I could be.

After the workshop, I would be inside and working, and by the time I would be alerted to the baboons arriving (either by my dogs barking or by them being on the roof) it would be too late to meet them on the fence line. These engagements would be quite heated or fiery, causing a disjunct from being able to use IIC. On other occasions, I would sense them coming and would be able to catch them on the fence line, as suggested by April. My presence would alert them, and they would jump back over the fence, and we would engage on either side of the fence line. Having a literal physical boundary would help and I would ask them to stay on the other side of the fence, and they would oblige. It was a felt experience, not a thought experience. Honing this skill is something that takes a long time;

it needs to be applied so as to be learned so as to be honed so as to be applied effectively. Then once you have a better handle on the methods, I believe it's not as essential to get "ahead of the red wave". If there is one troop that is around consistently, I could recognize certain members of the troop and then the dialogue becomes an ongoing two-way engagement.

After the workshop, it got to the point where I started off not using it initially due to the "red wave", then it got to a point where hang on, let's actually give this a go, then I started using it on every occasion that the baboons would come around. My ability to soften into intuitive dialogue improved, then the results became more observable. Then it actually became too difficult when there were heightened interactions where the moment to pause wasn't allowed. Then the conflict died down for awhile, and using IIC regularly wasn't needed. I haven't used it much in the last year or so, because we have a dog that does the job for us. Some people in the area are experiencing heightened conflict again. The only time I have had to use IIC lately, is because my dog has a knack for climbing the fence into the forest, which is baboon territory. He has created a territory barrier by chasing the baboons away that now the baboons are infrequent to cross. This particular day, my dog had climbed the fence into the forest, and the alpha male was up in a tree, and my dog was running around the base of the tree, barking. I had to apologize to the alpha male, because my dog had gotten onto their territory. I went "hat in hand" to apologize, because my dog had gotten onto their territory, and there was a sense of annoyance from the alpha male. It's our duty to ensure that the dog stays out of the forest, and there was nothing else for me to say other than I'm sorry, I come in peace, and we will keep working on getting better.

Cluster 5: Outcomes

Prior to the workshop, I was eager for a change. There were times where we had nonstop baboons on the property for 4-5 days; part of me wanted to resort to violence because I was so finished. I was very open to trying something different in the hope that it might work.

The workshop was an integral piece of the puzzle in terms of my understanding and engagement with animals, causing me to consider the baboons in a different light and to

empathize with them more. I came to understand that this shift towards empathy would be necessary in terms of intuitive dialogue. I became more willing to engage with the baboons differently, leading to a shift in my approach to addressing conflict with them, even if there were still some heightened moments (old patterns can't disappear overnight).

I like to think that the baboons are not doing anything differently as a result of the workshop. Rather, I believe that through the workshop, they were suddenly made aware of why they were being met with such aggression. While they continued to seek readily available food after the workshop, it seemed that territorial boundaries had been made clearer.

April's narrative

From what I heard from Paula some time after the workshop (I don't remember the exact amount of time that lapsed), there were some immediate positive outcomes, particularly regarding a decrease in conflict amongst both parties. Even though the baboons were still visiting the human spaces, the people were being more tolerant and understanding. There seemed to be less anger, like at the community meetings, from the farmers and others who were particularly angry at the baboons. I'm not sure how long the "peace" lasted, however, which I regret, as we did not keep more in touch and plan a follow-up meeting.

There were some lovely outcomes for Doug and Jessica with their individual cases as well, which required some self-reflection and inner work as well as establishing boundaries with the baboons. They came to understand why the baboons were behaving in specific ways at their homes in particular, which had to do with some personal issues with boundaries and confidence and the energy they were giving off as individuals. Both realized that they needed to set and show specific boundaries for the baboons to be respectful of human space, and for Doug, where the baboons could be without being bothered by the humans and dogs.

It was unsurprising to me that things calmed down for a while after the workshop, and left a sense of peace; that has happened in almost every conflict-ridden situation that I've been involved in, the moment we step into this "heart field" communication work. All human

participants react positively to this method, because it is all based on unconditional love, and that energy will always diffuse a situation that is filled with fear, because love is the opposite of fear. I was pleasantly surprised with how engaged the people were, though, especially because there were participants from all backgrounds, including people who may not understand the spiritual or energetic side of life. Regardless of their background and training, everyone was there actively doing the work. Another surprising outcome was that we thought we were there to help the baboons, and particularly with respect to the individual case studies, the baboons were ‘holding a mirror’ to the humans and helping them address issues in their personal lives.

When I came back to my home after the workshop, there was a troop of baboons down by the river swimming and playing, which was surprising, because I had never seen that before or since. It was magical and felt like a blessing from them, or at least an acknowledgement of work well done.

It has been a few years since the workshop, and I’ve learned a lot since then. If I were to change my methods for another workshop, I would teach more about sacred activism¹ and transformation work, so that people could learn more about it. I would have taught them more about sacred activism so they could learn that if the community members felt like their hands were tied physically, they could do the heart-work, visualize a positive outcome, and connect with the baboons and nature to be guided more in the actions that can be taken. Ultimately it gives them more tools to continue the work. Given that it was a one-off workshop, I wanted to do follow-ups, which I believe would have kept the people on board and interested in the work. The world has changed so much with more online opportunities, that nowadays I would create an opportunity for people who were interested to meet regularly on Zoom so that even if they weren’t physically living in the community

¹ *Sacred Activism is “an approach to social justice that synergizes mindful awareness and spirituality with the work of [activism and] anti-racism”* (<https://www.naropa.edu/academics/extended-campus/sacred-activism/#:~:text=What%20is%20Sacred%20Activism%3F,the%20work%20of%20anti%20racism.>)

anymore, they could still be involved. We had talked as a group about holding an in-person follow-up workshop, but one of the reasons why it didn't happen, was because it was difficult to organize (a long drive or expensive flight for the AC) and organizing availability etc. Time and money made it more difficult.

If I were to conduct another workshop, I would still describe the basics of IIC, because that doesn't change, and the methods work. I always start by describing the concept of animal communication and how it works, and then I give them a practice session, so they have an opportunity to do the work. These are things I always keep in other workshop events.

Overall, I have no doubt in my mind that our methods were effective. The work was not one-sided; both sides were contributing. I know the methods were effective because of the information received while communicating with the baboon representative. Of course, the decrease in conflict was the ultimate proof that we were successful in our methods and mission.

Appendix B - Elephant Case

Abstract

In the spring of 2016, reserve staff of a long-term research program at a wildlife reserve in Malawi were given an enormous task. They were asked to choose 18 elephants from a herd of 56 to be relocated to a new reserve elsewhere in the country as part of a historic reintroduction of elephants to that region. Despite this exciting milestone, reserve staff struggled to choose which elephants to relocate; elephants are highly social beings, and it seemed that no matter what they tried to do, they were going to break up the social fabric of the herd and possibly traumatize the animals in the process. The animal communicator, Ashley, was brought in at this point to communicate the plan to the elephant herd, and see if there were individuals that were interested in moving. Upon interviews and conversations using IIC with the matriarch and sub-matriarch of the herd, Ashley received information from the matriarch identifying 18 elephants that were willing to relocate to the new reserve. She then needed to communicate to the elephants that even though they (the elephants) knew who desired to be relocated, on the day of the capture, they needed to make it very clear to the humans which 18 individuals were planning to go. If they did not do this, the capture crew would randomly choose other elephants from the herd to take their place. Ashley gave the elephants very explicit instructions for behaviour on the day of the capture, as well as informed them about what to expect during transport and introduction to the new reserve. The elephants behaved exactly as planned on capture day, and not only was the capture a success, but the transport was also a success, as was their release into the new environment. This was significant because often some animals become injured, sick, or even die during the capture-and-release process.

Format of the case: This case study is written in first person narrative from the perspective of the AC, Ashley. When this case first occurred seven years ago, the AC received an email briefing from the reserve staff and made handwritten notes during her consultation processes to document the case as it unfolded. Her feedback to reserve staff was via an online meeting.

Introduction

About seven years ago, in April of 2016, I (Ashley Lowe) was contacted by wildlife reserve staff of an elephant management program in Malawi. They had heard about my work through a mutual colleague and decided to contact me for help.

Reserve staff were heading up a long-term research program at a wildlife reserve in Malawi (reserve A), which housed a herd of 56 elephants. This reserve had agreed to relocate 18 of the 56 elephants to a different region of the country (reserve B), for the purposes of a historic reintroduction of elephants to that region. The problem was that the staff at reserve A had differing opinions about which 18 to choose based on the elephant family structure and dynamics. There were no natural subgroups to choose from; either way they looked at it there were individuals or subgroups that would be broken up. Given these complications and uncertainty, I received a specific request from staff to “hear straight from the elephants’ mouths” who would be willing to relocate to reserve B.

Human managers of animals in reserves have very limited observational data to inform their life-changing decisions about the animals impacted. Seldom do any humans track an animal’s behaviour, personality, and daily life consistently over several months/years. Even if they did, this information would still be prone to misinterpretation, and anthropocentric projection. Directly involving the animals eliminates any guesswork on the part of well-intentioned researchers and reserve managers. An IIC intervention can work as a comprehensive conversation that conveys information to the animals about possibilities and plans, thus allowing them to make informed choices regarding their own wellbeing. Using IIC, we can also ask them how they feel about the options on the table, convey their needs and concerns to the humans and even negotiate compromises.

Methods

Prior to my first communications with the elephants, I received emailed photographs of the matriarch, Aurora, the sub-matriarch Princess (her daughter), and two of the reserve’s bull elephants. Given that I was conducting these communications remotely, those four photographs were used to facilitate connection with each elephant as necessary. This is a

common practice among animal communicators, and one that I find helpful. Having specific unique data to identify an individual animal is how our outgoing thought communications land at the intended target. It is also important to note that I had never been to reserve A, nor met any of the elephants in person.

I conducted my first “round” of communications in May of 2016. This first round would involve only Aurora, not any of the other elephants. To prepare for the communication, I opened the picture of Aurora on my computer, and sat in my chair with my eyes closed to centre myself and quieten my mind. Inwardly I set a silent intention for myself to be clear in the communication. I visualized my heart field expanding outwards from my body’s seated position, in all directions, across the local landscape and then further beyond my physical location. In my mind’s eye I held the memory of the photograph image of Aurora and imagined my heart field encompassing her at reserve A. I then intended that my energy connected with hers, as if I were casting out a line from my heart to her being. With this internal feeling of “reaching out” I included a heartfelt greeting of respect with silent words in my mind. This greeting was unspoken, but expressed internally as I might otherwise verbally greet any being, were they in my presence. This established a connection between us; upon making the connection, I thought silent words that expressed a desire to communicate. Then I opened my eyes to look at her photograph; this I have found to be helpful to keep my cognitive faculties focused on her energy.

Internally, I invoked silent words that explained that I was communicating on behalf of reserve staff about some very big changes. This “thought stream” was automatically flowing towards her by virtue of our connection and her attunement to my “silent broadcast”. I sensed her openness and willingness to engage, which I have learned to interpret as “permission” for me to continue with our conversation. I wanted to brief her on all relevant information so that she could consider her responses to the questions that followed.

I very deliberately started the conversation by laying out the facts and intended benefits. I sent a mental image of approximately one third of her group of elephants separating from

the other two thirds, along with the feeling of this being permanent. I conveyed the feeling of great distance and “impossibility” within myself, and let those feelings expand outwards in the energetic direction of Aurora. This was to let her know that this distance was too great for elephants to walk to meet up again in the future. I then let her know the bearing or compass direction of this destination for the one third of the elephants and conveyed the current absence of elephants at the destination district. I visualized the general idea of one third arriving at this landscape devoid of elephants. With this mental image I sent the sense of new start, a new population, and growing numbers over the years, as well as restoration of an ecosystem. For the latter I sent mental images of native plants growing and other animals being attracted into that area. I was also specific about the timing of the intended relocation, letting her know that it was intended to happen in the next three months. To convey the timeframe, I internally imagined the visual sequence of a cycle of the moon in the sky, from new (dark) to full (bright). I repeated three continuous iterations of this - thus conveying the total elapsed time of three months.

The immediate feeling from Aurora manifested in my own nervous system as a sense of mild alarm. I perceived her responses as if they were my own inner emotional experiences when they arrived in my cognitive awareness. There was resistance to the notion of permanent separation, but also a curiosity about the bigger picture benefits to the greater elephant population.

In the interest of being honest with the animals, I let Aurora know that this was going ahead regardless of her choices. I apologized for the dominant culture of fenced wildlife reserves, trade in animals, and unnatural forms of travel between areas.

Having given Aurora the context, I asked her a few prepared questions. I received the translation of her responses in a combination of verbal words and direct knowing.

The first question I asked was, “How do you feel about the fact that this relocation is happening?” To convey the question to Aurora, I simply thought the exact words silently in my mind - slowly and deliberately. In the moments immediately after that I left space internally for my personal sense of interest and care for her reply yet to be received.

She conveyed that she was not happy about her family breaking apart, but that she understood that elephants were allowed limited space at reserve A. Aurora's internalized understanding of the reserve environment's constraints on natural elephant behaviour were available to me as concepts and constructs. She was aware that many of the females could not have babies, due to contraception – so they were not living entirely naturally there anyway. She believed that all members of her herd were healthy physically, by conveying emotions of happiness and satisfaction at the physical wellness of the herd. This arose in my inner human awareness as the mental image of the forms of the larger group of elephant bodies in combination with the concurrent emotions aforementioned. She also expressed that for so many of them (the 18) to move would be easier than fewer because of the benefits of having company and comfort from their relatives during the inevitably stressful process. I received this information as a clear construct and deduction in her cognition on a felt level, without any accompanying bits of data to illustrate her point. All of the above information simply appeared in my inner knowing without arriving through the mechanism of a sequence of data.

She asked, "What is the land like at the destination?" so she could get a sense whether this relocation was a good or bad idea. I told her I would research that and get back to her.

Then I asked her, once again thinking the words slowly and silently in my mind, "Would you be willing to relocate, given your experience as a leader?". The researchers had thought that she would be a good candidate to lead the new herd in reserve B, given the unknown territory requiring a matriarch's experience to navigate and teach the other elephants.

She responded with a sense of "No" - with a gentle firmness in the feeling of it as that silent word arose in my human mind. She conveyed a strong desire to stay here (reserve A) through a feeling of solidity. I perceived a mental image of Aurora standing firm on reserve A's land, rooted to the spot and immovable. This was followed by my inner sense of a mental image of her eldest daughter, Princess - along with the knowing that Aurora felt that Princess might be better suited to lead the new herd. She expressed that she had been mentoring Princess, and this would be a good opportunity for her to step forward into a

leadership role. She went on further to point out to me that her own experience had a lot to do with the specific land and resources in reserve A, so it would be of little use in a new location. Princess would have a longer life span to learn and lead in new lands.

Once again using silent word thoughts, I asked her, “Who else do you feel should relocate with your daughter?”.

She showed me Princess’ small family group of five elephants, including two calves. I saw in my mind’s eye another related group of eleven elephants, including three young males. Lastly, I saw a pair of bulls - an older one and his younger mentee. Aurora knows these elephants very well, and knows who they are, so she had no need to describe to me any of their identifying qualities. She shared only this configuration with me, which I then relayed back to reserve staff a few days later. They knew who Aurora meant as the staff was very familiar with the group dynamics in reserve A.

Reserve staff were surprised that Aurora had chosen not to go, but that had been part of their dilemma; should they relocate Aurora, an experienced leader but much older, or Princess, a much younger elephant but inexperienced leader? In terms of conservation success, they had been leaning towards sending Aurora. However, upon hearing the feedback from the communication, they wanted to respect Aurora’s wishes, and accepted her preference. One staff member admitted to me that she had an immense sense of relief that the full weight of decision-making was not resting on her human shoulders, because the repercussions of her choices were going to be lifelong for these elephants.

In that same feedback conversation with reserve staff, they told me what the landscape was like at the destination reserve, so I could share that with Aurora. They also told me what the game capture day would involve in specific terms, so that I could prepare the elephants for that stressful process in our second conversation.

-- 1 month later --

I conducted the second “round” of communications in June of 2016, with Aurora first, then with Princess.

First, I informed Aurora (using silent word thoughts and a general feeling of agreement within myself) that her nominations had been accepted by the humans. I explained that all the elephants' physical cooperation on capture day was going to be imperative to their choices being honored, because not all humans were on board with - or even aware of - the elephants' choices. I also let her know that a lot of external people would be arriving at the reserve (i.e. helicopter pilots, vets, professional marksmen, handlers, etc.) all of whom would be focused on tranquilizing the first 18 elephants that could be successfully darted from the air. I conveyed this, and the immensity of the time pressure involved in the human world on capture day by sharing mental images and feelings from the imagined scenario playing through in my mind.

Then through images and words, feelings I described the landscape of reserve B, which was slightly different than at reserve A, but the vegetation and food sources were relatively the same. With this information conveyed, I received a feeling of relief from Aurora that there would not be any known life-threatening obstacles to survival in the new place. In me there arose a feeling of her neutrality about reserve B and the relocation, and a sense of forward momentum signaling a desire to continue the conversation and make specific plans. The last thing that I told her was that I was going to communicate with her daughter, Princess, about game capture day. Specifically, I conveyed two sets of visual information to Aurora. In my mind's eye I imagined her separating from Princess, and moving as far away as she could in the opposite direction, encouraging the elephants not self-selected for relocation to follow her away from Princess. I asked Aurora to vocalize and call those elephants in her language so that they would understand. She conveyed a sense of acknowledgement. I felt this as an inner "Yes" in my conscious awareness. She also conveyed a slight sense of sadness, due to the manifestation of the separation of her family, but these feelings were always with a backdrop of understanding and willingness to go ahead with the plan.

I then communicated with Princess, the sub-matriarch. I followed the same process that I had used to connect with Aurora, using the photograph that I had. I let Princess know about the relocation, and the human reasons for it. She did not engage with the human

reasons as her mother had, but trusted her mother's choice to send her away with sufficient family members for it to not be hugely traumatic in outcome. Princess then conveyed that she had never been anywhere off reserve A, so she did not know what to expect nor did she have an imprint of the stress or trauma associated with relocation. I was left with simply a sense of innocence and openness in her.

I then conveyed to Princess the visual, auditory, and emotional aspects of game capture. I imagined myself to be on the ground, looking upwards from elephant perspective at airborne helicopters circling and swooping down towards my elephant body, along with the noise becoming louder, and the intensity of focus that comes with the predator taking aim at one's body. I imagined myself running away from the helicopter, as is natural to do; however, I imagined myself as an elephant slowing down and curving my travel trajectory to turn towards the helicopter. Acknowledging the inner feeling of this going against my flight instinct, I summoned a sense of determination and focused on the conscious choice to move towards the noise and pain of the inevitable tranquilizer shot into my hide.

Coming back into the perspective of my human self doing the communicating, I sent an imagined verbal message of words that emphasized this sequence of actions to be the only way to make sure Princess is selected, and the only way to save other relatives who had not agreed to relocate from being tranquilized and captured. I asked Princess to call for her small family group to follow her into the firing line, as this was the only way to be assured that they would come with her to the new reserve. I felt her response as physiological fear at how scary the whole scenario was for her. Through my exact descriptions she had preemptively "lived" a simulated experience of what was to come, and she registered an internal stress response to that. Yet at the same time she conveyed an understanding of what would be required for a successful outcome.

Finally, I conveyed to her the physical feeling of her darted body becoming heavy and falling asleep, by imagining my own human body feeling that way. I then visualized her being found by humans on the ground and her hearing their voices as they approached. I imagined her sedated self feeling their human hands on her body and the attachment of

straps. Next, I sent the feeling of being lifted off the ground by a crane into a big metal box on wheels (transport truck). I imagined a very slow waking-up process, inside this metal prison, and encouraged her to get to her feet as soon as she was able, despite feeling sleepy. Finally, I let her know that she would be in this truck with the feeling of motion for the duration of the road trip. This feeling would endure for the entire nighttime, and would only come to an end in the heat of the middle of the next day. When the motion of the truck stopped, one side would open and she and the others would be allowed to step onto the earth again into a fenced enclosure, where they would remain for some days and nights to become familiar with their surroundings. Princess could not relate to the specifics (not having experienced them before) but understood that enduring these stresses would be necessary.

It is important to note that sometimes at this point during a consultation the animals convey a feeling of “this is too much” and a refusal to accept the situation being described. This would cause a negotiation to unfold, which may lead to a different individual being selected. None of this was present here; Princess gave no indication of resistance or sense of being unable to cope with her future realities.

I also conducted a third communication with the herd destined for reserve B, which was more of a “broadcast communication” than a series of multiple individual communications. I explained that they had been selected for relocation by their matriarch, and described what was coming on game capture day. The information I shared, and how I shared it, was similar to my exchange with Princess. The only information that was different was that I asked these elephants to follow Princess towards the helicopter. For everyone but the pair of bulls, I was asking them to go against their instinct and to follow Princess (the leader-in-training) rather than Aurora. For the two bulls, I asked them to stay isolated as a pair rather than seeking safety in numbers by joining the larger herd running away from the helicopters. From the two bulls I felt a sense of acknowledgement, a silent “Yes, we got it” were words that appeared silently in my own inner mental landscape. The feeling behind this message was of a combined energy of “we”, conveying a message from one agreed point of view. Once again, it is important to note that had somebody been

resistant, I would have become aware of a sort of “spokesperson” sense; instead, I got a feeling of collective consent.

When engaging with animals, it is important to follow their protocols or social norms to ensure mutual respect and maximum cooperation. Elephant society is highly social, based on bonded family relationships and wider clan dynamics. Mirror self-recognition tests (Plotnik et al., 2006) have proved the cognitive self-awareness of elephants who consciously identify as individuals. Behaviourally, elephants are observed to display complex and advanced emotions such as loyalty, mourning and ritual acts. Adult male elephants separate from the breeding herds of females and their young to live alone or with an older bull for a time. Elephant herds are matriarchal, so I followed the decision-making succession throughout this consultation with Aurora, Princess, and their herd. I believe that a large part of the herd’s agreement for a portion of them to relocate was due to their leader’s consent and cooperation.

I finished my communication session by sharing with the animals my own feeling of, “We’ve got a plan, you know the plan, thank you for cooperating with the plan; I invite you to behave this way on the day, and also trust that whatever needs to happen will be appropriate to whatever is true for you at that future moment”. It is also important that I, as the animal communicator, am not personally attached to the plan or the outcome of it. I don’t want to impose my will onto them when only they can fully know what is best for them – individually, collectively and in the greater ecosystem to which they are inextricably related. My role in communication is that of a bridge and a translator. I consider it my duty to honour the animals’ sovereign right to self-determination, to the extent that their circumstantial constraints allow their choices to manifest/be realized.

Outcomes

After I concluded the communications, I did not know when game capture day was going to happen. The reserve staff contacted me two days prior to capture day in July 2016, asking me to hold space on the day. I agreed to hold the whole situation in my awareness - as much in my mind as in my heart where my sense of compassion and care resides. My

thoughts centred around a simple wish for “the highest good of all”, including the safety of all the animals, because so much can happen on the day; there’s usually loss of life (often referred to as “collateral damage”) from stress, tranquilizer and reversal medication, animals running into fences, dying in transit, to name a few.

The day after game capture I heard from reserve staff that it had all gone very well. They were pleasantly surprised when the elephants acted exactly as requested during the IIC sessions, as they were very aware how counter-instinctive the requested actions were.

I was told that from the view in the helicopter, it was visibly obvious how Aurora led the majority of the elephants as far away as she could manage. What was astounding to the professionals in the air and on the ground was how Princess switched from running away from the helicopter to curving back in a loop towards the helicopter’s line of flight, exposing herself and her small group on open ground. This allowed the marksman to easily get clean shots of the tranquilizer darts into those specific elephants. This is remarkable in the context of the challenges of hunting down fast-moving targets from the air. The elephants seek cover in the trees and bushes which obstruct the line of sight. Dust is kicked up and the necessarily low-flying helicopter’s rotor blades create wind and more confusion and extreme stress for the animals who are flooded with sensory challenges of noise, movement speed and reduced field of vision. If and when they can no longer outrun the helicopter, they usually bunch their bodies together to protect each other - which makes it difficult to isolate individuals for darting on a safe part of their bodies (hindquarters). In just a few short hours, the exact 18 individuals nominated were captured and loaded into the transport trucks.

Video footage taken on capture day from the air and on the ground for a conservation TV show (which aired months later) shows exactly the sequence of elephant movements described by the reserve staff whilst they were being chased by the helicopter.

That night, the elephants took the 14-hour road trip between two districts. They were safely offloaded the next morning, without loss of life or any incident whatsoever. It is not unusual for elephants to become injured or sick because of the impact on their organs of being

compressed during immobilization - their lungs being the most vulnerable to fatal consequences. The panic and trauma associated with the chase, capture and transport is often too much to survive on top of their compromised post-anaesthetic physical instability.

It was unsurprising to me how smoothly things went on game capture day. The earlier communications between myself and the elephants had prepared them well about specifics and their agreement was clear to me during those communications. Therefore, there was no reason for the elephants not to cooperate on capture day other than some unexpected change in the humans' plans, new developments, or unanticipated crises - none of which happened. Furthermore, in many of my other IIC interventions the animals have behaved as agreed and the outcomes have been positive.

It is quite common for us animal communicators to be unsurprised. What did surprise me, however, was how surprised the other humans were by the success of the project. Even when animals clearly cooperate consciously as evidenced by their actions, humans still find that unusual. Perhaps our human conditioning that has us regard other animals as inferior and less intelligent has a role to play in that. The animals, however, never cease to surprise me, particularly with their generosity of spirit and holistic view of life. I was amazed by Princess' willingness to go into unfamiliar experiential realms. She showed great personal courage, and a great determination to walk into the unknown. I was also struck by Aurora's concern for the "greater good" of elephants as a species; she set aside her sadness about splitting up her family, to prioritize furthering her species.

Discussion and Conclusion

I have found it is very important to explain to the animals very specifically, in detail, the exact sequence of events that will unfold, and importantly, what actions are required of them. Leaving out details gives them an incomplete picture, often resulting in them not knowing what actions to take in response to the particular stimuli in the situation/event. Giving them full information ahead of time also removes a lot of their otherwise understandable fear of the unknown - remembering that many human interventions and

management actions are in and of themselves entirely foreign to the animal species' life experience, instinct, or paradigm.

It is imperative that specifics are conveyed to them from their perspective, taking into account their sensory realities. That is why I imagined myself as an elephant looking up at the helicopter when communicating with Aurora, Princess, and the other elephants. Also, I am providing more than a set of instructions, because these methods acknowledge the emotional component (in this case, the stress they would be under and their instinctive reactions). Giving them specific action steps helps them know how to respond and move in the moment, particularly when following instructions requires them to behave in contrast to normal instinctive reactions. In sum, providing this level of detail, together with ensuring that I account for the emotional aspects and convey information from their perspective, contributes greatly to empirical success. Specific guidance is given in a way that the animals can act upon it based on their sensory realities, usual modes of operation and behavioural predispositions.

If I could do anything differently with this project, I would have conducted the communications with the elephants in person, particularly on capture day. Generally, when I do my work in stressful wildlife interventions, I do find it's more helpful if I am on site. This does not strengthen my ability to communicate with the animals, but rather when things are unfolding on the day, I could be more able to guide the animals moment-by-moment with the unfolding physical scenario. Being able to update them in real-time can reduce the stress on the animals, and possibly on the humans as well. The outcome was good in this case, but had something gone awry then I could have guided the elephants to get back on track. The fact that my involvement was not made public, and the cost of my travel to and from the site, were barriers to this happening.

Acknowledging the animal's sentience and rights to self-determination are an effective way to ensure the success of a project. Maintaining a sense of empathy for the animals is another way to ensure success, which I accomplished by describing action items from their perspective. In my experience, by placing myself in their individual perspectives, I can

greatly increase the chances of me becoming aware of subtle things that are true for them
– things that my human self would not have thought to ask about.

Appendix C - Vole (and Other Backyard) Cases

Abstract

An AC in a mountainous county in the United States moved into a rapidly urbanizing/developing neighborhood and immediately began to observe problems in the co-existence between humans and native species in the area. Most notably, a lack of pollinators, as well as a tense relationship between the neighbours and local predators, as their chickens and other small farm animals would disappear periodically. The AC decided to use IIC as the primary method to co-create a garden and backyard wild space that would allow for cultivated/farmed and wild native species to coexist as harmoniously as possible. While the data focuses primarily on her interactions with voles, it also documents communications with bees, hummingbirds, ants, red-tailed hawk, and chipmunks, to establish a safer backyard space for all beings.

Format of the case: *This case study is written in first person narrative from the perspective of the AC (Julia) with additional insight from her husband (Peter). Bolded indicate a shift in narrative voice.*

Introduction

I (Julia) live in a quickly developing valley, nestled between two mountain ranges in the Rocky Mountain Lower Montane-Foothill Shrubland ecological system. We have just under 2 acres, which is mostly dry pasture and was overgrown by weeds when we bought it. I use the term “weeds” to refer to both native and non-native plants that are widely considered invasive, or were just generally unwanted in that area, particularly those that were toxic to animals. Adjacent to our property is a neighbour with dozens of acres of grassland used for cattle; his is the only larger property, while everybody else has a couple of acres each for a several mile radius. The native habitat that was once here and on neighbouring properties was turned to grass and alfalfa fields many years ago; furthermore, continuous urbanization of the area has displaced many native species. Some wildlife species have learned to co-exist among humans (i.e. raccoons, coyotes, foxes etc.) but based on what I

have seen so far, I expect that the rest will be killed as ‘collateral damage’ of development. Not unlike other urban ecosystems, there seems to be ongoing conflict between human and wild residents, which I speculate is due to, or at least exacerbated by, an increasing degree of habitat loss for the wildlife in the area. Predators are preying on livestock or poultry (as is their nature...) giving them a bad reputation amongst local farmers. Furthermore, in an attempt to create the “ideal backyard” in a developed space outside of the city, there has been an increase in pesticide use on weeds and other undesired plant species, cultivated or non-native plants in landscaping design, and the use of poison for rodents and other harsh methods to prevent them from moving in.

My purpose in this project was to co-create a garden and wild space with the local species that allowed for safer co-existence and an ongoing bargaining process for everyone’s needs to be met. As an adult, I started receiving spontaneous communications from an animal that came into my life. This triggered an intense curiosity about the nature of IIC work, and the possibility for its application across fields of work. With a background in biology and natural resources conflict resolution, I have found that interspecies communication can be applied in a wildlife context for enhancing habitat and reducing human-wildlife conflicts. I worked with local birds, ants, bees, red-tailed hawks, voles, and others, to negotiate and address conflicts as they arose. I will summarize these various cases in the “methods” sections below, and will describe one of the cases in greater detail to capture the essence of my methods.

3.4.2.1. Negotiating with pollinators and predators

When I first inhabited my property, it was full of invasive plant species, as well as what most people consider “nuisance” animals, such as racoons, mice, voles, skunks, foxes, and magpies, and the house happened to sit in the middle of a migratory bird route. There were several issues that I began to notice regarding coexistence between locals and native species. First, the native flora was sparse in the valley and during the first spring/summer I noticed that there weren’t many songbirds or pollinators flying around in my neighborhood. Second, many of my immediate neighbors regularly expressed how often their chickens would get eaten or disappear, even when they were safe in their coop. I have a small,

rescue-filled, hobby farm with free-range animals including hens and a rabbit that could be easy targets for predation. I believe in allowing the animals under my care to have adequate space, so I choose to let them have free range when appropriate. Given that there are many predators that could easily prey on a hen, I decided to have conversations with the local predators to see if we could work together and reduce the risks for my animals or if that was even possible.

Individual cases

The following individual cases are shorter examples of how Julia has worked with wildlife in various circumstances.

Co-creating a wildflower garden with local pollinators

Julia's narrative

I didn't know where to begin in the rehabilitation process of the land to organically create a wildflower garden. After much research, and in the spring after about 6 months of inhabiting the property, I began hand pulling weeds, laying out new soil, and communicating with the few local bumblebees and hummingbirds that stopped by to understand their specific requirements in a small garden landscape, from plant species to water requirements. I maintained open communications with them and other garden visitors such as butterflies and spiders throughout the gardening season (spring-fall) to ensure their needs were being met and adjusted accordingly. I found that once the chosen plants were planted and blooming, the amount of wildlife increased exponentially the first year in the garden compared to what was observed the previous year when full of weeds. Unfortunately, I haven't documented the number of species observed throughout the years to truly measure the success rate of the collaboration, but it's highly apparent to me that the garden designed by working together with local wildlife, has been a success.

The information received included, but was not limited to, the following:

- The bumble bee queen asked for a specific type of water bowl with pebbles inside so her children wouldn't drown when getting water.

- The hummingbird shared with me which plants are best for nectar and why; she preferred rocky mountain penstemon (*Penstemon strictus*) and threadleaf giant hyssop (*Agastache rupestris*).

While I have been a gardener for over ten years, I have learned so much about the specific needs of the local wildlife and am happy to accommodate their needs whenever possible.

Peter's narrative

We moved onto the property 4.5 years ago, and at that time the wildflower garden was just a massive weed patch that was completely out of control. We cleared it all out, and added some natural rock/stone walls, and made some walking paths throughout the garden. Julia went and bought a bunch of native plants to plant throughout. After a year or two they started thriving.

Ants destroying garden plant roots

Julia's narrative

While most of the garden visitors were welcomed, I did encounter a problem with the ants ruining several plants in the garden by destroying their roots. After first using methods like cinnamon and chili powder to deter them with no success, I decided to try communicating with them to see if they'd kindly relocate. I struggle to find words to describe the experience of what was going on, so the best I can describe is that I was tapped into and feeling their "ant energy", which is simultaneously an inner knowing as well as a feeling of their external body *and* energetic presence.

I see the difference in connecting with an individual being versus a group of beings, as "levels" of energy or consciousness: the first level is an individual energy being that you can communicate with, then the second level is a group consciousness, then the third level is the consciousness of an entire population. The layers of energy can be felt when entering into the communicative space, and I can pick up on individual personalities at times. Using all your subtle "clair" senses, you can feel them taking up space, almost like an 'energetic signature'. This is how I can tell when a being steps forward to be the group's

representative; their unique ‘energetic signature’ becomes clear to me, which is a similar experience to when a human friend walks into a room and you feel their presence. When an individual animal steps forward, then they will proceed to identify themselves as the representative of the group, which I receive as silent words being spoken in my mind.

While my intention is the same going into group communications (being clear that I want to talk to the “ants” as a collective, for example), an individual representative does not come forward on behalf of the group every single time. Instead, such as with the ants, the way I understand it is I was talking to the collective consciousness of the group.

There wasn’t a formal communication that occurred, or an exchange with any one individual in particular; I ‘talked’ into the space, and hoped the message would get across. I asked if the colony would find a new place to live and explained why it was important for them to stop killing my plants. After several days, the ant colony disappeared. I don’t know where they went, but they were no longer harming my garden plants.

While the overall outcome case was a success for me, if I were to do this case again today, I would change my approach; I would try to target the queen and talk to her. She is the leader, and thus I would want to respect her authority, or at least consider more the dynamics of ant colonies. That being said, I do not research the species of being that I am communicating with ahead of time. This is because the problem-solving is not always related to social structure, it’s about what’s going on in the environment and why they’re there, which is why I like to get the animal perspective first.

From my experience, communication with insects is a bit different than communication with other animal beings. When it comes to insects that exist in large groups but have a queen in their ecosystem (with the exception of bees, for some reason), I have a hard time communicating with an individual. Instead, I either work with the consciousness of the entire group, or with the being at the top of the hierarchy. From my understanding (and from the perspective of these beings), ants and termites and other similar species have a collective consciousness, meaning they all think and feel the exact same thing, allowing

them to all work together synchronistically. This is the notion of the “hive mind” as it is known widely in the natural science community.

Peter’s narrative

Ants have always been an issue on our property. I do notice the ants move quite a bit; I’m not sure if that is a natural pattern or if Julia has asked them to do that.

Ensuring co-existence between red-tailed hawks and our flock of chickens

Julia’s narrative

There is a red-tailed hawk family that lives in the trees by my house and is comprised of five individuals: two adults, three yearlings. I was concerned about this family of hawks because they would regularly swoop close to the house and eyeball my hens. While I haven’t lost an animal to them yet, I know from having lived rurally before that hawks and other predators pose threats to animals like my chickens, kitten and free-range rabbit. When I connected, I tuned-in to the male adult. I learned that the family has lived here for years and that they don’t migrate. After a few moments of what I’d describe as casual conversation, I asked if he and his family could kindly leave the animals that I care for out of their diet.

While at first he gave me the feeling of a side eye sort of impression, as if he were to imply that he wouldn’t consider the request, I could feel his consideration energetically (almost like an attitude or emotional shift, without him saying anything) because I had formally asked him with kindness and respect.

Ever since that conversation three years ago, the hawk family no longer comes close to my yard, and I haven’t lost a hen or rabbit yet to predation. They did, however, take a baby robin out of its nest in my garden, which I consider to be a breach of our agreement, so this requires a follow-up with them. Other than that, I believe my approach worked well, and I don’t think I would have done anything differently.

Peter’s narrative

We've got chickens, a rabbit, and cats that we care for. We've never had a loss of any of the animals due to predators, they seem to kind of stay out of our property. I've talked to quite a few neighbours who have had their chicken flocks raided by different predators, yet we've had the same chickens for 10+ years, so the fact that we haven't had anything come and raid the chicken coops is pretty surprising to me. The chickens free-range and they can go all over the property; there's not a ton of places for them to hide, which is extra perplexing that they remain unscathed to this day.

Chipmunks: A client case showcasing alternative outcomes

The chipmunk case that I conducted for a client awhile ago is the most thorough case that I have documented, but it didn't "end well". Before entering a communication with the animals involved, I will usually ask the human client questions such as:

- What is the conflict, from your perspective?
- What do you want to see, or what is your ideal result?
- Where might you be willing to negotiate/compromise?
- What have you tried so far to try to address the situation?
- What is the worst-case scenario?

My approach to negotiation during a conflict resolution between human and animal stakeholders is to constantly seek and share information from both parties, in a circular-type fashion, that will move us towards the human client's desired outcome, while maintaining the animal's best interest at heart.

In this case, the clients informed me that the chipmunks were destroying the underneath of the driveway and the foundation of the house, causing it to crack, which my clients were understandably very concerned about. They were trapping and relocating 40 chipmunks a day for weeks – they were at their wits end, and approaching me was their last resort before taking lethal measures.

After completing the first step, (asking the client the questions listed above) I then go into the initial communication with the animal stakeholder and present the current situation (from the perspective of the human client) as transparently as possible. When I opened the

communication, the chipmunk I connected with said “I could move the ones that are willing to relocate, just give us a few days”; afterwards, there was a noticeable reduction in population. The chipmunk I connected with did warn me that all we were going to be doing by relocating a group of chipmunks was making space for more to take their place, though, which is exactly what happened. He made it clear that there was an imbalance in the ecosystem, and an overpopulation of chipmunks in the area, and that the only natural ways to regulate the chipmunk population was to: 1) encourage more of their natural predators to move into the neighborhood (i.e. owl and fox), or 2) wait for disease to take over.

Unfortunately, my clients were living in a very developed area, and the chipmunks were unsure if the presence of these predators would be welcome in the neighborhood. My clients also were not in a place to wait for disease to balance the population naturally. They did everything they could to find a non-lethal solution to the problem and had given me three weeks to sort everything out.

After asking all the questions listed above, I will rank possible interventions from least to most invasive. I always start with the least invasive solution for the animals, but if there is no improvement to the situation, I have had to change the approach to be progressively more invasive. In this case, it seemed that there was no alternative option, so in the end we had to move to the most extremely invasive option, and ask the chipmunks what their preferred method of euthanization was. I think the clients started to put dry ice down the holes. So, I say this case didn’t “end well” because there was nothing I could do; there were no other remediation options because there were too many outside influences impacting the outcome. The only other actionable steps to be taken was to understand and acknowledge that my clients and the chipmunks were coexisting in an entire ecosystem even in an urban environment, and that we therefore could not control that larger landscape.

The following section summarizes a more detailed case that gives a more concrete description of Julia’s process of negotiation with wild animals.

Negotiating with voles in the lawn

Julia's narrative

In the summer of 2022, there seemed to be a vole family that had moved into the backyard, digging about 100 square feet of holes in our freshly placed lawn. My husband did not want these voles in the lawn, digging it up. For seven weeks, various methods were used unsuccessfully to encourage the voles to leave, such as:

- Flooding the holes daily
- Backfilling the holes with dirt
- Sprinkling cinnamon powder down the holes, then fresh/dry mint leaves, then garlic and chili peppers.

Given the lack of success with these methods, my husband became fed up and suggested taking lethal measures. At this point, in the hopes of avoiding taking lethal measures, I stepped in to try and communicate with the voles to ask them to leave. I use automatic writing as the method for communicating with animals, so upon connecting with the voles, I documented our conversation largely through that medium. Automatic writing involves me moving my conscious mind out of the way, and allow my unconscious mind and body to take over through the connection with the animal, and the information from the animal flows through without bias or judgement onto the piece of paper.

In order to connect with a being, I follow the same series of steps, which can be summarized as 1) setting an intention for the communication, 2) grounding my energy, usually through a meditation, 3) connect with love and higher consciousness, then send a cord/bubble of love to the being I want to connect with, and 4) ask permission to connect, feeling intuitively for a “yes” or “no”. Sending and receiving information between me and the being I'm connecting with can be done through all the senses. These include: sounds, emotions, a sense of knowing, images, taste, and smells.

A transcript of our conversation follows. Words in italics indicate further description, thoughts and commentary on what I was experiencing or interpreting in the moment. These

notes were made during the communication, or immediately afterwards. My primary form of sending and receiving information is sounds, so most of the communication I describe below is shared through silent sounds/words, unless it says otherwise.

First Impressions: The individual stepping forward to connect with me feels like the leader or “spokes vole” for the group. I can feel his unique ‘energetic signature’ upon connecting with the group of voles, and then he identifies himself as the representative, which I receive as silent words spoken in my mind. I can sense he doesn’t want me here and I have to show him that I mean no harm before he communicates with me. In my energy body, or in my mind’s eye, I visualize holding up my hands showing him I just want to talk. He then allows the connection, but I can feel his suspicion.

Vole Leader: Why are you here?

AC: I would like to kindly ask that you relocate your family. You are digging up a space that is causing problems. *I can sense that there are several others residing in the holes, including very young babies.*

Vole Leader: Where are we supposed to go?

AC: How about to the other side of the fence?

Vole Leader: We will get trampled and it’s too dry. *When he said the word “trampled” he showed me images of my goats and horses.*

AC: Okay, what about in the garden bed? *This is a perennial garden bed where I placed bark chips a few feet away from the grassy lawn.*

Vole Leader: No. *I can feel his disinterest.*

What's in it for me? *He's getting impatient with this conversation; I can feel he's ready to disconnect.*

AC: Unfortunately, if you stay, lethal measures might be taken, and I don't think either of us want that. *I can sense this statement confirms exactly why he doesn't like humans and I can feel him disconnecting from me, by pulling his energy away.*

Wait, just hear me out and then you can go. Would you be willing to move to the back of the garden where nobody goes? You can have that whole corner; whatever vegetables are on the edges, and nobody will bug you. *I'm showing him a specific area of my garden in my mind. I can sense he's listening with one ear, but I can't tell if he's taking me seriously.*

I can give you three days to relocate otherwise, it's out of my control. We will leave you alone in the meantime. *In my mind I'm showing the sun coming up and going down, three times to depict each day. As soon as I finished showing him the days in my mind, he disconnected.*

Because my husband was having such a hard time with the voles, I was acting as a mediator between the two parties, leaning into what my husband wanted while maintaining the voles' best interest in mind. My husband gave me the three-day deadline, which is what I passed along to the voles, and thus was my reason for taking that approach.

Immediately after the communication, I felt like I had betrayed the voles because I confirmed their distrust with humans, and I was unsure if our conversation would be enough to encourage them to relocate. Two days after our communication, however, we noticed the holes in the yard were no longer actively being dug up. I looked around the

entire lawn to see if they had moved and didn't see anything. It wasn't until later that day when I realized a new vole colony had taken up residence in a corner of the garden, exactly where I asked the vole leader to take his family.

It has been almost two years now, and we have not had any voles dig up our lawn to date.

Peter's narrative

We had a group of voles – I'm not sure how many – that decided to burrow in our backyard. When they take up residence, they dig holes and make dirt mounds everywhere. If they were out in the horse pasture, for example, it wouldn't have been an issue, but them being in the backyard where we hang out was a problem for me. I wanted them out of there and to stop digging up the yard and the new sod which had recently been laid.

Julia is not in favour of using lethal methods, so I was trying instead to continually disrupt their home to force them to find somewhere else to live. Initially I stuck a hose in one of the holes and let it run for awhile, and tried that a few times, with no success. I was also refilling the holes – I poked a shovel around in there to disrupt the tunneling system – again with no success. I started to do research to see if there were other non-lethal ways to deal with them, and found out about these smoke bombs, which basically flood their holes with smoke, but Julia was not enthused about that idea.

I think Julia knew that I was getting increasingly frustrated, and I had reached a point where my next step was going to be a lethal approach, so she offered to handle it. I didn't really know what she meant at that point in time when she said she would handle it – I knew she was going to use IIC but didn't know what that meant or what that would look like.

Outcomes

Julia's narrative

Regarding the vole case specifically, because I had given the voles three days, I was respectful of that agreement, and we left them alone entirely during that time. I noticed after two days, however, that the vole activity in the lawn was gone; you can tell because

voles keep their holes/mounds visible, and when they leave their tunnels collapse back into the ground. I figured I would look in the garden on the off chance that they had relocated to the spot I had suggested; sure enough, they were exactly where I had suggested that they go. I never reached out again to confirm that they had indeed relocated to the garden, as I didn't want to bother them, but it seems too significant to be a coincidence. We haven't had voles in the lawn since then.

This was one of the first times that I communicated with an animal that is largely perceived as a pest, so I was surprised when I tuned in that the “spokes-vole” didn't want to talk to me; I hadn't encountered that yet. It was a good lesson that the way we perceive (and treat!) certain animals is how they will perceive us in return. I was also surprised that they wound up relocating – I really didn't think that they would leave. I was unsurprised, however, by the way the communication went, that is fairly “standard” and tends to follow a framework, as I've mentioned previously.

Peter's narrative

I was leaving town from Friday to Sunday, and so I saw that as giving Julia a three-day window to do what she needed to do before I came back and could pay more attention to the ongoing issue. When I got back on Sunday, my focus was on the family, and getting ready to go back to work on Monday. At some point during that week, I did notice the lack of digging activity – I went and filled in the holes using the dirt mounds, and at that point the holes didn't reappear, the dirt mounds stopped showing up, and without ongoing activity I just let it go.

Discussion and Conclusion

Julia's narrative

I learned about the “numbered days timeline” method from someone else who had tried it with great success, and the vole case was my first time giving it a try. Given the obvious success with this method, it has impacted my approach going forward. Unless the case gets really serious and the outcomes become time-sensitive based on what the client wants, we will take a more flexible approach by asking the animals to give me a timeline in

human terms. Sometimes I will request a timeline to be provided by the animal, and there have been other cases where the animals offer a timeline of their own volition; this information is usually received by me as a number heard verbally, paired with a visual of the cycles of the sun representing the number of days.

If I were to do this case again, I would still approach the voles in the same way and open the session/communicate with them in the same way. I would still offer them a safe space to relocate (I find that this method generally works really well and is very important), and I would again give them a time limit, or ask that they provide one; that way I know when next steps need to be taken rather than leaving it without an end date. I would probably advocate a little harder for the voles with my partner next time, and I have also begun to reflect on my approach to follow-ups, and would likely do that differently in this case and in other cases going forward. When the animals involved in a case do relocate or adjust their behaviour, I'm not sure how they are doing afterwards, as my follow-ups are more human client-focused. That's something to note, though, to start incorporating into my practice.

My overall small, yet successful attempts for maintaining harmony on my property, makes me wonder how we could use similar conflict resolution negotiations and intuitive interspecies communication to navigate future conflicts. Could habitat management and restoration efforts at all scales be more successful if informed by the beings whose lives are impacted by these efforts? Could the approach to human-wildlife conflict resolution result in less relocation or euthanization of predators? These are questions that absolutely should be considered moving forward in a world full of sudden change, habitat loss and many unknown factors.

Peter's narrative

The first emotion I felt was just relief, about not having to deal with the voles anymore. Once we talked more about the approach Julia took, I thought it was quite intriguing that this is something that is possible. I still find it really surprising that there could be a relationship there, between us and animals. I have not had any previous experience with IIC – I've been slowly learning through Julia, but have always taken a more "standard"

approach to things like this, meaning I am more skeptical of this line of work. I am very analytical, so you can say that connection to the “outside realm” is not something that I have considered prior to Julia beginning her journey. If I were to navigate this case again, though, I would probably have Julia deal with it, honestly. Her approach seemed to work better than whatever I was doing.

Additional Insight: My IIC process for negotiating with animals

IIC Methods Step-By-Step

To formally learn more about the practice of IIC, I read books and took a few courses taught by professional ACs. These are the steps I take when going into “formal” communications:

1. Set a boundary/visualize a bubble around me
2. Set my intention to communicate with a specific animal or consciousness (group/population),
3. Ground my energy (I start a meditation from the top of my head down throughout the body, my awareness is internal, meaning I am in a meditative state of being and my mind is quiet),
4. Connect with love and higher consciousness,
5. Anchor my awareness into the heart,
6. Send a cord or bubble of love to the animal or consciousness I want to connect with,
7. Ask permission to connect, feel intuitively for a “yes” or a “no”,
8. Go for it – hang out and see what happens!

Sending information can be done in a number of ways: by talking in your mind or out loud, by thinking about the questions or comments you want to share with the animal, by sending a mental image, or sending a feeling.

Receiving information is a similar process. I describe the subtle senses, or “clairs”, as I experience them, below:

- Clairaudience: The ability to hear sounds that are inaudible to others nearby. The source originates from elsewhere, such as from animals, plants, the spiritual realm, etc.
- Clairsentience: The ability to feel the emotions or attitudes of another within myself, as well as physical sensations.
- Claircognizance: a sense of knowing - information comes to me suddenly and I know, without a doubt, that the information came to me and is correct without logical explanation.
- Clairvoyance: The ability to see images, or other visions, in the mind’s eye. The information feels as if it’s coming from outside of me.
- Clairagustance: The ability to taste something that isn’t from me/in my mouth.
- Clairalience: The ability to smell something clearly that didn’t originate from my physical realm.

Casual Communications vs Conflict Resolution

Generally, many of my communications with wildlife are to learn more about them - what they’re doing and why they’re doing it. For example, there was a robin who nested in a shelter in a park, and I was curious why they chose that particular location, rather than a tree, for example. When I go into a communication like that, I set an intention – what is my goal here, or what do I want to learn? Casual communications are generally just to learn more about the wildlife I encounter while I’m out and about.

When I’m doing conflict resolution, I’m working with a human client in most cases. Often in these situations, I’m acting as a mediator representing both sides of the conflict, so there’s a lot more to consider. Before entering a communication with the animals involved, I will usually ask the human client questions such as:

- What is the conflict from the client’s perspective?
- What do they want to see, or what is their ideal result?

- Where might they be willing to negotiate/compromise?
- What have they tried so far to try to address the situation?
- What is the worst-case scenario?

Thus, when I go into communications with the animals, I have all that context to navigate and direct the conversation towards where the client wants to go. During negotiations, the animals are usually aware that the humans are not happy with them, and are typically understanding, but not quite as willing to have casual conversation just for fun. I still set an intention before each communication with the animals in conflict resolution cases too, but the goal and approach will be different according to what the client needs.

Other things I think about, are whether I'm communicating with an animal in person or over distance. If I'm in person and I see a wild animal I'd like to communicate with, I consider what they're actively doing. For example, if they're busy, I don't want to interrupt. I might circle back to them later in that case.

I did mention when talking about the ant case earlier that I would have taken social hierarchy and colony dynamics into consideration if I were to do this case again; however, I generally do not do prior research on an animal species prior to communicating with them. That being said, I do have a background in wildlife biology, so many of the animals I approach, I already know a lot about them. I feel like it's better to know less and see what the animals have to say first. This is to reduce the risk of bias and unconscious manipulation of the information coming through. Especially for newer ACs, having more information can lead to preconceived notions and muddling messages from the animal.

The Negotiation Process

My approach to negotiation during a conflict resolution between human and animal stakeholders is to constantly seek and share information, in a circular-type fashion, that will move us towards the human client's desired outcome, while maintaining the animal's best interest at heart. I have a graduate certificate in natural resources conflict resolution, where we train to be that intermediary between different parties seeking a resolution within the scope of natural resources. I lean into that training to inform my approach with cases I

take on. Additionally, it has been an ongoing process of refinement by continually asking myself, “What is working? What isn’t working? How can I modify/refine/do better?”. In this way, I am in an exploratory zone and thus be open to the process.

After completing the first step, (asking the client the questions listed in the previous section) I can then go into the initial communication with the animal stakeholder and present the current situation (from the perspective of the human client) as transparently as possible. I will then see what the animal has to say in response, which I will then report back to the human. This back-and-forth of me relaying what one party said to the other will continue, until we come to an agreement. Reaching an agreement can require up to five conversations between the parties, though usually three is enough to see results, on average, or less. I like to circle back around and check in if possible, if time and capacity permits. In terms of frequency or time lapsed between check-ins, this is on a case-by-case basis; I do try to let animals lead in terms of follow-up, if they can, wherein they give a timeframe, and I try to abide by what they request.

As far as methods go, (setting up space and having conversations with both parties), my approach has not changed. I always ask the client what the worst-case scenario is from their perspective, what they are willing/not willing to do, what their timeframe is, how much they are willing to give the animals space, and whether they would be willing to try to deter them naturally. Using this information the client has provided, I will rank possible interventions from least to most invasive. The most significant alterations I have had to make to my approach is mid-case, as I always start with the least invasive solution for the animals, but if there is no improvement to the situation, I have had to change the approach to be progressively more invasive. I continue to follow the same guiding principles, by asking myself and the stakeholders, “what is the overarching goal, and how can I bring that forward?” and then we take it from there.

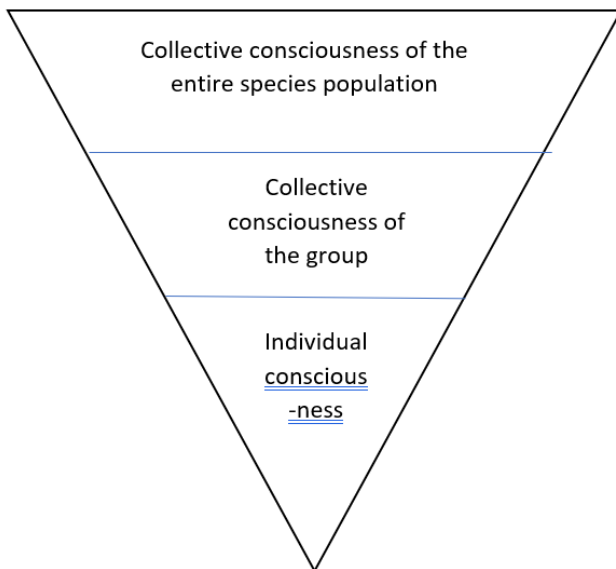
IIC With a Group of Beings

I see the difference in connecting with an individual being versus a group of beings, as “levels” of energy or consciousness: the first level is an individual energy being that you

can communicate with, then the second level is a group consciousness, then the third level is the consciousness of an entire population. I see and experience it almost like an upside-down triangle, where the widest point at the top is the collective consciousness of the entire species population, which feels big and vast; the middle point is the consciousness of a group of the species, which feels smaller and less vast, and finally the bottom point of the triangle is a single individual. The levels, or layers of energy can be felt when entering into the communicative space, and I can pick up on individual personalities at times. Using all your subtle “clair” senses, you can feel them taking up space, almost like an ‘energetic signature’. This is how I can tell when a being steps forward to be the group’s representative; their unique ‘energetic signature’ becomes clear to me, and then they proceed to identify themselves as the representative of the group, which I receive as silent words being spoken in my mind. You can still feel the energy of the entire group, when a representative steps forward; you hear one voice, but there’s an inner knowing that the message is on behalf of the collective.

Figure C.1.

“Layers of energy” when Communicating with a Species of Beings



While my intention is the same going into group communications (being clear that I want to talk to the “ants” as a collective, for example), usually one individual will step forward as the representative, or intermediary, on behalf of the group. However, an individual

representative does not come forward on behalf of the group every single time. For a couple cases, that's not what happened; instead, the way I understand it is I was talking to the collective consciousness of the group. For the ants, as I mentioned earlier, there wasn't a back-and-forth conversation; I talked into the space, and hoped the message would get across. In another case involving beetles, they also didn't have an individual step forward. When communicating with bees, I talk to the one in front of me while in the garden. From my experience, it seems to me that communication with insects is a bit different than communication with other kinds of animal beings.

The way I understand IIC, is that we all speak the same language – the language of energy. It's the universal language through the love frequency. Our bodies are energetic, and act like an antenna or a translator of information/messages. The translation of energy is universal and through our physical body and mind. When our energy meets another energy that's when the decoding of information process begins. The energy gets decoded by our own unique energy including your physical body, mind, intuitive senses, etc.

Appendix D – Case Study Guiding Document

Case Study Data Collection Framework: AC Consultations with Wildlife

Taanishi>Hello! To help you navigate this document, please see table of contents below.

Table of Contents:

1. Introduction to me and my research* (also on my website: <https://researchers.usask.ca/mj-barrett/sydney-kuppenbender.php>)
2. Preparations for Working Together
3. How to Construct a Case Study
4. Case study content
 - a. Title
 - b. Elevator pitch
 - c. Introduction
 - d. Methods
 - e. Outcomes
 - f. Conclusion/Discussion
 - g. Assumptions
 - h. Glossary of terms
5. Appendices:
 - a. Consent form

*If you have already visited my webpage, you can skip section 1.

This research has been approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board

1. Introduction to Me, and My Research

Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this study that will help us generate, prepare, and present information on Animal Communicator (AC) engagements with wildlife. Participation should take 7-21* hours of your time, and an honorarium will be provided to compensate for your time.

We hope that this research will provide crucial baseline knowledge for further study of animal communication, and its implications for research, policy, and fieldwork, such as land management, wildlife rehabilitation, conservation, or other environmental science work.

We are aiming for this research to pave the way for more-than-human animal voices to be heard, offering the opportunity to bring their voices forward for meaningful consultation in areas that impact them.

Finally, we hope that upon engaging with this research study and our findings, that Indigenous land managers can determine whether a collaboration with ACs is desired.

This research study will take a case study approach, and this case study framework document will:

- Provide guidance for us as we work together
- Help us determine if you have a case study that we might be able to use for this study
- Provide a framework to flush out the details of the case

*The amount of time needed to complete this project will be dependent on factors such as, the information you have readily available, the turnaround time for revisions of the document, whether you and the researcher work together on the first draft of the document or if you fill in the first draft independently.

2. Preparations for Working Together

Writing a case study is a collaborative endeavor; I look forward to working with you to document your project!

Before we meet, please ensure that you have carefully read and identified any questions you have about the consent form and this case study framework document. Both the consent form and case study framework documents are essential to ensuring an equitable and ethical partnership, and to manage expectations about the project moving forward.

The next step is that you and I will meet to a) review the consent form, b) make a final determination whether the case meets the criteria for my study; and c) assuming we go forward, determine how you would like to work together to document the case study. Options that are available to you are: a) you write the first draft by yourself and send it to me to provide input, or b) we co-construct the first draft during an in-depth zoom interview.

Once these pre-requisites are met, and you have signed and submitted the signature section of the consent form, then documentation of the case study can commence. **Even after our first meeting when I have answered your questions, I strongly encourage you to reach out to me with any questions or concerns you might have, and I will be happy to answer them.**

Please note: If your case is not selected for a full case study write-up, it may still be a valuable ‘short synopsis’, which is a very brief description of the case*. We can discuss this option as well. Note that given the limitations of funding for this project, there is no honoraria provided for short synopses. However, we hope that the knowledge that you are contributing to widening understanding of the ways in which IIC is used in wildlife contexts will be adequate compensation.

3. How to Construct a Case Study

This section outlines some general guidelines and provides an overview of typical content in a case study. It will also help us know whether your case study is a good candidate to document for this study. Please read on!

- The approximate length for each section is listed in italics at the beginning of each section. This suggested length is assuming you are using 12-point font, single spaced, with an estimated total of 6-12 pages. Any diagrams or charts may affect this, as will inclusion of documented dialogue with animals (if relevant and available).
- Any areas with blue italicized text are prompts to help you start writing and documenting your case. When documenting your case, please ensure that you maintain the anonymity of any third-party participants involved. This can be adhered to by carefully omitting identifiable information about these individuals. We will need to talk through examples of how to do this appropriately as the narrative gets developed.
- Please note that your name will be changed in all versions of the case study and replaced with a pseudonym. This is an extra measure of precaution to help ensure the protection of any third-party participants involved in your case.
- You are welcome to share about your involvement in this study with others at any time during the project. Carefully consider the potential impact on other third-party participants involved as you share.
- After the first draft is completed, we will work together to review suggested edits, places to elaborate, or to pare down the case. This may require several back-and-forth emails and/or follow-up meetings to finalize the document.
- I may also need your advice about how to access important contextual information (e.g. historical documents that give background about the ongoing human-animal conflict situation in which you intervened; reports from community organizations that give follow-up information on the project in question). I will also need to add a section about methods, and how the case was documented (e.g. from memory, from detailed journal notes, etc.)

4. Case Study Content

4a. Case Study Title

4b. Case Study “Elevator pitch” (one or two sentence(s)):

- *Example: Two-year project working on relocation of pack of wolves, so humans and wolves could co-exist more peacefully after a period of discord between the two species.*

4c. Introduction (~2 pages, or 20% of the paper): This is the section where you describe the context from which the case study came about. Typically, you would identify your role in the project, as well as any other stakeholders (human or more-than-human) and your relationship with them. As you do so, however, be general so that they are not identifiable (e.g. a sanctuary director, rather than the name and location of the sanctuary). Identify the circumstances that led to your involvement in the project, how you were introduced to the (case/situation) and invited to become involved. Then finally, describe the significance of the project and its importance for the stakeholders. This can take the form of answers to the following questions:

- *Who? – How did you get involved? Were you invited by humans, by animals? Did you take the initiative to get involved?*
- *What? – Problem, situation, or question.*
 - o *If you haven’t already done so, include a description of what the situation was before you arrived, why you were invited to get involved.*
 - o *Did you have a prior relationship with any of the individuals involved, including the animals?*
- *When? Provide a timeline of events to get started -see the chart below as an example of the format you could use.*
 - o *Consider: when did each back-and-forth conversation happen? Were there multiple communications or a single communication? And any other details we may need to paint a fuller picture of the project.*

Sample timeline:

Date	Event	Outcome
(example) 2008-2014	Ongoing conflict between humans and wolves	Wolves were being shot as a means for population control, which was having a ripple effect on community and ecosystem wellbeing

(example cont'd) Oct. 2019	I was contacted by a community member, and asked to mediate some problem-solving sessions between humans and wolves	I reached out to the wolves to see if they would be interested in participating in a mediation session

- *Why? – Describe the significance of the project.*
 - o *Why is your project important for the stakeholders, including both human and more-than-human?*

4d. Methods (~3 pages, or 30% of the paper): This is generally the longest section. This is where you describe in as much detail as you can, what happened during the project. First describe how you chose to proceed in order to address the problem/question/situation you outlined in the introduction and timeline. Then describe why those methods were chosen, whether they were appropriate, and what happened as a result of those chosen methods. Depending on how you think, the timeline chart, with an additional ‘comments’ column like the sample above, might be helpful. Some questions to get you started:

- *What did you do? Be sure to include your processes for initiating communication with the animal(s).*
- *How did you address the problem, situation, or question?*
- *Why did you address the problem, situation, or question this way?*
- *What happened?*

4e. Outcomes (if known) (~1.5 pages, or 15% of the paper): If you know the results, or outcomes, of the communication(s) please describe them. Be sure to identify (in general terms) your sources of information about results, keeping in mind the need for anonymity of third-party participants. First summarize key outcomes of your project, then elaborate on them with as great of detail as possible.

- *What was the outcome(s) of your project? How were you able to determine this? Please provide details, as much as you can.*
- *Reflect on the outcomes: For example, you could highlight results that were surprising for you, and similarly, you might highlight results that were unsurprising.*
 - o *Were there any outcomes or other things that happened that surprised you?*
 - o *Were there any outcomes or other things that happened that were unsurprising?*

4f. Discussion and Conclusion (~2.5 pages, or 25% of the paper): This section is meant for you to wrap up any final thoughts about the project. You might, for example, discuss whether your methods were effective, what you might change and what you might carry over in future projects. You might also share any tangible outcomes that came from your conversations with animals or other stakeholders, and your vision for future projects that might carry forward from this project, if applicable.

- *Were your methods effective? Provide details regarding how you know this.*
- *If you were to do this project again, what would you do differently?*
- *If you were to do this project again, what would you keep the same?*
- *Were there any tangible outcomes that came from your research/conversations with animals? With the humans involved?*
- *Were there any unanticipated consequences (positive, negative or neutral) for animals, humans, organizations, ecosystems?*

4g. Assumptions: Sometimes, when collecting data or conducting research, we make assumptions based on our worldview or how we perceive/experience the world around us. It is important that we list these assumptions so that those who read our research are well-placed to understand who we are as individuals and the baseline assumptions we have about IIC. *As we write the case, we will be able to identify assumptions that are important to make clear for readers.* I have done this in writing my own proposal, so I have listed some examples from my own list of assumptions below to help shape your own.

My Preliminary assumptions about IIC, and how ACs are using it:

- *ACs communicate with animals, and act as translators and/or mediators between animals and the humans they interact with.*
- *IIC is a nonverbal form of communication that can occur between two beings, regardless of distance.*

3h. Glossary of terms: If you use any jargon and/or acronyms in your paper, please be sure to either define them directly in your paper, or to list a glossary of terms at the end for those unfamiliar with the language used.

Acknowledgements: This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Canadian Health Sciences Research Council of Canada (CIHR), the Gabriel Dumont Institute, and the School of Environment and Sustainability, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and MentorStep program at the University of Saskatchewan. We wish to extend our most sincere thanks to Leonard Tipewan and Alfred Gamble at the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Land Technician's

Association, our Elder advisors over the years (particularly the Beardy's-Okemasis Research Advisory Group, and Elders Loretta Mandes, Stewart Prosper, Yvonne Chamakese, and traditional Knowledge Keeper Joseph Naytowhow), as well as the many students and colleagues who have engaged us in conversation with this topic. We also wish to thank the many more-than-human beings for their critical contributions to this research. This proposal is humbly offered to those who hear the voices of animals and to the more-than-human animals who have waited so patiently for this work to make its way into the world.

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This is a working document. Please contact sydney.kuppenbender@usask.ca for more information about this study, to participate, or for permission to use or adapt this form for your own research.

For primary researcher (Sydney Kuppenbender)'s use:

Case Study Number: _____

Case Study Author Pseudonym: _____

Appendix E – Workshop Evaluation Document

Case Study Data Collection – Workshop Reflection Interview Script

This research has been approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board

1. Introduction to Me, and My Research

Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this study that will help us generate, prepare, and present information on Animal Communicator (AC) engagements with wildlife. Participation should take 1-3 hours of your time, and an honorarium will be provided to compensate for your time.

We hope that this research will provide crucial baseline knowledge for further study of animal communication, and its implications for research, policy, and fieldwork, such as land management, wildlife rehabilitation, conservation, or other environmental science work.

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Finally, we hope that upon engaging with this research study and our findings, that Indigenous land managers can determine whether a collaboration with ACs is desired.

This research study will take a case study approach, and this case study framework document will:

- Provide guidance for us as we work together
- Get to know each other, and how you got to be involved in the workshop
- Provide a framework to flush out your reflections on the workshop

There are five clusters of questions, all of which build on one another to paint a picture of the impact of the workshop or training.

2. Case Study Workshop

2 a. Introduction

- Tell me about yourself, and how you came to be involved in this workshop.
- What was your experience of the baboons in your community prior to the workshop?

2 b. Reflection Questions

CLUSTER 1: Reactions

- Was your time in the AC training enjoyable?
 - Did you enjoy the content?
- Do you feel that the methods taught to you in the workshop are applicable to the issues you're experiencing at home?

CLUSTER 2: Learning

- What do you remember being taught during the training?
 - What methods were you taught and encouraged to use in training?

CLUSTER 3: Barriers

- Do you feel like there were factors that prevented you from using IIC in your daily life?
 - What was the greatest barrier for you to implement IIC?
- Did you feel supported or receive support in implementing IIC?

CLUSTER 4: Use of new knowledge

- How well-prepared did you feel to engage in IIC after the workshop? Why?
- When you left the workshop, how eager were you to change your behaviour?

CLUSTER 5: Outcomes

- What are you doing differently as a result of the workshop?
- What are the baboons doing differently as a result of the workshop?
- Do you feel that your attitude towards the baboons has changed as a result of the workshop?
 - Say more about this.

Acknowledgements: This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Canadian Health Sciences Research Council of Canada (CIHR), the Gabriel Dumont Institute, and the School of Environment and Sustainability, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and MentorStep program at the University of Saskatchewan. We wish to extend our most sincere thanks to Leonard Tipewan and Alfred Gamble at the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Land Technician's Association, our Elder advisors over the years (particularly the Beardy's-Okemasis Research Advisory Group, and Elders Loretta Mandes, Stewart Prosper, Yvonne Chamakese, and traditional Knowledge Keeper Joseph Naytowhow), as well as the many students and colleagues who have engaged us in conversation with this topic. We also wish to thank the many more-than-human beings for their critical contributions to this research. This proposal is humbly offered to those who hear the voices of animals and to the more-than-human animals who have waited so patiently for this work to make its way into the world.

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This is a working document. Please contact sydney.kuppenbender@usask.ca for more information about this study, to participate, or for permission to use or adapt this form for your own research.

Details that have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participant (For case study author's use):

Appendix F – REB Approval Certificate



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) 24-Jan-2023

Certificate of Approval Amendment

Application ID: 1333

Principal Investigator: M.J. Barrett

Department: School of Environment and Sustainability

Locations Where Research

Activities are Conducted: - Main locations: Saskatchewan (Researchers will remain situated here while collecting data electronically with animal communicators who may be situated in other cities and countries); PhD student Hinz may also, during part of this study's period, conduct some of her research from Germany (Hinz's home country) or other locations in Canada. Most of the researchers practice and mentoring will take place primarily in Saskatchewan, but distance communications may take place (intuitively with the support of the internet or telephone) animals and guardians anywhere in the world. - Participant locations: 1) Animal communicators (AC) as well as professional mentors will be working from their home locations (which may include, but are not limited to: Canada, United States, Europe, Africa, South America, Asia and Australia). 2) Clients of these ACs can be from anywhere in the world with good telephone or internet access. 3) Animal guardians (i.e. animal owners or caretakers) who allow researchers to conduct intuitive practice communications with the animals in their care may be in Saskatchewan, or anywhere in the world with good or internet access (although an emphasis on Canada is likely). They may also be at animal rehabilitation sites within Saskatchewan., Canada
Online Survey, Canada

Student(s): Aliya Khalid
Jessica Jackson
Kayla Seel
Sydney Kuppenbender
Viktoria Hinz

Funder(s): College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research
Mary Barrett
Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Relations
School of Environment and Sustainability
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Sponsor: Office of the Vice-President Research
University of Saskatchewan

Title: Understanding the Lived Experience of Intuitive Interspecies Communication

Approved On: 24-Jan-2023

Expiry Date: 13-Aug-2023

Approval Of: Amendment to add funders and a new subproject- recruitment of animal communicators for a case study exploring how they are engaging with wildlife

Beh1333 - Attachment - Case Study Consent Form (Revision) (Jan. 9)

Beh1333 - Attachment - Case Study Short Synopsis Consent Form (Jan 9)

Beh1333 - Attachment - Case Study Framework (Revision - Jan24).docx

Beh1333 - Attachment - Recruitment Scripts (Revision - Jan24).docx

Acknowledgment Of:

Review Type: Delegated Review

Application ID: 1333

Principal Investigator: M.J. Barrett

2 / 2

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans - TCPS 2 (2018). The University of Saskatchewan Beh-REB has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the current approved protocol. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Any significant changes to the proposed method, or consent and recruitment procedures must be reported to the Chair through submission of an amendment for Beh-REB consideration in advance of implementation.

To remain in compliance, a status report (renewal or closure form) must be submitted to the Beh-REB Chair for consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the Research Ethics Office website for further instructions and current forms.

*Digitally Approved by Diane Martz, Vice-Chair
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
University of Saskatchewan*



Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) 30-Mar-2023

Certificate of Approval Amendment

Application ID: 1333

Principal Investigator: M.J. Barrett

Department: School of Environment and Sustainability

Locations Where Research

Activities are Conducted: - Main locations: Saskatchewan (Researchers will remain situated here while collecting data electronically with animal communicators who may be situated in other cities and countries); PhD student Hinz may also, during part of this study's period, conduct some of her research from Germany (Hinz's home country) or other locations in Canada. Most of the researchers' practice and mentoring will take place primarily in Saskatchewan, but distance communications may take place (intuitively with the support of the internet or telephone) animals and guardians anywhere in the world. - Participant locations: 1) Animal communicators (AC) as well as professional mentors will be working from their home locations (which may include, but are not limited to: Canada, United States, Europe, Africa, South America, Asia and Australia). 2) Clients of these ACs can be from anywhere in the world with good telephone or internet access. 3) Animal guardians (i.e. animal owners or caretakers) who allow researchers to conduct intuitive practice communications with the animals in their care may be in Saskatchewan, or anywhere in the world with good or internet access (although an emphasis on Canada is likely). They may also be at animal rehabilitation sites within Saskatchewan., Canada
Online Survey, Canada

Student(s): Aliya Khalid
Jessica Jackson
Kayla Seel
Sydney Kuppenbender
Viktoria Hinz

Funder(s): College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research
Mary Barrett
Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Relations
School of Environment and Sustainability
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Sponsor: Office of the Vice-President Research
University of Saskatchewan

Title: Understanding the Lived Experience of Intuitive Interspecies Communication

Approved On: 30-Mar-2023

Expiry Date: 13-Aug-2023

Approval Of: Amendment to include community participants who were involved in the case studies.

Beh1333 - Attachment - Recruitment scripts and Participant Questions_Mar29

Beh1333 - Attachment - Participant Wildlife Case Study Consent Form_Mar29

Acknowledgment Of:

Review Type: Delegated Review

Application ID: 1333

Principal Investigator: M.J. Barrett

2 / 2

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans - TCPS 2 (2018). The University of Saskatchewan Beh-REB has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the current approved protocol. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Any significant changes to the proposed method, or consent and recruitment procedures must be reported to the Chair through submission of an amendment for Beh-REB consideration in advance of implementation.

To remain in compliance, a status report (renewal or closure form) must be submitted to the Beh-REB Chair for consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the Research Ethics Office website for further instructions and current forms.

*Digitally Approved by Pammla Petrucka
Chair, Behavioural Research Ethics Board
University of Saskatchewan*



Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) 12-Jul-2023

Certificate of Approval Amendment

Application ID: 1333

Principal Investigator: M.J. Barrett

Department: School of Environment and Sustainability

Student(s): Aliya Khalid
 Jessica Jackson
 Kayla Seel
 Sydney Kuppenbender
 Viktoria Hinz

Funder(s): College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
 Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research
 Mary Barrett
 Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Relations
 School of Environment and Sustainability
 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Sponsor: Office of the Vice-President Research
 University of Saskatchewan

Title: Understanding the Lived Experience of Intuitive Interspecies Communication

Approved On: 12-Jul-2023

Expiry Date: 13-Aug-2023

Approval Of: Amendment to add an honorarium for third-party participants.

Beh1333 - Attachment - Case Study Consent Form Amendment_July1.docx

Acknowledgment Of:

Review Type: Delegated Review

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans - TCPS 2 (2018). The University of Saskatchewan Beh-REB has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the current approved protocol. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Any significant changes to the proposed method, or consent and recruitment procedures must be reported to the Chair through submission of an amendment for Beh-REB consideration in advance of implementation.

To remain in compliance, a status report (renewal or closure form) must be submitted to the Beh-REB Chair for consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the Research Ethics Office website for further instructions and current forms.

*Digitally Approved by Pammla Petrucka
 Chair, Behavioural Research Ethics Board
 University of Saskatchewan*

Appendix G – Animal Communicator Case Study Consent Form



University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board

ANIMAL COMMUNICATOR WILDLIFE CASE STUDY CONSENT FORM

You have been invited to participate in a research project entitled:

**“Bringing Animal Voices to the Table: Interspecies Communication Methods in Land Management”
a subproject of “Understanding the Lived Experience of Intuitive Interspecies Communication”**

Student Researcher: Sydney Kuppenbender, SENS M.E.S candidate; sydney.kuppenbender@usask.ca

Supervisor: Dr. M.J. Barrett, SENS Associate Professor; mj.barrett@usask.ca

Committee Chair: Dr. James Robson, SENS Associate Professor; james.robson@usask.ca

Committee Member: Dr. Simon Lambert, Indigenous Studies Associate Professor; simon.lambert@usask.ca

Aim: Seek meaningful engagement with more-than-human voices and to make space for animal voices in research and land management.

Purpose: Generate, prepare, and present information on Animal Communicator (AC) engagements with wildlife, so that Indigenous land managers can determine whether a collaboration with ACs is desired. This study will take a case study approach.

Funding: This study is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and the University of Saskatchewan (Indigenous Graduate Leadership Award; MentorSTEP) as well as the School of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan (Equity Scholarship).

Procedure:

Participation in this study is anticipated to take between 7-21 hours* of your time. We appreciate your willingness to contribute to this important, and potentially ground-breaking study. Steps are outlined below.

1. Read this consent form and the **case study framework** carefully, which provide an overview of the data collection procedures as well as potential benefits, risks, and confidentiality related to both your participation and keeping confidentiality of third-party participants (these are other humans, beyond you, who are connected to the activity being described in the case).
2. If you wish to participate and have any questions, please contact Sydney Kuppenbender. I am always available to answer questions you may have, and I will contact you to set up a time to talk through case study selection criteria, data collection procedures, and how we will work together to write the case.
3. Once all your questions have been answered, please follow the instructions at the end of this document to fill out the consent section. This confirms your agreement to participate. Once filled out, scan, or take a photograph of the signature page of this form and send it back to me.
4. Once your consent form has been completed and submitted, and we have discussed how we will work together (e.g. whether you write the first draft or we co-construct it during a zoom interview), documentation of the case narrative can commence, using the framework document provided.

5. To maintain the anonymity and ensure the privacy of any third-party participants involved in your study, we ask that you commit to the following procedures during case study documentation: 1) your name will be changed in all versions of the case study and replaced with a pseudonym, and 2) you will omit identifiable information about third-party participants when documenting your case study. We will talk through examples of how to do this appropriately in subsequent meetings. You are welcome to share about your involvement in this study at any time during the project. Depending on the context of the case you decide to share, you may be recognizable by others even if you decide to remain anonymous.
6. Once your first draft is complete, we will work together to identify and review suggested edits, places to elaborate, or to pare down the case. I may also need your advice about accessing important contextual information (e.g. historical documents that give background about the ongoing human-animal conflict situation in which you intervened; reports from community organizations that give follow-up information on the project in question, etc).
7. Finalizing the document may require several back-and-forth emails, document sharing and/or follow-up meetings.
8. Given my intent is to develop knowledge that will be useful to Indigenous land managers, I will share anonymized drafts of the case study with community partners for input.
9. Any online meetings will happen via zoom and be audio or video-recorded to ensure accuracy of data collection (see “Audio and Video Recordings” section for further information. I will also be taking notes during these meetings.

*The amount of time needed to complete this project will be dependent on factors such as, the information you have readily available, the turnaround time for revisions of the document, whether you and the researcher work together on the first draft of the document or if you fill in the first draft independently.

Potential Risks or Discomforts: Your participation in this study does not pose any significant risk for you as this study reports on activities that have already occurred. Any potential risk associated with being identified as a research participant is related to making your work more publicly accessible to audiences who would not normally see your work. This may prompt disagreement or discomfort in the form of public critique. This risk is reduced by replacing your name with a pseudonym; however, given the small pool of animal communication professionals, and the context in which you are working, it is highly likely that you may be able to be identified by those who know you. If you choose to be video-recorded and give permission for excerpts from this video to be shared publicly (see consent section below), this will also limit the extent to which your identity can remain confidential.

Potential Benefits: By participating in this study, you are contributing to crucial research in this emerging but very important field. Potential benefits of this study may include providing crucial baseline knowledge for further study of animal communication, and its implications for research, policy, and fieldwork, such as land management, wildlife rehabilitation, conservation, or other environmental science work. This work may pave the way for more-than-human animal voices to be heard, offering the opportunity to bring their voices forward for meaningful consultation in areas that impact them. If you choose to share your involvement in this research publicly, you may also receive greater recognition for your work with wildlife in both your professional circles as well as academic circles. Participation in this study may also be very enjoyable. Although possible, these study benefits cannot be guaranteed.

Compensation: To respect your expertise and commitment to the study, participants will receive an honorarium equivalent of \$150 CAD after completion of the first full draft of the case study framework document (#4 in procedures). An additional \$150 CAD will be processed after completion of #7 in procedures.

Depending on your country of residence and preferred form of payment, information such as your home address and bank details may be required to process payment. You also may need to provide your Social Insurance Number (SIN) to USask Financial Services for taxation audit purposes. Any personal information collected as a record of honorarium payment will be stored separately from the data by the research team and may be kept for 7 years in case the University of Saskatchewan is subjected to a financial audit. If you are interested in this study's results, you may sign up (below) to receive a digital copy of the summary research report.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: You may not provide any identifiable information about third-party participants in your case study. To provide extra protection for these participants, names in the case study will be changed to pseudonyms and potentially identifiable information about the case may need to be changed (e.g. location). Please also see some confidentiality related information about Zoom (the online platform to be used for the interviews) in the data storage section below.

Data Storage: All research materials will be stored for the short-term on the research team's password-protected computers, or an encrypted hard-drive and physical copies kept under lock and key. Backup electronic copies will be stored on the university's secure Microsoft OneDrive server or Datastore system for at least 5 years beyond the date of study completion and publication of results. When no longer needed, all paper copies will be shredded, and electronic copies destroyed beyond recovery. Your consent information will be stored separately from your data.

Audio and video recordings: All interviews will be conducted and recorded via Zoom. I (the primary researcher and interviewer) will be conducting interviews in a private place, and participants are recommended to do the same. Participants have the option to have their camera on while recording and may turn off their camera without providing a reason at any time. While no absolute guarantee of privacy of data can be made with any of the platforms currently in use, every effort will be made to keep data privacy as high as possible. Zoom uses encryption to ensure data security and the researcher will also activate endpoint/end-to-end encryption. Furthermore, any recordings will be saved to the researcher's password-protected computer and not on the Zoom cloud. However, some caching of data may be done on Zoom servers to allow for the recording in the first place. Zoom uses servers in the United States or in other countries around the world. Such countries may have data protection rules that are different and less protective than those of your country. For more information on the privacy policy of Zoom see: <https://zoom.us/privacy>.

Knowledge Dissemination: Distribution of this study's results may include, but is not limited to, the following: Master's thesis, peer-reviewed journal articles, plain-language research summary, book or book chapters, artistic exhibits, interviews with public media, workshops, courses, public and academic presentations (including multi-media productions that may be posted on the internet), talking circles with Indigenous partners of our research group. The reported study results may contain direct quotations from your case study as well as video or audio recordings.

If you wish to share your participation in this study, we ask that you:

- a. Feel free to talk about the study to peers and friends, and share, either in hard copy, or electronically, the link to my website.
- b. You agree not to make any unauthorized recordings of the research interview(s).
- c. Do not, under any circumstances, share data collected for this study in any way can compromise the confidentiality of third-party participants as indicated in the procedures above. If necessary, some details may also need to be changed or omitted to protect third-party participants.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary, and you may terminate participation in this research project without explanation. Furthermore, you may withdraw your case study until two weeks after the end of procedure #7. After that time, any data collected will be retained for analysis. A termination of participation and the withdrawal of data need to be indicated to Sydney Kuppenbender via email.

Questions: If you have any questions concerning the research project, please feel free to contact the researchers with the contact information provided on page 1. This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board (ethics.office@usask.ca, phone: 306-966-2975; out of town participants may call collect, or toll free from within Canada: 1-888-966-2975). Any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this research may be addressed to either committee.

Consent to Participate: If you agree to participate in the study “Bringing Animal Voices to the Table: Interspecies Communication Methods in Land Management” please fill out this form, then scan, or take a photograph of the signature page of this form and email it back to Sydney Kuppenbender’s email: sydney.kuppenbender@usask.ca (NOTE: This email must be sent from your own email address and not anybody else’s).

FOR YOUR REVIEW AND SIGNATURE

I, _____ (print name), consent to participate in the study "Bringing Animal Voices to the Table: Interspecies Communication Methods in Land Management" in the following ways:

Mandatory to Participate: By signing this consent form, I am agreeing to the following:

1. I have a case study that I am willing to document as part of Sydney Kuppenbender’s master’s thesis.
2. I agree to not share identifiable information of any third-party participants when documenting the case study.
3. I give permission for my name to be changed to a pseudonym in all versions of the case study.
4. Data gathered in form of my written account(s) of the case study, recorded meetings between myself and Sydney Kuppenbender (including any follow-up meetings), as well as any further information I share (and have shared) with Sydney throughout this research project about my experiences of communicating with wild animals may be used as part of Sydney’s Master’s thesis.

Optional to Participate:

5. I give permission for relevant excerpts from recorded zoom conversations to be shared publicly in the following formats (check one):

Audio and Video _____

Audio only _____

I do not want excerpts from our meetings to be shared publicly _____

6. I agree for the above-described data to be used for other related research being conducted by the research team (check one).

Yes _____

No _____

See here for more details: <https://researchers.usask.ca/mj-barrett.php>

7. I would like a digital copy of the research results from Sydney's dissertation sent to me (check one)

Yes _____

No _____

I have read and understood this *Animal Communicator Consent Form*; I had an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered; I am at least 18 years of age and understand that direct quotations will be used.

Participant's Signature

Date of Signature

Researcher's Signature

Date of Signature

Appendix H – Participant Case Study Consent Form



University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board

PARTICIPANT WILDLIFE CASE STUDY CONSENT FORM

You have been invited to participate in a research project entitled:

“Bringing Animal Voices to the Table: Interspecies Communication Methods in Land Management”
a subproject of **“Understanding the Lived Experience of Intuitive Interspecies Communication”**

Student Researcher: Sydney Kuppenbender, SENS M.E.S candidate;

sydney.kuppenbender@usask.ca

Supervisor: Dr. M.J. Barrett, SENS Associate Professor; mj.barrett@usask.ca

Committee Chair: Dr. James Robson, SENS Associate Professor; james.robson@usask.ca

Committee Member: Dr. Simon Lambert, Indigenous Studies Associate Professor;

simon.lambert@usask.ca

Aim: Seek meaningful engagement with more-than-human voices and to make space for animal voices in research and land management.

Purpose: Generate, prepare, and present information on Animal Communicator (AC) engagements with wildlife, so that Indigenous land managers can determine whether a collaboration with ACs is desired. This study will take a case study approach.

Funding: This study is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and the University of Saskatchewan (Indigenous Graduate Leadership Award; MentorSTEP) as well as the School of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan (Equity Scholarship).

Procedure:

Participation in this study is anticipated to take approximately 1 hour of your time and involves a one-on-one conversational interview, with the possibility of limited follow-up questions via email for clarification or to fill in missing information. We appreciate your willingness to contribute to this important, and potentially ground-breaking study. Steps are outlined below.

10. Read this consent form carefully, which provides an overview of the data collection procedures as well as potential benefits, risks, and confidentiality related to both your participation and keeping confidentiality of third-party participants (these are other humans, beyond you, who are connected to the activity being described in the case).

11. If you wish to participate and have any questions, please contact Sydney Kuppenbender. I am always available to answer questions you may have, and I will contact you to set up a time for an interview.
12. Once all your questions have been answered, please follow the instructions at the end of this document to fill out the consent section. This confirms your agreement to participate. Once filled out, scan, or take a photograph of the signature page of this form and send it back to me. At that time I will reach out to you to schedule an online interview.
13. To maintain the anonymity and ensure the privacy of any third-party participants involved in the case, we ask that you commit to the following procedures during the interview: 1) your name will be changed in all versions of the case study and replaced with a pseudonym, and 2) you agree that all identifiable information about third-party participants will be omitted. You are welcome to share about your involvement in this study at any time during the project.
14. Given my intent is to develop knowledge that will be useful to Indigenous land managers, I will share anonymized drafts of the case study with my community partners for input.
15. The interview will happen via zoom and be audio or video-recorded to ensure accuracy of data collection (see “Audio and Video Recordings” section for further information). I will also be taking notes during these meetings, and selectively transcribing the interview afterwards.
16. A one-hour interview, in most cases, will be sufficient. With your permission, I may contact you via email after the interview if additional follow-up information or clarification of details are required.

Potential Risks or Discomforts: Your participation in this study does not pose any significant risk for you as this study reports on activities that have already occurred. Any potential risk associated with being identified as a research participant is related to making your work more publicly accessible to audiences who would not normally see your work. This may prompt disagreement or discomfort in the form of public critique. This risk is reduced by replacing your name with a pseudonym. If you choose to be video-recorded and give permission for excerpts from the video (or audio) recording to be shared publicly this will limit the extent to which your identity can remain confidential (see consent section below).

Potential Benefits: By participating in this study, you are contributing to crucial research in this emerging but very important field. Potential benefits of this study may include providing crucial baseline knowledge for further study of animal communication, and its implications for research, policy, and fieldwork, such as land management, wildlife rehabilitation, conservation, or other environmental science work. This work may pave the way for more-than-human animal voices to be heard, offering the opportunity to bring their voices forward for meaningful consultation in areas that impact them. If you choose to share your involvement in this research publicly, you may also receive greater recognition for your work with wildlife in both your professional circles as well as academic circles. Participation in this study may also be very enjoyable. Although possible, these study benefits cannot be guaranteed.

Compensation: To respect the time you are investing into my thesis, there will be a small honorarium payment of \$50 CAD for your participation. Depending on your country of residence and preferred form of payment, information such as your home address and bank details may

be required to process payment. You also may need to provide your Social Insurance Number (SIN) to USask Financial Services for taxation audit purposes. Any personal information collected as a record of honorarium payment will be stored separately from the data by the research team and may be kept for 7 years in case the University of Saskatchewan is subjected to a financial audit. There will be no cost for your participation in this study. If you are interested in receiving a copy of my thesis results, you may sign up (below) to receive a digital copy of the summary research report once the study is completed.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: Due to the nature of case study research which tells the story of unfolding events, you may be able to be identified by others, particularly by those who know you. This risk is reduced by replacing your name with a pseudonym, and removing or changing potentially identifying information, including specifics of your position or location of the events, for example. To protect the identity of others, you may not provide any identifiable information about third-party participants (those also involved in the case). Please also see some confidentiality related information about Zoom (the online platform to be used for the interviews) in the data storage section below.

Data Storage: All research materials will be stored for the short-term on the research team's password-protected computers, or an encrypted hard-drive and physical copies kept under lock and key. Backup electronic copies will be stored on the university's secure Microsoft OneDrive server or Datastore system for at least 5 years beyond the date of study completion and publication of results. When no longer needed, all paper copies will be shredded, and electronic copies destroyed beyond recovery. Your consent information will be stored separately from your data.

Audio and video recordings: All interviews will be conducted and recorded via Zoom. I will be conducting interviews in a private place, and I recommend that you do the same. You have the option to have your camera on while recording and may turn off your camera without providing a reason at any time. While no absolute guarantee of privacy of data can be made with any of the platforms currently in use, every effort will be made to keep data privacy as high as possible. Zoom uses encryption to ensure data security and the researcher will also activate endpoint/end-to-end encryption. Furthermore, any recordings will be saved to the researcher's password-protected computer and not on the Zoom cloud. However, some caching of data may be done on Zoom servers to allow for the recording in the first place. Zoom uses servers in the United States or in other countries around the world. Such countries may have data protection rules that are different and less protective than those of your country. For more information on the privacy policy of Zoom see: <https://zoom.us/privacy>.

Knowledge Dissemination: Distribution of this study's results may include, but is not limited to, the following: Master's thesis, peer-reviewed journal articles, plain-language research summary, book or book chapters, artistic exhibits, interviews with public media, workshops, courses, public and academic presentations (including multi-media productions that may be posted on the internet), talking circles with Indigenous partners of our research group. The reported study results may contain direct quotations from you as well as video or audio recordings.

If you wish to share your participation in this study, I ask that you:

- a. Feel free to talk about the study to peers and friends, and share, either in hard copy, or electronically, the link to my website.
- b. You agree not to make any unauthorized recordings of the research interview(s).
- c. Do not, under any circumstances, share data collected for this study in any way can compromise the confidentiality of third-party participants as indicated in the procedures above. If necessary, some details may also need to be changed or omitted to protect third-party participants.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary, and you may terminate participation in this research project without explanation. Withdrawal of participation/non-participation will not affect your relationship with the animal communicator or researchers, or how you are treated in any way. Furthermore, you may withdraw your contributions up until two weeks after the interview. After that time, any data collected will be retained for analysis. A termination of participation and the withdrawal of data need to be indicated to me via email.

Questions: If you have any questions concerning the research project, please feel free to contact any of the researchers with the contact information provided on page 1. This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board (ethics.office@usask.ca, phone: 306-966-2975; out of town participants may call collect, or toll free from within Canada: 1-888-966-2975). Any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this research may be addressed to the committee.

Consent to Participate: If you agree to participate in the study “Bringing Animal Voices to the Table: Interspecies Communication Methods in Land Management” please fill out this form, then email the completed document back to me at sydney.kuppenbender@usask.ca (NOTE: This email must be sent from your own email address and not anybody else’s).

FOR YOUR REVIEW AND SIGNATURE

I, _____ (print name), consent to participate in the study "Bringing Animal Voices to the Table: Interspecies Communication Methods in Land Management" in the following ways:

Mandatory to Participate: By signing this consent form, I am agreeing to the following:

8. I have first-hand lived experience in the identified case study that I am willing to share as part of Sydney Kuppenbender’s master’s thesis.
9. I agree to not share identifiable information of any third-party participants when documenting the case study.
10. I give permission for my name to be changed to a pseudonym in all versions of the case study.
11. Data gathered in form of my interview, -, as well as any responses to follow-up questions may be used as part of Sydney’s Master’s thesis.

Optional to Participate:

12. Follow-up Questions: I give permission for you to contact me after the interview for clarification of details or to provide essential additional information. Yes ___ No ___

13. Publicly sharing audio or video excerpts: I give permission for relevant excerpts from our recorded zoom interview to be shared publicly in the following formats (check one):

___ I do not want audio or video excerpts from our meetings to be shared publicly

___ Audio and Video

___ Audio only

14. I would like a digital copy of the research results from Sydney's dissertation sent to me (check one)

Yes ___

No ___

I have read and understood this *Participant Consent Form*; I had an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered; I am at least 18 years of age and understand that direct quotations will be used.

Participant's Signature

Date of Signature

Researcher's Signature

Date of Signature

Appendix I – REB Amendment Application



Behavioural Amendment

For Internal Use Only

UnivRS Internal ID:

Date Received: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Key Information

UnivRS Internal Project ID# or old Ethics ID# (Beh xx-xxx): * **#1333**

PI Name: * M.J. Barrett

Title: * Understanding the Lived Experience of Intuitive Interspecies Communication

Current status of this project: * **Recruitment is open; data collection involving participants has not started**

Summarize and provide rationale for proposed revision(s): * **Thesis project**

Funding (Sponsors and Agencies): This amendment is funded by the following organizations: (note that we have only included the funders that are specific to the aspect of the project that we are seeking approval for at this time. We have not added these new funders to other consent forms previously approved, as these funders are only supporting the case study amendment that supports Sydney Kuppenbender's masters research. It would make no sense for, example, for the Gabriel Dumont Institute to be added to my doctoral student's consent forms, or to my animal communication mentor consent forms, as these data collection and analysis procedures are not supported by GDI).

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI)

College of Graduate and Post Doctoral Studies, School of Environment and Sustainability, MentorSTEP program – at the University of Saskatchewan

Locations where research activities are conducted: Data collection will occur online, through Zoom and/or email consultations.

Conflict of Interest: I have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Consent form Title: Bringing Animal Voices to the Table: Interspecies Communication

Methods in Land Management * Note that we have used the title of the student's thesis for

the consent form as it is more descriptive and precise than the protocol title and thus will make more sense to participants.

Aims and Purpose: Note that like the title, the consent form includes aims and objectives that are more specific, but still meet the original study purposes.

Project Overview:

Sydney Kuppenbender (student researcher), who is already approved under this ethics protocol, would like to recruit animal communicators (ACs) to participate in a case study to explore how animal communicators are engaging with wildlife, which is a little-known aspect of their profession.

She intends to document three full case studies with up to three different animal communicators, which will demonstrate how each individual has engaged with wildlife for either consultation, conflict resolution, or other reasons. Short synopses of cases which are not selected for the full case writeups will also be retained and documented.

Please see attached:

1. A consent form which outlines the procedure of data collection as well as the role of the animal communicator participants for case studies,
2. A consent form for synopses of case studies that will not be accepted for the thesis project, but whose stories we would like to collect for other future use.
3. Recruitment emails written for animal communicators,
4. A Framework Document which:
 - a. Provides guidance for the student researcher and AC as they work together,
 - b. Helps to determine if the AC has a case study that is suitable for a full case study writeup,
 - c. Provides a framework to flush out details of the case.

Duration and Location of data collection: Initial communications, and responses to initial questions will occur via email so as to not create barriers to participation. Information provided by prospective participants will be saved to a secure OneDrive file and deleted from email archives. Once cases are selected, drafts will be submitted and stored in a OneDrive folder. Each participant will have their own folder, which can only be accessed by the participant and the researcher.

Internet-based Interaction: All communications will be via email, and meetings will be conducted via Zoom. For further details see the “Audio and Video Recordings” section of the consent form.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: To provide extra protection for third-party participants, names of Animal Communicators in the case study will be changed to pseudonyms. While animal communicators may choose to identify themselves in association with the study and the activities they were involved in, they will not be identified in the research results and dissemination. Animal Communicators may not provide any identifiable information about third-party participants in their case study.

Risks and Benefits: (see consent form)

Community Engagement:

In the data collection and analysis, there is no Indigenous engagement, although relationships with Saskatchewan Aboriginal Land Technicians are being built and strengthened. All Indigenous engagement activities are covered under E-210 protocol: Understanding the Lived Experiences of Intuitive Interspecies Communication (IIC): Exploring avenues of study engagement from an intercultural perspective. At this time, the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Land Technicians Association (SALT) and other Indigenous Elders and experts have been providing general advice with respect to what would be helpful for them to know, and how they might wish to have knowledge disseminated once the thesis is completed. If this should change, and SALT decides they want to be directly involved in the project (e.g. collaborative data analysis), we will submit an amendment and inform research participants of their involvement.

Recruitment and Consent: I will recruit ACs who have already conducted communications or projects with wildlife, asking that they document these projects to be included in my research as case studies. Recruitment will be conducted in various ways:

1. By reaching out to potentially eligible ACs directly via their publicly available contact information,
2. By asking ACs who publish online newsletters, blogs, listservs etc. to post a “call-out” encouraging interested and eligible ACs to contact me,
3. Doing announcements at various events where ACs might be present,
4. By advertising on my webpage: see <https://researchers.usask.ca/mj-barrett/sydney-kuppenbender.php>

Scripts for all these recruitment methods are included in the “Recruitment” document (attached). Criteria for inclusion/exclusion of individuals and their projects is also outlined in the “Recruitment” document (attached). Consent will be obtained at the time when ACs decide they would like to contribute a case study for documentation, and I have determined

that their project meets all the required criteria (after they have reviewed all materials, we have met on zoom, and all their questions have been answered). Scripts for acceptance or rejection emails are also included in the “Recruitment” document (attached). Reimbursement details are outlined in the consent form (attached).

Security and Storage: (see “Data Storage” on the consent form)

Indicate how participants will be notified of proposed revisions: * No current participants

If other, specify:

Change to Sponsor(s) and Agency(ies)

Sponsor(s)

Add / Remove:	Sponsor:
ADD	Student Awards: School of Environment and Sustainability (equity scholarship); SSHRC (Master’s Scholarship); CGPS (Indigenous Leadership Award; SSHRC Top-Up); Gabriel Dumont Institute (Post Secondary funding)

Agency(ies)

Add / Remove:	Agency:

Project Application(s) Directly Associated with the Fund(s) Supporting this Project

Specify the UnivRS Internal ID# (for pending grants or contracts):

Project(s) Directly Associated with the Fund(s) Supporting this Project

Specify the UnivRS Internal ID# (for awarded grants or contracts):

Change to Location(s) Where Research Activities are Conducted

Add / Remove:	Building or Organization:	Country:

Change to Project Personnel

Principal Investigator

New PI Name:	NSID:	Email:	Phone:	Organization (Department):

Sub-Investigator(s)

Add Remove:	Name:	NSID:	Email:	Phone:	Organization (Department):

Student(s)

Add Remove:	Name:	NSID:	Email:	Phone:	Organization (Department):

Primary Contact

Add Remove:	Name:	NSID:	Email:	Phone:	Organization (Department):

Secondary Contact

Add Remove:	Name:	NSID:	Email:	Phone:	Organization (Department):

Declaration by Principal Investigator

By submitting this amendment form, the Principal Investigator confirms that he/she is responsible for the scientific and ethical conduct of this project and agrees to conduct this project in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2 2014), the Personal Health Information Protection Act (HIPA) and other relevant laws, regulations or guidelines.

Date the form was completed: 2022-10-03
 Name of person who completed the form: Sydney Kuppenbender

If form submitted on behalf of the PI:

Sydney Kuppenbender is authorized to prepare and submit this form on behalf of the Principal Investigator
 Authorized person contact information:
 Email: sydney.kuppenbender@usask.ca Phone: (306) 425-9268

DOCUMENT(S)

Provide a list of documents that are being submitted along with this amendment: **Animal Communicator (AC) Case Study Consent Form, Animal Communicator Wildlife Case Study Synopsis Consent Form, Recruitment Scripts, and a Case Study Framework.**