



Biodiversity: Is there hope?

Washington, D.C. – June 18, 2019 – Biodiversity and People

On June 18, the **Embassy of France in the United States** and **Smithsonian Conservation Commons** are pleased to invite you to a **French-American Climate Talk on Biodiversity** (FACT-B) in Washington, D.C. France has launched FACT-B as part of its broader efforts **to make biodiversity conservation a priority at the international level**, in the same way as the fight against climate change.

Nature plays a critical role in providing food, energy, medicines, and a variety of aspects that are central to our quality of life and cultural integrity. A landmark assessment released in May in Paris revealed that **nature is declining globally** at rates unprecedented in human history. This report, conducted by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), concludes that **“transformative change is needed”** to halt the loss of biodiversity and maintain the healthy functioning of ecosystems that underpin all dimensions of human life.

A growing movement has been emerging that seeks to catalyze such transformative change: **Earth Optimism** documents and magnifies stories of conservation actions that are working, across sectors and locations, and builds a global community of practice to scale up **science-based conservation solutions**. In this spirit, French and American biodiversity experts will share **innovative success stories** and discuss how more people may be engaged in France, in the United States and around the globe, with the mission to jointly build a sustainable future for our planet.



Agenda

- 5:30-5:40 PM **Opening Remarks**
H.E. Philippe Etienne, Ambassador of France in the United States
- 5:40-7:00 PM **Panel on Biodiversity and People**
With:
Thomas Lovejoy, University Professor, George Mason University and Senior Fellow, United Nations Foundation
Autumn-Lynn Harrison, Scientist, Migratory Bird Center, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute
Steven Monfort, John and Adrienne Mars Director, Smithsonian National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute
Cyrille Barnerias, Head of European and International Affairs, French Biodiversity Agency
Thierry Boulinier, CNRS Research Director, Center for Functional & Evolutionary Ecology, University of Montpellier
- Moderated by **Ruth Anna Stolk**, Executive Director of the Smithsonian Conservation Commons
- 7:00-8:00 PM **Wine & Cheese Reception**
Ballroom

Speakers



Thomas Lovejoy, University Professor, George Mason University & Senior Fellow, United Nations Foundation

Thomas Lovejoy is an innovative and accomplished conservation biologist who coined the term “biological diversity”. He served as Assistant Secretary for Environmental and External Affairs for the Smithsonian Institution from 1987 to 1998, and as President of the Heinz Center for Science, Economics, and the Environment from 2002-2008 and was the Biodiversity Chair of the Center from 2008-2013. Before assuming this position, Lovejoy was the World Bank’s Chief Biodiversity Advisor and Lead Specialist for Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Senior Advisor to the President of the United Nations Foundation. Spanning the political spectrum, Lovejoy has served on science and environmental councils under the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations.



Autumn-Lynn Harrison, Scientist, Migratory Bird Center, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute

Autumn-Lynn Harrison is a Marine Ecologist with the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Program Manager of the Migratory Connectivity Project. For the past decade her work has focused on the migrations of large marine animals, including seals and seabirds. She was a researcher with the Tagging of Pacific Predators, a project of the Census of Marine Life, and contributed to United Nations efforts to identify ecologically significant areas for migratory marine animals in the high seas. Prior to joining the Smithsonian in 2014, Harrison worked for the Society for Conservation Biology and the Institute for Parks at Clemson University.



Steven Monfort, John and Adrienne Mars Director, Smithsonian National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute

Steven Monfort directs operations at the organization's 163-acre facility in Washington, D.C., and its 3,200-acre facility in Front Royal, Virginia. Monfort is responsible for managing the organization's multimillion dollar budget; the Zoo, a public facility which welcomes approximately 1.8 million visitors each year; and the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI), which includes groundbreaking work in conservation biology. Throughout his career Monfort has used multidisciplinary, collaborative science to help save species and habitats and restore animals to the wild. He is an expert in zoo biology, animal health, reproductive biology, behavioral ecology, and conservation biology.



Cyrille Barnerias, Head of European and International Affairs, French Biodiversity Agency (AFB)

With his team, Cyrille Barnerias is in charge of preparing and implementing the AFB strategy at the international level, including by providing support to multilateral negotiations and initiating cooperation projects. Before joining the AFB, he worked at the Global Environment Facility in DC from 2016 to 2018 where he managed marine and terrestrial biodiversity projects in Africa and SIDS. From 2009 to 2016, he worked for the French Ministry of Environment in Martinique (Caribbean) on biodiversity, protected areas and marine turtles, while participating in cooperation projects in the Caribbean. He is an agronomist by training with a Master in Forestry.



Thierry Boulinier, CNRS Research Director, Center for Functional & Evolutionary Ecology, University of Montpellier

Thierry Boulinier is also Deputy-Head of OSU OREME, an observatory of environmental changes that promotes the integrated gathering of long-term data. Trained as a veterinarian in Maisons-Alfort school and with a PhD in Ecology from the Université Pierre & Marie Curie, Paris, he has published more than a hundred papers in international scientific journals. As an animal ecologist, he combines different approaches to study the responses of wild populations to environmental changes, notably seabirds and infectious agents in polar areas.

Moderator



Ruth Anna Stolk, Founding Executive Director, Smithsonian Conservation Commons

The Commons convenes scientists, curators, and cultural leaders from all over the Smithsonian to create a stronger conservation science vision, improved mechanisms for collaboration, and greater impact on conservation practice in the U.S. and worldwide. Stolk has a long career as an advocate and promoter of linkages between arts and science as a team builder among experts in multiple organizations. Her career has included not only service to Smithsonian in this capacity, but also the Institute of International Education, USAID's Higher Education for Development, International Council on Monuments and Sites, Council of American Overseas Research Centers, and as an adviser to a number of conservation and academic NGO's.

About FACT-B

Following the success of the French Ameri-Can Climate Talks (**FACTS**) created in the lead-up to COP21 and the series dedicated to oceans (**FACT-O**), the Embassies of France in the United States and in Canada launched the **French Ameri-Can Climate Talks on Biodiversity (FACT-B)** in 2019.

The goal of FACT-B is twofold: **to raise public and decision makers' awareness** in France, the United States, and Canada, as well as **to reinforce exchanges between experts** on biodiversity issues. These **high-level conferences** bring together French, U.S., and Canadian speakers from academia, government agencies, NGOs, and think tanks.

FACT-B is part of **France's broader efforts to make biodiversity conservation a priority at the international level**, in the same way as the fight against climate change. The science diplomacy initiatives on biodiversity issues to be led by the French diplomatic network in North America in 2019 echo the organization of major events in France in 2019 and 2020:

- The **7th Plenary** of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in Paris from 29 April to 4 May 2019;
- The **G7 Summit**, one of whose priorities is biodiversity conservation, in Biarritz from 24 to 26 August 2019;
- The **7th World Conservation Congress** of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Marseille from 11 to 19 June 2020.

Two series of FACT-B conferences are organized in major cities on the **West Coast** and the **East Coast** of the United States and Canada. For each series, two French speakers travel in three cities and have the opportunity to discuss with different U.S. and Canadian speakers in every city. All conferences have the same central question "**Is there hope?**" but focus on different issues.

West Coast:

- **San Francisco**, May 28
[Biodiversity and Urban Areas](#)
- **San Diego**, May 29
[Biodiversity and Oceans](#)
- **Vancouver**, May 30
[Biodiversity and Forests](#)

East Coast:

- **Washington D.C.**, June 18
[Biodiversity and People](#)
- **Chicago**, June 19
[Biodiversity and Climate](#)
- **Toronto**, June 20
[Biodiversity and Cities](#)

In addition, a side event to the IPBES 7th Plenary on "**Earth Optimism: What's Working in Conservation**" was organized by the Embassy of France in the United States the Smithsonian Institution as part of **La Nuit de la Biodiversité** in Paris on April 27.