



CONVIVA

Convivial Conservation

Coexistence & convivial conservation



Shortcomings in debating coexistence

Human-wildlife interactions are central to discussions of species conservation, particularly in relation to large mammals such as lions, jaguars, wolves and bears. While transformative perspectives on coexistence have been proposed to [bridge the knowledge-practice gap](#), we argue a convivial take on human-predator interactions can address four key shortcomings in some existing work.

- Firstly, [disciplinary blinkers](#) among conservation and social scientists can prevent holistic, interdependent thinking and application of [diverse lenses and insights](#) which capture ecological and political-economic aspects equally.
- Secondly, [inclusivity](#) in whose [voices and knowledges](#) are championed can be lacking by overlooking [researchers from the Global South](#) or by ignoring a [diversity of knowledge holders](#), including local views and historically grounded knowledges.
- Thirdly, these two flaws prevent a [consistent awareness](#) of and emphasis on [asymmetries of power and justice](#). This can fail to capture the complex links between local issues and global power structures which favour e.g. wealthy tourists visiting protected spaces, while local communities support predators through their livestock.
- Finally, these points prompt us to go beyond a [focus on conflict](#) to allow for positive interactions between humans and more-than-humans which are defined by [coexistence](#) or even [conviviality](#).

What a convivial perspective on coexistence can add

We argue that conviviality, understood following [Illich \(1973\)](#) and [Büscher & Fletcher \(2019, 2020\)](#), could help address these shortcomings.

- Convivial conservation brings together insights from diverse geographies and disciplines with an emphasis on the interdependencies between and within humans and environments.
- It highlights the importance of learning from what is already being done, while privileging local, indigenous and diverse knowledges through systematic engagement and grassroots decision-making.
- This [means prioritising justice](#) at all times in analysis and outcome, including alternative funding mechanisms to replace top-down, conditional funding with local, redistributive sources of finance.
- It emphasises the importance of living together, shifting the focus beyond conflict towards integrating instead of separating humans and nonhumans.

To harness diverse forms of knowledge across different contexts, disciplines and methods, the [CONVIVA - convivial conservation project](#) brings together scholars and practitioners from [social and natural sciences](#) based in Brazil, Finland, the Netherlands, Tanzania, the U.S. and the UK. [Through open spaces](#) in which to debate fundamental concepts [such as 'coexistence'](#) - should we have a joint definition? or can we have different ones? - and learn from each others' expertise, we have developed a series of questions to facilitate a convivial perspective on coexistence for practitioners and researchers.



Key questions for a convivial perspective on coexistence

We have identified five interconnected dimensions, to be adapted to each specific context and species:

- **Environmental dimension: landscape lens**
In what landscapes are these human-predator interactions occurring, and what boundaries are there (not)? Where is the planned intervention located?
- **Institutional dimension: policy lens**
Who are the stakeholders? How inclusive is the planning process of diverse and especially marginalised stakeholders?
- **Societal dimension: political economy lens**
What are key livelihoods, especially for the disadvantaged? How are they affected by conservation interventions and human-predator interactions?
- **Cultural dimension: group/individual lens**
What do residents think of conservation interventions? What do residents think of these predators, especially the most vulnerable?
- **Ecological dimension: animal behaviour lens**
What are the predator's prey base, habitat and patterns of movement? What damages to crops/ livelihoods occur? How to move from human-wildlife conflicts to coexistence?



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About the project

The CONVIVA - convivial conservation - research project develops new convivial (literally: 'living with') approaches to understanding and practising environmental conservation, with a particular focus on bears, jaguars, wolves and lions. It aims to establish a truly transformational approach to conservation that benefits both wildlife and humans, and that combines structural change with grassroots solutions to promote co-existence, (cultural and bio)diversity and justice. It is funded by the generous support of NORFACE/Belmont Forum. All views expressed are those of the authors, not the funding body or other organizations.

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