

Fast tech, slow humans? The social side of implementing monitoring technologies for wildlife conservation

Real-time satellite and drone monitoring, artificial intelligence-filtered alerts, comprehensive data management systems: these are a few of the innovations increasingly being implemented in field conservation. The hope is that they will facilitate and speed up action against threats to biodiversity in a resource-strapped sector (Pimm et al. 2015). While these tools' technical characteristics and quantitative outputs are well documented (see for instance: Critchlow et al. 2017; Bondi et al. 2018), little research has yet been conducted about users' perceptions of these appliances or how they come to fit in the routine work and management processes of organisations in charge of protected areas (Arts et al. 2015; Sintov et al. 2017). This presentation puts forward preliminary research conclusions based upon 50+ interviews with stakeholders promoting and implementing such technologies, from representatives of international conservation NGOs and donors to public and private actors of the biodiversity conservation sector in Indonesia. It highlights the shifts in human and material resources accompanying the implementation of new monitoring technologies and argues that the social side of this process needs to be given much more attention for sustained and effective adoption.