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Abstract Submission

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TITLE: Making the “man-eater”: the role of the state in producing violent multispecies environments

ABSTRACT: Under what conditions does it become acceptable to kill a tiger? What can the procedures and politics of classifying a tiger as a “man-eater” teach us about the value of animal life to the state under shifting conditions of resistance to state power? This paper draws on fieldwork from South India to address these questions, and in doing so explores the many uses of animals by the state in maintaining territorial hegemony in the name of wildlife conservation. I draw on Mbembe’s (2003) concept of necropolitics and McIntyre and Nast’s (2011) spatialization of the term—the *necropolis*—in order to analyze how the Indian state attempts to manage increasingly violent human-wildlife relations in a contested conservation landscape. Examining the process of how the state goes about reclassifying tigers from strictly protected species to killable—the process of making a “man-eater”—helps articulate the foundational role of capital in producing multispecies environments in which certain human lives are made more vulnerable to death in the name of conservation. This paper responds to calls across both political ecology and political geography to better theorize the role of non-human animals as essential subjects of inquiry (Collard 2012; Hobson 2006; Sundberg 2011). At the same time, it also demonstrates the persistent and essential role of the state in producing unjust geopolitical ecologies and the concomitant destruction of surplus populations, both human and animal alike (Hudson 2011; McIntyre and Nast 2011).

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