
INTRODUCTION

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I am very pleased to introduce the second issue of the now biannual *International Review of Environmental History*. More than any other issue so far, the contributions to this one illustrate the global reach, richness and importance of environmental history. Geographically, the contributions range widely, from the Indian Ocean world, to Africa, Russia and New Zealand. They cover histories of marine and terrestrial environments, animals and microorganisms. Each contribution offers new historiographical perspectives: whether on global environmental history, animal introductions, shark–people history or the history of plague–human impacts and planning. Together, they illustrate the benefits of taking a global approach to environmental history.

The first article, by Miles Powell, **‘A world of fins and fences: Australian and South African shark management in the transoceanic south’**, examines the fascinating history of changing scientific, legislative and, ultimately, cultural attitudes towards sharks in these two countries. Powell avoids framing what easily could have become a one-sided history of legislative efforts to control sharks, by teasing out the ‘tensions between mobile nature and the real and imagined boundaries with which we [humans] seek to control and administer it’. The article operates at a number of levels. First, it provides a fascinating transoceanic history of legislative and scientific exchanges between South Africa and Australia over shark control. Second, it charts increasing environmental impacts of human leisure through swimming and surfing. Third, it offers an important new perspective on marine/littoral environmental history. Fourth, Powell powerfully draws out parallels between segregation of humans (white and non-white) and humans and sharks, evident on South African beaches. As Powell writes, segregation meant that ‘[a]t beaches, power over the body included not only dictating what spaces an individual could enter, and in what attire, but also controlling which bodies were visible to whom’. Thus, as he notes, to a certain extent, attempts ‘to impose a barrier against mobile nature also reflected and reinforced South African racial apprehensions’.

The second article highlights a major omission in global environmental histories. In **‘The curious case of the marginalisation or distortion of Russian and Soviet environmental history in global environmental histories’**, David Moon casts a critical eye over global environmental histories published in the last 30 years. He

finds that global environmental historians have generally ignored Russia—and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), 1922–91—in inverse proportion to both its actual size and importance. Where they have examined it, Moon finds that historians have mostly focused on the USSR, presenting its environmental policies in near-apocalyptic terms. Going on to explain reasons for both omissions and misrepresentations, Moon presents a series of works from which global environmental historians can draw in their future studies.

Carolyn M. King's '**The history of transportations of stoats (*Mustela erminea*) and weasels (*M. nivalis*) to New Zealand, 1883–92**' traces 'one of the world's first large-scale attempts to use alien carnivores as agents of biological control against a major vertebrate pest'. This occurred in response to major fears of wool exporters and some government ministers of the effects of introduced rabbits on sheep stocking numbers and the New Zealand economy. King's article examines the remarkable efforts and expense of trying to introduce stoats and weasels into New Zealand, both of which required careful transshipment. She also illuminates the role of competing interests, notably warnings by scientists of the dangers of introducing weasels and stoats, whose misgivings were sadly borne out in reality. In highlighting competing discussion over acclimatisation, King's work demonstrates 'how powerful economic interests and dominant cultural assumptions determine official policy, with implications for thinking about contemporary ecological globalisation'.

The fourth article focuses on the response and impact of plague in the capital of Nigeria. Olukayode A. Faleyé's '**Environmental change, sanitation and bubonic plague in Lagos, 1924–31**' examines colonial modernisation's role in creating conditions, though increased commerce and better transportation networks, which facilitated the entry of bubonic plague to Lagos. Urbanisation associated with colonialism, in addition to poor living conditions, provided a situation conducive to plague's spread. Despite the relative ineffectiveness of initial efforts to deal with plague, Faleyé shows that environmental planning and sanitary measures ultimately proved successful in dealing with the problem by the early 1930s.

'Bodies of knowledge' special issue, 2018

Next year (volume 4, issue 1) we will have a special issue on 'Bodies of knowledge: Histories of environment and science', guest edited by Ruth Morgan and Alessandro Antonello.

New associate editor

I'm very pleased to welcome Dr Ruth Morgan (Monash University, Melbourne) as a new associate editor.

Call for papers

I would particularly like to encourage submissions on topics related to energy, the atmosphere and water, especially in relation to Africa, South America and Asia. Please also contact me if you are interested in guest editing a special issue.

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James Beattie, Editor
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