



Mon, 10 Feb 2025 | 10 am | S3 05-02 Conference Room 1

Hosted by Assoc Prof Darren Yeo

Chasing Giants: In Search of the World's Largest Freshwater Fish

Beneath the surface of the world's rivers and lakes swim mysterious giants, the real-life Loch Ness monsters of the aquatic world. They are a diverse assemblage of poorly understood creatures, from gargantuan gars to sumo-sized stingrays. Enormous in size and voracious in appetite, these ancient fish – some of which have been around for hundreds of millions of years – play critical roles in freshwater ecosystems. Yet their numbers are dwindling. Threatened by overfishing, habitat loss, dams, pollution and climate change, the majority of the world's freshwater megafish are today at risk of extinction. As an aquatic ecologist and host of the National Geographic Channel's "Monster Fish" series, Dr. Zeb Hogan has spent more than two decades searching for and studying these increasingly endangered river titans. In this presentation, he tells the remarkable and troubling stories of the world's megafish, and the complex cultures and places that depend on them. It's a story that stretches across the globe, from the most remote locations on Earth into our own backyards, chronicling a race against the clock to find and protect these ancient leviathans before they disappear forever.



By Zeb Hogan

University of Nevada, Reno

About the Speaker

Dr. Zeb Hogan started his professional career with an internship at an aquarium in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, his sophomore year in high school. Later, in college, at the University of Arizona, summer jobs working with endangered native fish solidified his interest in freshwater biodiversity, in particular, endangered species issues. Working on fish conservation projects in his native Arizona eventually led him to graduate school to become a conservation biologist, and ultimately to dedicate his career to finding, studying, and protecting the world's largest freshwater fish. Zeb has spent the past 20 years studying the world's freshwater ecosystems, working to merge conservation science with conservation education and action. He is currently an assistant professor at the University of Nevada-Reno, a National Geographic Society Explorer, and United Nations Convention on Migratory Species Scientific Councilor for Fish. Zeb also hosts the National Geographic television series "Monster Fish." Zeb's research includes contributions to understanding the migratory patterns and population status of vulnerable fish species; designation of the giant Mekong catfish as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List; and awareness-raising through international media and local communications about the plight of endangered fish species and their habitats. Zeb's passion for freshwater comes partially from his love, fascination, and curiosity about aquatic habitats, and partially from a recognition that freshwater fish are one of nature's true underdogs: misunderstood, understudied, and severely threatened by human activity. He gets inspiration from the hope that we can find balance between our needs as humans and the need to preserve increasingly fragile freshwater ecosystems.