PhD or MSc/MA opportunity: Understanding and Resolving Conflict in Urban Recreational Fisheries

Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada
Supervisor: Dr. Vivian Nguyen
Funding: Fully funded PhD position available (subject to admission requirements), Master's student would also be considered
Start Date: Flexible (Summer/Fall 2027 preferred)

Help Shape the Future of Inclusive and Sustainable Recreational Fisheries

Recreational fishing is one of Ontario's most popular outdoor activities, supporting over 1.5 million anglers and contributing more than $1.6 billion annually to the provincial economy. Yet increasing diversity within angling communities, competing values about conservation and harvesting, and growing pressures on aquatic ecosystems are creating new forms of conflict among anglers, non-anglers, governments, and communities.

We are seeking a highly motivated PhD student or MSc/MA to join an interdisciplinary research program examining the causes, dynamics, and resolution of conflict in Ontario's urban recreational fisheries.

This exciting project will work directly with collaborators including the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), and other community organizations to develop practical tools for improving communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution within fisheries systems.

Research Focus

The PhD student will investigate questions such as:

- Why do conflicts emerge among recreational anglers, conservation organizations, government agencies, and local communities?
- How do different cultural values, fishing practices, and perceptions contribute to conflict?
- How are conflicts discussed and amplified through social and traditional media?
- What strategies can effectively prevent, reduce, or resolve fisheries-related conflict?
- How can fisheries managers better engage diverse stakeholder groups?

The project will focus on urban fisheries case studies in Ontario, including:

- Port Hope's Ganaraska River salmon fishery
- Toronto's High Park urban fishery

These sites represent some of the most visible and socially complex fisheries conflicts in Ontario and provide opportunities to generate both theoretical and applied insights.

Research Activities

The successful candidate will have opportunities to:

Characterize Fisheries Conflict

- Conduct interviews with anglers, government agencies, conservation organizations, community groups, and other stakeholders
- Examine root causes of conflict related to access, resource use, cultural values, conservation, and governance
- Develop new frameworks and typologies for understanding recreational fisheries conflict
- Conduct social network analyses for informing communication and outreach pathways

Analyze Public Discourse

- Conduct media and social media analyses
- Explore how fisheries conflicts are framed in public discussions
- Examine narratives related to identity, legitimacy, conservation, and fishing rights

Facilitate Collaborative Solutions

- Organize and participate in stakeholder workshops
- Apply participatory and community-engaged research approaches
- Co-develop conflict resolution strategies with fisheries stakeholders

Contribute to Management

- Generate recommendations for fisheries agencies and partner organizations
- Help develop outreach and communication tools that improve stakeholder engagement
- Inform future fisheries policy and management practices

Qualifications

Required

- Master's degree (completed or near completion) for the PhD position or BSc (for a Master’s position) in Environmental Studies, Geography, Sociology, Natural Resources Management, Conservation Science, Human Dimensions, Public Policy, Planning, Anthropology, Environmental Psychology, or a related field
- Strong writing and communication skills
- Interest in community-engaged and applied research
- Interest in human dimensions of natural resource management
- Strong interpersonal skills to navigate political spaces and cultural sensitivity

Assets

Experience with one or more of the following:

- Qualitative interviewing
- Stakeholder engagement
- Participatory action research
- Social science theory
- Media or discourse analysis
- Social network analysis
- Fisheries, conservation, environmental governance, or conflict studies
- Quantitative survey methods
- Knowledge of recreational fishing communities in Ontario

What You Will Gain

This project provides an excellent opportunity to:

- Publish in leading interdisciplinary journals
- Work directly with government and NGO partners
- Develop expertise in conservation conflict and natural resource governance
- Receive training in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research
- Build professional networks across academia, government, and industry
- Present research at national and international conferences
- Mentor undergraduate researchers

About the Research Program

Dr. Vivian Nguyen's research program focuses on the human dimensions of environmental management, fisheries, conservation, and food systems. Research emphasizes collaborative approaches that connect science, policy, and communities to address complex environmental challenges.

How to Apply

Please send:

- A cover letter describing your research interests and fit with the project
- Curriculum vitae (CV)
- Unofficial transcripts
- Contact information for two to three references

For more information, please contact Dr. Nguyen at Vivian.nguyen@carleton.ca