

PhD Dissertation
Department of Environmental Science and Policy
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Title: Cultural differences: A multispecies ethnography of black vulture predation on cattle in Virginia

Dissertation Directors: Dr. David Luther

Committee: Dr. Susan Crate, Dr. Esther Peters, and Dr. Enrique Montaña

ABSTRACT

This dissertation addressed the conflict between cattle farmers and black vultures in Virginia using a multispecies ethnography framework. Using a mixed-method design, I built a better understanding of black vulture predation on livestock including its frequency, risk factors, and how perception of this issue is affected by human dimensions such as values, attitudes, and cultural factors. Methods included surveys, interviews, content analysis and GIS (Geographic Information Systems) mapping and modeling of predation events, potential attractants, and vulture populations. Results suggested increased predation reports are more related to changes in the farming features than vulture population increases or proximity to attractants.