Title:
In sickness and in health: complex effects of social behavior on infectious disease

Abstract:
Social behavior is intricately linked to animal health and fitness. When animals form groups they often benefit from better access to resources, but they also incur important costs. One of these costs is an increase in the transmission of pathogens. Interestingly, although elevated infection risk is considered a near universal cost of group living, the social interaction that occurs in groups may simultaneously provide benefits that mitigate the negative impacts of infection. These complex effects of social behavior on pathogen exposure, on one hand, and pathogen defense on the other, complicate our understanding of how social behavior shapes infectious disease outcomes. In this talk, I describe ongoing work in my lab that is using experimental and longitudinal studies of wild mammals to shed light on the links between social behavior, infection, and pathogen defense.