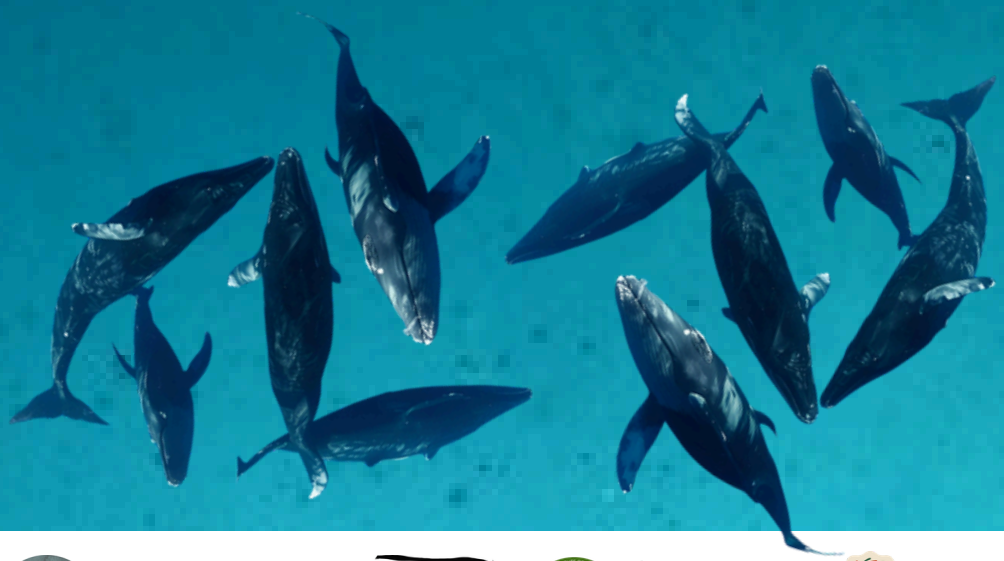
WELCOME TO THE ANTARCTIC RIGHTS FESTIVAL

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
30th Nov - 4th Dec 2026

You are warmly invited to join us for five days of celebrations, as we honour Antarctica's inherent rights, and stand together for the signing of the Antarctica Declaration.

Through ceremony, assembly, art, testimony, science, intuition, ancestral jurisprudence and wisdom, the Festival invites us to imagine and practice other ways of relating to Antarctica and the Earth community.



15 | GARN GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR THE RIGHTS OF NATURE | EMPATHEATRE | Dzomo la Mupo | DYLAN WHALE | INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS OF NATURE TRIBUNAL | EARTH-RISE COLLECTIVE | ANTARCTIC RIGHTS | WILD LAW INSTITUTE



About the Festival

The Antarctic Rights Festival is a gathering unlike any other: a city-wide celebration of life, law, ceremony and the wild world we are part of.

Convened by the Antarctic Alliance, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN), and allied organisations from around the world, it brings Cape Town alive with creativity.
Ecological debate, ancestral knowledge and Earth-centred legal discourse will converge with storytelling and collective imagination to reimagine our relationship with Antarctica as a living being with rights.



Declaration & Tribunal

At the heart of the week is the **public signing of the Antarctica Declaration**: a visionary legal document that recognises Antarctica and the Southern Ocean as a living entity with inherent rights, among them the right to a voice in the international decisions that shape Antarctica's future.

The **International Rights of Nature Tribunal** will hear testimony on how industrial krill fishing and global heating threaten Antarctica's rights, and the inaugural in-person **gathering of the Antarctic Alliance** will unite members from every corner of the world in a shared commitment to protect our Antarctic kin.

Panels explore why Antarctica matters, how the Declaration might be implemented, and what a flourishing Southern Ocean could look like a century from now.

Evenings turn to **Wild Talks,** which explore intuitive listening rooted in African ancestral knowledge that has long understood animals, water and land as kin to be heard.

The Declaration is then carried into the international legal stage at the **IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Colloquium, Cape Town.**



Programme



Day 1
Monday 30/11/2026

17h30

One Ocean **- Ceremony and Ritual Assembly**

Indigenous wisdom-holders and ceremonial practitioners gather at the water's edge for a shared ritual honouring the unity of all waters, ancestral knowledge and Antarctica as a living being.

St James Beach, at the Tidal Pool

18h00

Remembrance of the Lost Species

A candlelit vigil honouring extinct animals, plants and habitats, wreath-laying and dance in tribute to the more-than-human lives once held.

St James Beach, at the Tidal Pool

20h00

As the vigil closes, we come together for a relaxed sunset gathering on the lawn at St James Beach, to hold what has been honoured, and turn towards hope for what is still to come.

St James Beach, on the lawn

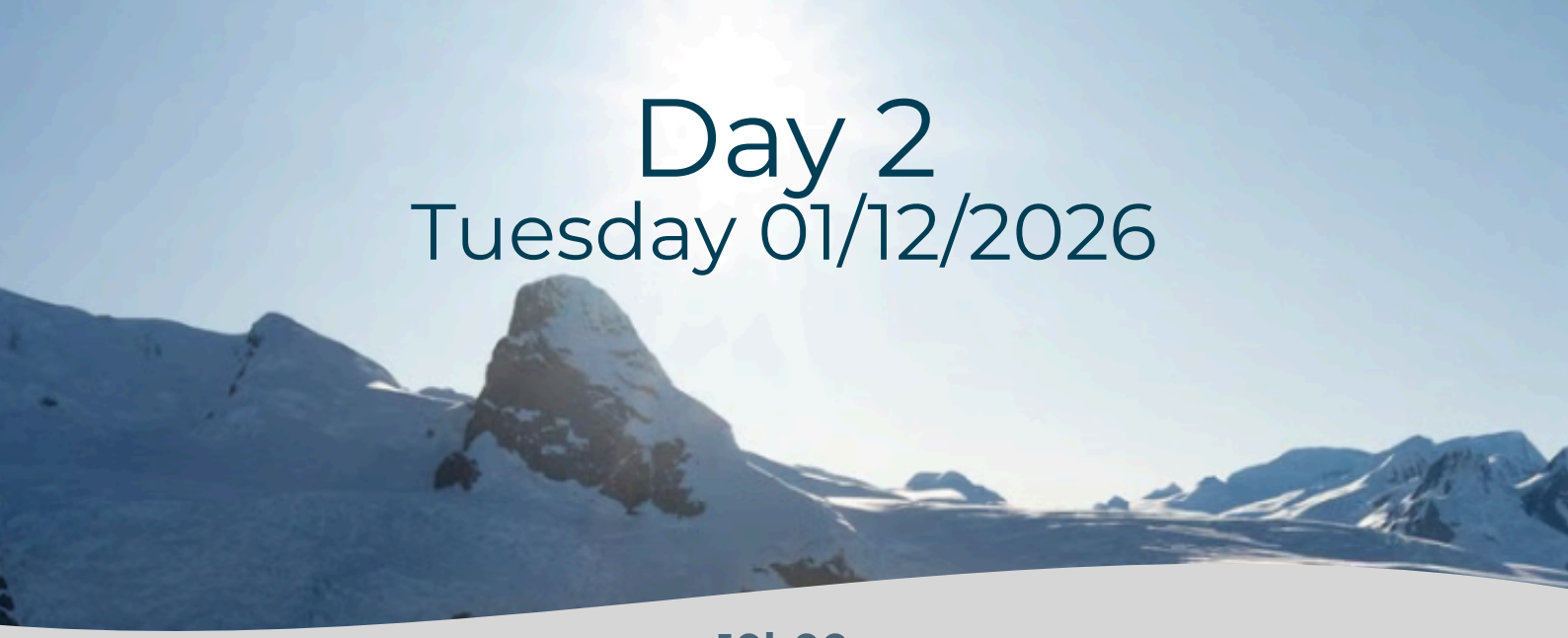
Tuesday to Friday
01/12 - 04/12/2026

10h00 – 20h00

Antarctica: Elemental Dialogues - Art Exhibition

A polyvocal exhibition using art and the senses to draw a distant, ice-bound continent into closer emotional and cultural proximity. This is an invitation to feel what Antarctica asks of us.

Centre for the Book



Day 2
Tuesday 01/12/2026

10h00
Indigenous Prayers: Opening in Honour of Antarctica

A multicultural ceremony of prayer, song and connection, opening our hearts to Antarctica as kin.

Company Gardens, Iziko Museum, Queen Victoria Street

10h30
Towards the Declaration

A symbolic procession giving voice to Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, moving to the rhythm of the more-than-human. African voices, ancestral instruments, and multispecies embodiments and giant figures representing whales, ice, krill and birds, as the presence of Antarctica and the Earth community is carried through the Gardens towards the signing of the Declaration.

Company Gardens, Queen Victoria Street

11h30
Public Signing of the Antarctica Declaration

A historic moment in the rise of Earth jurisprudence: witness the signing of a Declaration affirming Antarctica's inherent rights and calling for a meaningful representation in every decision that shapes Antarctica's future.

Simultaneous signing of personal pledges to stand up for Antarctica.

Centre for the Book

14h30 – 16h30
PANEL 1 - ANTARCTIC RIGHTS AT THE CROSSROADS OF SCIENCE, LAW, GEOPOLITICS AND ETHICS

The Elephant (Seal) in the Room: Why Antarctica Matters

Why does Antarctica matter to every living being on Earth? Scientists, lawyers and philosophers set out the science, the geopolitics and the ethics, and expand on what the Antarctica Declaration says, what it hopes to achieve, and why recognising Antarctic Rights is vital.

Centre for the Book

18h00 – 20h00
WILD TALK I - RELATIONSHIP AND KINSHIP

Antarctica, the Living Being

Through accounts of profound encounters with Antarctica, the ice, the water and the wild, this panel explores how their living presence can be tangibly felt, revealing our capacity to relate to them as a community of life and challenging the idea that Antarctica is simply *a place*.

Centre for the Book



Day 3
Wednesday
02/12/2026

09h00 – 12h30

International Rights of Nature Tribunal: The Antarctica Case

A tribunal hearing testimony about alleged violations of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth and of the rights and freedoms recognised in the Antarctica Declaration. This will include evidence from experts on the impact of the industrial krill fishery (the tiny keystone species whose survival underpins the entire Southern Ocean food web), and the impacts of climate change on Antarctica and Antarctic beings.

Centre for the Book

14h00 – 17h00

International Rights of Nature Tribunal hearing continues and interim findings of the Tribunal

The Tribunal continues hearing evidence and concludes with the panel of judges handing down their preliminary findings and recommendations for next steps.

Centre for the Book

18h00 – 20h00

WILD TALK II - ANCESTRAL JURISPRUDENCE, WISDOM AND INTERSPECIES COMMUNICATION

Re-Membering (with) Antarctica

How do we listen to Antarctica? Indigenous knowledge-holders and intuitive interspecies communicators share how they listen across species, grounded in science and in African ancestral knowledge that has long understood animals, water and land as kin to be heard.

Centre for the Book

Day 4
Thursday 03/12/2026

10h00 – 17h00
Gathering of the Antarctic Alliance
Alliance members gather to discuss and agree on the structure of the Alliance and its strategy and objectives.
Centre for the Book

17h30 for 18h00
Antarctica as Kin: Book Launch,
followed by Film Screening
The evening opens with the launch of *From Sovereignty to Guardianship: Governing Antarctica, Governing the World* (Oxford University Press, 2026) by philosopher Alejandra Mancilla. Examining the Antarctic Treaty System, the book questions the limits of state sovereignty and argues for a less state-centred, less anthropocentric approach, including political representation of Nature and sentient non-human beings.

A film screening follows, inviting audiences to encounter Antarctica and the Southern Ocean as kin, recognise the marvel of their living communities, and open themselves to other ways of seeing and relating to them.
Venue: Museum of Dogs, 95 Keerom Street, Cape Town
The museum is open to visitors from 17h30 to 22h30.
Canapés and crudités / Cash bar available



Day 5
Friday 04/12/2026

14h00 – 16h00

PANEL 2 - IMPLEMENTATION

The Declaration Is Signed. Now What?

What does it mean to recognise Antarctica as a living community with rights, agency and an autonomous future? This session maps the road ahead: how the Declaration could be implemented, how Antarctica can be represented in the decisions that shape a better future, and how a global movement can turn pledges into action.

Centre for the Book

18h00 – 20h00

PANEL 3 - ANTARCTICA 2126

A History of the Future: Antarctica's Next Hundred Years

It is 2126, and the Southern Ocean is thriving. How did we get here? In this closing session, a whale scientist, a sea-ice engineer, an ocean humanities scholar and a political philosopher each bring one object from the future as evidence: an instrument, a recording, or a law not yet written. Together, they become the first entries in the Museum of the Planetary Ocean. Walking backwards from a flourishing future, the speakers trace the cultural, institutional and political steps that made it possible, finding the seeds of change already visible today, and leave us with a pathway to implementation.

Centre for the Book



Tuesday
08/12/2026

IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Colloquium

Antarctic Alliance Executive Committee member Cormac Cullinan joins the opening plenary panel to bring the Antarctic Rights and the newly signed Antarctica Declaration before an international audience of scholars and
law practitioners.

University of Cape Town (UCT)

CONFIRMED JUDGES, SPEAKERS AND CONTRIBUTORS



Cormac Cullinan is a South African environmental lawyer and Rights of Nature advocate who has advised on environmental treaties, laws and policies in more than 30 countries. He is the author of *Wild Law: A Manifesto for Earth Justice* and helped establish Earth jurisprudence, an approach that places ecological relationships at the centre of law and governance. He is a director of the Wild Law Institute and a founder of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature. In 2025, he won the Shackleton Medal for the Protection of the Polar Regions for his work on Antarctica, which uses law to transform how humans relate to Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.
Panel 1, Panel 2, Tribunal



Prof Alejandra Mancilla teaches philosophy at the University of Oslo and sits on the steering group of SCAR's Standing Committee on the Humanities and Social Sciences (SC-HASS). Her work bridges political and environmental philosophy, asking how the nonhuman natural world can take a more active part in politics and law. Her new book, *From Sovereignty to Guardianship: Governing Antarctica, Governing the World* (Oxford University Press, 2026), takes Antarctic governance as inspiration for protecting ecoregions and the oceans, while exploring its limits. She also co-edited *Colonialism and Antarctica* (Manchester University Press, 2024). Prof Mancilla is an international Rights of Nature Tribunal Judge.
Panel 1, Panel 3, Tribunal



Prof Dr Alan D. Hemmings is Adjunct Professor at the Gateway Antarctica Centre for Antarctic Studies and Research, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and lives in Canberra. He has worked on Antarctica for over 45 years, including two winters with the British Antarctic Survey and visits with the British, New Zealand and French national programmes, Greenpeace, and tourist vessels. He began as a seabird biologist and later served on government Antarctic advisory committees in New Zealand and Australia, attending many Antarctic Treaty meetings. His current work focuses on Antarctic geopolitics and the workings of the Antarctic regime. He has published 145 articles and six books, and received the New Zealand Polar Medal in 2026. Prof Hemmings is an international Rights of Nature Tribunal Judge. **Panel 1, Tribunal**



Dr Ricardo Roura is an Antarctic conservation professional and independent scholar, and a senior adviser and consultant to the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC), the environmental NGOs' official observer in Antarctic Treaty forums. He represents ASOC on the Treaty's Committee for Environmental Protection and has taken part in Antarctic Treaty and CCAMLR meetings. He has spent fourteen seasons in Antarctica, including overwintering, with Greenpeace, the Argentine Antarctic programme and the University of Canterbury. He earned his PhD at the University of Groningen. Originally a geomorphologist, he is now a social scientist whose research focuses on human interactions with polar environments and the geopolitics of Southern Ocean conservation. **Panel 1**



Captain Knowledge Bengu is a South African master mariner and ice pilot. Raised in a township in apartheid South Africa, he began his working life as a bricklayer before a bursary opened the way to maritime studies. He became the first Black African ice pilot, and first took command of the polar research vessel *SA Agulhas II* in 2013. In 2022, he was Master of the ship during the Endurance22 expedition, which located *Sir Ernest Shackleton's Endurance* beneath the Weddell Sea. He holds a Master of Commerce in Maritime Studies from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Years of navigating Antarctic and Southern Ocean waters shape the perspective he brings to the Festival. **Wild Talk I, Tribunal**



Mphatheleni Makaulule is an international Rights of Nature Tribunal Judge, a VhaVenda Indigenous knowledge keeper, environmental activist, and defender of sacred natural sites from Limpopo, South Africa. She is the founder and Executive Director of Dzomo la Mupo ("Voice of the Earth"), a community-based organisation protecting sacred sites, Indigenous knowledge, seeds, forests, and food systems. For over 35 years, she has worked with Venda elders, women, and youth to revive Indigenous knowledge and strengthen intergenerational learning. In 2009, she helped establish Dzomo la Mupo with the Makhadzis, traditional women leaders, to defend sacred sites threatened by mining and development. Internationally recognised for her leadership, she was a finalist for the UN Forest Heroes Award. **Wild Talk II, Tribunal**



Hinano Murphy is a Tahitian cultural practitioner and widely recognised expert in Tahitian cultural history. She grew up on Moorea and Tahiti learning oral traditions from her elders, and worked as a teacher and as a government adviser developing Tahitian language and culture programmes for schools. She founded the Atitia Cultural Center on Moorea and is Cultural Director of the Tetiaroa Society, where she heads the Cultural Committee. Her work connects Polynesian heritage with ocean conservation, from opening the 2019 UN World Oceans Day Symposium with a Polynesian creation story to speaking on the ocean and deep-sea mining at the 2024 World Wilderness Congress. **Wild Talk II, Tribunal**



Pooven Moodley Pooven Moodley is a South African international human rights and environmental lawyer and social justice activist. He is the former Executive Director of Natural Justice, where he represented indigenous and local communities across Africa defending their territories of life. Earlier, he served as International Head of Campaigns at ActionAid International and Country Director for Oxfam. A co-founder of the Earthrise Collective, he also helped establish the Centre for Environmental Justice in Africa at the University of Pretoria and collaborates with NYU School of Law on climate litigation. A judge on the International Rights of Nature Tribunal, he sits on several international boards. He contributed to the coalition that won the prestigious UN Human Rights Prize for securing recognition of the right to a healthy environment.
He is an international Rights of Nature Tribunal Judge.
Wild Talk II, Tribunal



Wynter Worsthorne is a South African Intuitive Interspecies Communication practitioner and founder of Animaltalk Africa. Since 2001, she has worked to deepen communication between humans, other animals and the Earth. Her extensive work with wildlife in Southern Africa includes chacma baboons and white lions, and African elephant conservation and rehabilitation. A co-founder of Nature's Council, she helps bring human and more-than-human voices into conversations about ecological and wildlife challenges. Her work centres on listening to Nature, understanding other beings more deeply, and supporting more harmonious relationships between humans and the wider living world.
Wild Talk II



Danii Kehler is a Plains Cree woman from Kawacatoose First Nation in Treaty 4 territory, Canada. An artist and advocate for environmental justice, she works from a decolonial perspective, questioning the colonial frameworks that shape how land, ocean and ice are governed. In 2022 she became the first First Nations person from Canada to join the 2041 Climate Force Antarctic Expedition. A founding member of the Antarctic Alliance, she draws on reciprocity, ancestral wisdom and kinship with the living world in the campaign to recognise Antarctica and the Southern Ocean as a living entity with inherent rights. **Wild Talk I**



Roberta Bosu is Global Campaign Lead for the Antarctic Rights Initiative, where she coordinates international outreach, strategic partnerships and public engagement to secure recognition of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean as rights-bearing entities. A campaign strategist and storyteller, she works at the intersection of environmental advocacy, law, science, Indigenous knowledge and the arts, bringing diverse voices and networks together to build support for the Antarctica Declaration and the wider Rights of Nature movement. Through her work, she seeks to transform how Antarctica and the Southern Ocean are understood in global governance, advancing an Earth-centred approach that recognises them as a living being with rights. **Panel 2**





Natalia Greene is an Ecuadorian political scientist and environmental activist who has been central to the international Rights of Nature movement. She was one of the main advocates behind the recognition of the Rights of Nature in Ecuador's 2008 Constitution, a first for any country, and has worked on the environmental and Indigenous dimensions of the Yasuní-ITT Initiative to keep oil underground in the Amazon. She is Global Coordinator of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN), a member of its Executive Committee and Secretary of the International Rights of Nature Tribunal. She has been an expert in the UN Harmony with Nature network since 2016. **Panel 2**



Prof Charne Lavery is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Pretoria and co-director, with Isabel Hofmeyr, of Oceanic Humanities for the Global South. Her research explores literary and cultural representations of the sea, including the Southern Ocean and Antarctic seas, with particular attention to the ocean cultures of the Global South in a time of environmental change. She is Principal Investigator of an African Antarctic Artists and Writers Programme pilot, funded through the South African National Antarctic Programme, and a South African Humanities and Social Sciences delegate to the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). She is the author of *Writing Ocean Worlds* (Palgrave, 2021). **Panel 3**



Prof Dr Fannie W. Shabangu is a marine mammal bioacoustician at the University of Pretoria's Mammal Research Institute Whale Unit. Using underwater sound, he studies where whales occur, how they behave and what shapes their lives, from the Antarctic blue whale across the Southern Ocean to southern African waters. His passive acoustic monitoring investigates how environmental conditions and underwater noise affect marine mammals, and supports non-invasive ways of studying marine life and evidence-based protection of the ocean. He completed his PhD on Antarctic blue whales in 2018 and was among the first to record their calls off South Africa's west coast. **Panel 3, Tribunal**



Robyn Verrinder is an electrical engineer, Senior Lecturer in Electrical Engineering at the University of Cape Town, and Deputy Director of the Marine and Antarctic Research for Innovation and Sustainability centre (MARiS). Her work focuses on developing autonomous, low-cost instruments that observe Antarctic sea ice and the interactions between ice, ocean and atmosphere. She has led teams deploying autonomous observation platforms in Antarctic waters, including as Principal Investigator and onboard team leader for the buoys team on the 2022 winter cruise of the *SA Agulhas II*, combining engineering, marine robotics and climate science to improve understanding of sea ice and environmental change. **Panel 3**



Simone Haysom is a South African writer and researcher and Director of Environmental Crime at the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. She leads ECO-SOLVE, a programme that uses digital technology, including machine learning, to understand and respond to the illegal online marketing of wildlife products. Her work examines how organised crime, corruption, governance and environmental harm intersect, drawing on more than a decade of fieldwork in challenging environments. She is the author of *The Last Words of Rowan du Preez: Murder and Conspiracy on the Cape Flats* (Jonathan Ball, 2018). Her work sheds light on the human institutions and economic forces that shape the lives of other species. **Panel 3**



Francesco Martone is the founder and spokesperson of *In Difesa Di*, an Italian NGO network that supports human rights defenders, and an associate at the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam. A judge of the International Rights of Nature Tribunal, he chairs its Assembly of Judges, and he is a juror of the Permanent Peoples Tribunal. He served seven years as an Italian senator with the Greens and later the European Left, sitting on the Human Rights and Foreign Affairs Committees. Formerly Board Chair of Greenpeace Italy and a founding member, he launched Italy's campaign against the World Bank and has joined numerous global counter-summits. **Tribunal**



Nonhle Mbuthuma is an international Rights of Nature Tribunal Judge and a community leader and environmentalist from Xolobeni, on South Africa's Wild Coast. Raised by her grandparents, she developed a deep bond with Nature and amaMpondo culture. In 2007, she co-founded the Amadiba Crisis Committee, uniting five villages to oppose titanium mining and defend their land, livelihoods and right to self-determination. Despite threats to her life, she continues to challenge extractive developments. In 2024, she was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize, jointly with Sinegugu Zukulu, for stopping Shell's seismic testing off the Wild Coast, recognising her decades-long struggle to protect her ancestral land and the rights of the amaMpondo people. **Tribunal**



Rafael Colombo is an Argentine environmental lawyer, university lecturer, and international Rights of Nature Tribunal Judge. He teaches Rights of Nature, Access to Environmental Justice, and Animal Law at FCJS-UNL, and serves as adjunct and assistant professor of Constitutional Law, Legal Sociology, and Sociological Theory at FDyCP-UCSF. A member of the Argentine Association of Environmental Lawyers, GARN Latin America, the Global Parliamentary Front for the Rights of Nature, and the Southern Ecosocial and Intercultural Pact, he champions legislation recognising Nature as a subject of law in Argentina. With over 15 years of experience in judicial and parliamentary advocacy and policy strategy, he represents communities in cases involving pesticide spraying, oil waste, offshore extraction, and the protection of rivers, wetlands, and forests. **Tribunal**

