



# Death and Life on the Yangtze: Extinction, Conservation, and Environmental Change in Modern China



**David Pietz**

Professor

UNESCO Chair in Environmental  
History

University of Arizona

This presentation will seek to identify and explore, in a preliminary way, research questions on the social construction of the extinction of the Yangtze Baiji dolphin and subsequent conservation efforts of the Yangtze Finless Porpoise. Specific questions include: How did animal life fit into Chinese world views? How is the notion of extinction mediated by cultural context? To what degree is conservation laden with cultural meaning and values? How was animal life perceived during the Maoist period? How was the science of conservation biology (re) introduced in China during the post-Mao era? How do conservation efforts fit patterns of bureaucratic behavior in China? How has the term “biodiversity” been adopted by different social constituencies in China during the post-Mao era? The presentation will not engage the entirety of this list of questions, but instead represents an initial effort at developing a research agenda to explore these and other analytical themes.



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