

Michelle Modest: Examining Southern Hemisphere Humpback Whale Migratory Routes from Foraging to Breeding Grounds

Tue October 23 7pm–9pm



Southern hemisphere humpback whale populations spend a large portion of the year breeding in tropical waters and migrating between this region and their summer feeding grounds in the Antarctic. They travel great distances during their seasonal migration, the farthest migration of any mammal, with distances up to 11,706 miles recorded. Despite this impressive feat, minimal information is known about their migratory journeys. We have tagged numerous humpback whales with ARGOS satellite tags in the Antarctic feeding grounds over the past several years and have collected data on complete tracks from Antarctica to the western coast of South America. This is the first study to examine humpback whale migratory routes from foraging to breeding grounds, and one of the few to have a workable sample size. We will use this information to create a comprehensive overview of migratory behaviors and characteristics.

Open to the public and is free of charge. Donations are greatly appreciated and will fund cetacean research and education programs.

Biography:

Michelle Modest originally hails from State College, Pennsylvania. She received her BA from Yale University, and then went on Imperial College London to complete an MSc in Conservation Science. At Imperial, she worked with Brandon Southall to complete her thesis titled Anthropogenic noise pollution: Understanding the effects of mid-frequency active sonar on Risso's dolphin behavior. She is now a first year PhD student in Ari Friedlaender's lab at UC Santa Cruz, and is very excited to spend the next 5 years investigating the effects of climate change on humpback whales in the Western Antarctic Peninsula. Michelle is a past ACS San Francisco Bay Chapter research grant awardee.