

PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY B

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Anthropogenic resource subsidies and host–parasite dynamics in wildlife

A theme issue compiled and edited by Daniel Becker, Richard Hall, Kristian Forbes, Raina Plowright and Sonia Altizer

Published March 2018



THE
ROYAL
SOCIETY
PUBLISHING

About this issue

Human feeding of wildlife is diverse, pervasive, and on the rise. Human-provided food resources, whether accidental or intentional, can alter infectious disease processes in wildlife, including animal abundance and aggregation, contacts between different species, immune defences and tolerance to infection, and the movement of animals between habitats. A growing number of studies have asked how host-parasite interactions are responding to human-provided resource subsidies such as bird feeders, food handouts from tourists, landfills, and crops.

This theme issue synthesizes diverse approaches to studying interactions between resource availability and pathogen ecology in wildlife across multiple scales of biological organization, ranging from infection dynamics within individual hosts to landscape-level spread for highly mobile species. It highlights the applied importance of these perspectives for informing public health interventions to control zoonotic infections that can be transmitted from wildlife to humans and for improving wildlife management to limit infection risks in species of conservation concern.

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Front image Great tits (*Parus major*) feeding on human-provided fat. Image from iStockphoto ©Nataba.

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