

## ABS Outreach Grant 2019: Updates from *The Ethogram*

**Who we are:** The field of animal behavior uniquely inspires people to connect with the natural world. However, direct observation of many species is often logistically or economically inaccessible. Instead, in this digital age, many are turning to the internet for information on our planet's natural resources. Consequently, the Animal Behavior Graduate Group at the University of California, Davis began a formalized outreach effort in 2014 with the creation of *The Ethogram*. This blog, run entirely by graduate students, has grown steadily to reach nearly 17,000 visitors, in over 100 countries, in 2019 (Fig. 1a, b). Our staff consists of 7 editors and over 20 contributors per year, ranging from undergraduates to faculty, both at UC Davis and other institutions. Across 11 different columns, we publish up to 4 articles per week; critically, these pieces are designed to cater to different audiences. For instance, our biweekly "Creature Feature" presents a brief profile on a given organism, targeted towards non-scientists but supported by scientific references. We also discuss major issues in "Science and Culture", such as the inequity dilemma in field research and mental health in graduate school.

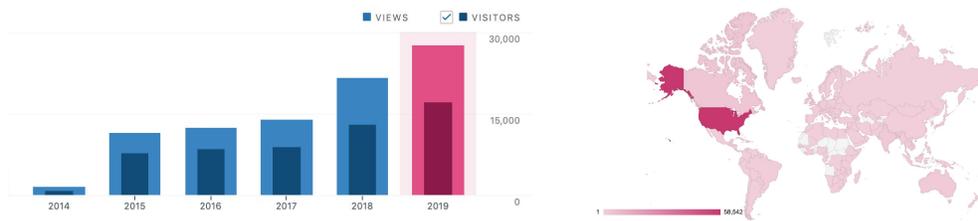


Figure 1. a) Views and visitors in the history of the blog; b) Total views per country since 2014.

**Outreach Plan:** *The Ethogram* is excited to be a recipient of the 2019 Animal Behavior Society Outreach Grant. Our goal is to use this funding to broaden our reach at both local and global scales - specifically, by maintaining, increasing, and extending our impact. This objective has become more important as we enter a time where most educational tools and outlets have become remote due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. To this end, we have used the ABS Outreach Grant to maintain our domain name and cover website costs for the next academic year (2020-2021). The award has also encouraged the Animal Behavior Graduate Group at UC Davis to support our work financially; for instance, we have a university account for the first time designated specifically for *The Ethogram*. We are continuing to use our current platform to highlight the work of researchers and current social justice issues, with the goal of ensuring that the field of animal behavior is accessible to all. Thus far, we have 42 new pieces published in 2020, including "Field Notes: Research in the time of COVID-19", "Creature Feature: World Wildlife Day," and an "Ethogram Statement of Solidarity" for underrepresented members of the STEM community.

While we had initially proposed to increase and extend our impact by expanding our in-person presence at the university and within our community, we have since decided to focus on strengthening our online presence to ensure our impact continues while prioritizing the health of our community. Consequently, we are in the process of creating a "Young Explorers" section of our website, which will essentially replicate our existing blog into a version targeted towards children of all ages. For instance, an "Ask an Expert" form will allow young visitors to ask questions about animals directly to the graduate students on *The Ethogram* team. These questions will be answered on a blog page for the general public, and a personalized response will also be sent to the original sender. Young visitors will also be encouraged to submit animal-related artwork and write their own Creature Features.

To accommodate educators remotely, we are taking advantage of the teaching expertise present on our team. Several of our editors have worked in K-12 education, creating lesson plans and implementing them in classrooms across the country. Consequently, we are developing middle-school curricula based on the science of animal behavior to be posted as a resource on *The Ethogram* website. We aim to cover broad topics, such as how to generate scientific questions, how to design an experiment, and other topics related to specific behavioral fields. To complement this accessible written resource, we plan to create videos or offer Zoom visits to classrooms so students can hear from our researchers directly. These online lessons and activities will be piloted during the 2020-2021 school year in collaboration with California K-12 teachers.

Finally, we are addressing the challenge of conducting community outreach remotely by planning a virtual webinar series that we will advertise on numerous local platforms. We are also organizing a “Virtual Trivia” night featuring facts about animal behavior.