



DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Special Seminar

William F. Laurance, PhD, FAA, FAAAS, FRSQ

Distinguished Research Professor & Australian Laureate

Director, Centre for Tropical Environmental and Sustainability Science

James Cook University, Cairns, Queensland, Australia

The Future of Biodiversity

How many species exist on Earth? Where do these species live? And what will happen to them in the future? I will explore these and other controversial issues that will ultimately determine the fate of biodiversity on Earth. There is great uncertainty about the number of species alive today, with plausible estimates ranging from 2-50 million species, excluding microbes. New genetic, databasing and swarm-intelligence techniques are rapidly improving our ability to identify and catalog species. Species richness and endemism tend to be concentrated in certain locales, many of which are in the tropics and among the most imperiled environments on Earth today. These centers of biodiversity are likely to come under even greater pressures from land-use and climate change in the coming century, but the magnitude of expected species losses is hotly debated. Despite many uncertainties, it is apparent that we face two great challenges: sustaining Earth's natural biological wealth and identifying vast numbers of unknown species before they vanish forever.

January 11, 2018

12:30 – 1:30pm

210 Aline Skaggs Biology Building

Host: Dr. Cagan Sekercioglu