

## WAJRA JEEWANTHA BANDARA

[jeewantha.bandara@rutgers.edu](mailto:jeewantha.bandara@rutgers.edu) | <https://wajra.github.io>

### EDUCATION

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**PhD in Ecology and Evolution** August 2021 - Present  
**Cumulative GPA: 3.99**  
Rutgers University, USA

**MS in Ecology and Evolution** October 2021  
**Cumulative GPA: 3.96**  
Rutgers University, USA

**Bachelor of Science in Biology (Zoology Special)** March 2017  
**Cumulative GPA: 3.31 (2<sup>nd</sup> Upper Division)**  
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**Teaching Assistant** September 2024 – Present  
Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources,  
Rutgers University, USA

**Graduate Assistant** September 2021 – September 2024  
Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources,  
Rutgers University, USA

**Graduate Fellow** September 2019 – May 2021  
Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources,  
Rutgers University, USA

**Research Associate** December 2017 – June 2019  
Blue Swimming Crab Fishery Improvement Project, Sri Lanka

**Research Assistant (Part-time)** April 2017 – December 2017  
Blue Swimming Crab Fishery Improvement Project, Sri Lanka

**Teaching Assistant** February 2017 – December 2017  
Department of Zoology, University of Colombo

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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- Species distribution modeling under climate change for marine species
- Population modeling in fisheries for informed management and decision making
- Quantitative frameworks for the assessment of data-poor fisheries in developing countries

## PUBLICATIONS (IN PREPARATION/UNDER REVIEW)

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**Bandara, R. M. W. J.**, Maureaud, A.A., Wagner, C., Wiedenmann, J. Pinsky, M.L., and the BIOSHIFTS consortium (2025; in prep). *Range shifts of marine species and their drivers*.

**Bandara, R. M. W. J.**, Pinsky, M.L., Wiedenmann, J. (2025; in prep). *A dynamic range model explains historical abundance patterns in a commercially important fish*.

Godoy, L. d. C., Fredston, A., Morales, M., **Bandara, R. M. W. J.**, & Pinsky, M. L. (2025; in review). *drmr: A Bayesian approach to Dynamic Range Models in R*. Methods in Ecology and Evolution

Oliveira, Bruno; Comte, Lise; Romain, Romain; Diamond, Sarah; Lancaster, Lesley ; Pinsky, Malin; Scheffers, Brett; Baecher, J. Alex ; **Bandara, R.M.W.J**; Chen, I-Ching; Lawlor, Jake; Moore, Nikki; Murienne, Jerome; Rolland, Jonathan; Rubenstein, Madeleine; Sunday, Jennifer; Thompson, Laura; Villalobos, Fabricio; Weiskopf, Sarah; Lenoir, Jonathan (2025; in review), *Species range shifts exceed projections*. PNAS

Oliveira, Bruno; Comte, Lise; Romain, Romain; Diamond, Sarah; Lancaster, Lesley ; Pinsky, Malin; Scheffers, Brett; Baecher, J. Alex ; **Bandara, R.M.W.J**; Chen, I-Ching; Lawlor, Jake; Moore, Nikki; Murienne, Jerome; Rolland, Jonathan; Rubenstein, Madeleine; Sunday, Jennifer; Thompson, Laura; Villalobos, Fabricio; Weiskopf, Sarah; Lenoir, Jonathan (2025; in review), *Genetic diversity impacts climate-induced species range shifts*. Ecology Letters

## PUBLICATIONS (IN PRESS/PUBLISHED)

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Maureaud, A. A., Kitchel, Z., Fredston, A., Guralnick, R., Palacios-Abrantes, J., Palomares, M. L. D., Pinsky, M. L., Shackell, N. L., Thorson, J. T., Alemany, D., Amador, K., **Bandara, R. M. W. J.**, Belmaker, J., Beukhof, E. D., Bograd, S. J., Camara, M. L., Carbonara, P., Chaikin, S., Collins, M. A., . . . Mérigot, B. (2025). *FISHGLOB: A collaborative infrastructure to bridge the gap between scientific monitoring and marine biodiversity conservation*. Conservation Science and Practice. <https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.70035>

Comte, Lise; Romain, Romain; Diamond, Sarah; Lancaster, Lesley ; Pinsky, Malin; Scheffers, Brett; Baecher, J. Alex ; **Bandara, R.M.W.J**; Chen, I-Ching; Lawlor, Jake; Moore, Nikki; Oliveira, Bruno; Murienne, Jerome; Rolland, Jonathan; Rubenstein, Madeleine; Sunday, Jennifer; Thompson, Laura; Villalobos, Fabricio; Weiskopf, Sarah; Lenoir, Jonathan (2024; in press), *Bringing traits back in the equation: A roadmap to understand species redistribution*. Global Change Biology

Lawlor, J. A., L. Comte, G. Grenouillet, J. Lenoir, J. A. Baecher, **R. M. W. J. Bandara**, R. Bertrand, I-C. Chen, S. E. Diamond, L. T. Lancaster, N. Moore, J. Murienne, B. F. Oliveira, G. T. Pecl, M. L. Pinsky, J. Rolland, M. Rubenstein, B. Scheffers, L. M. Thompson, B. van Amerom, F. Villalobos, S. R. Weiskopf, J. Sunday (2024; in press), *Mechanisms, detections, and impacts of species redistributions under climate change*. Nature Reviews Earth and Environment

**Bandara, R. M. W. J**, E. Curchitser, and M. L. Pinsky (2023). *The importance of oxygen for explaining rapid shifts in a marine fish*. Global Change Biology. e17008 doi: [10.1111/gcb.17008](https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.17008)

Weerakkody S., Gardiyawasam P., Wijekulathilake C., **Bandara J.**, Peiris U., Senanayake U., Siriwardana S., Seneviratne, S. (2018), *Avifauna of a Critically Important Montane Forest Corridor: The Kande-Ela Forest Reserve*. Loris: Journal of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka. Volume 8, Issue 3.

## REVIEWS

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Kitchel, Z.J., **Bandara, R.M.W.J.**, Bos, J.T., Clark, R.D., Forrest, D.L. and Pinsky, M.L. (2021), *Ocean Recovery: A Sustainable Future for Global Fisheries?* Hilborn, Ray and Hilborn, Ulrike, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK. 2019. 208 pages. US\$39.95 (hardcover), \$4.00 (Kindle). Fisheries, 46: 201-201. <https://doi.org/10.1002/fsh.10580>

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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**Bandara, R.M.W.J.**, de Silva D.N. (May 2017). *Use of GPS and GIS technology to assess the ecological impacts of Blue Swimming Crab (Portunus pelagicus) fishery in Palk Bay, off Jaffna, Sri Lanka on critical marine habitats*. Twenty Third Annual Scientific Sessions of the Sri Lanka Association for Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (SLAFAR), Colombo, Sri Lanka.

**Bandara, R.M.W.J.**, Pinsky, Malin. (September, 2020). *Use of Dissolved Oxygen and Zooplankton Concentration to Determine Black Sea Bass (Centropristis striata) Habitat in North East Atlantic*. American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting (Virtual conference).

**Bandara, R.M.W.J.**, Widenmann, J., Pinsky, Malin. (August 2022). *Process Models for Fish Populations Undergoing Range Shifts Under Climate Change*. American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, Spokane, WA, USA.

## TECHNICAL REPORTS

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**Bandara, R.M.W.J** (2018). *The Blue Swimming Crab Fishery in Palk Bay and its Impact on marine habitats*. Submitted to Seafood Watch, California, USA

**Bandara, R.M.W.J** (2018). *The Blue Swimming Crab Fishery in Gulf of Mannar and its Impact on marine habitats*. Submitted to Seafood Watch, California, USA

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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*\*All courses other than invertebrate zoology (11:216:324), vertebrate zoology (11:216:325), and principles of natural resource management (11:216:217) were taught at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

- Invertebrate Zoology (11:216:324) – Fall 2024
- Vertebrate Zoology (11:216:325) – Spring 2025
- Principles of Natural Resource Management (11:216:217) – Fall 2025
- Variety of Animal Life – Level I
- Introduction to Environmental Science – Level I
- Evolution and Biogeography – Level I
- Animal behavior – Level I
- Animal Form and Function – Level II
- Fish Biology and Fisheries – Level III – Lead TA for this course.
- Principles of Ecology – Level III
- Fundamentals of Conservation Biology and Wildlife – Level III
- Wildlife Management - Level III
- Entomology, Comparative Anatomy, Parasitology (Level IV) – Temporarily assigned as TA for several lab classes.

## PEER REVIEWING

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Peer reviewer for

*Oikos*

Nature Communications E&E journals

Ecography

Ecological Processes

October 2022

March 2024

June 2024

April 2025

## **AWARDS AND GRANTS**

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<b>Rutgers Climate Institute Student Travel Award (2024)</b>	<b>\$250.00</b>
<b>Rutgers Climate Institute Student Travel Award (2024)</b>	<b>\$250.00</b>
<b>Fulbright Masters Scholarship Award (2019 – 2021)</b>	<b>\$ 51,800.00</b>
<b>Van Duuren Travel and Research Award (2020)</b>	<b>\$ 1,046.00</b>

## **VOLUNTEER WORK / OTHER EXPERIENCE**

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Designed the website for Field Ornithology Group, Sri Lanka (fogsl.cmb.ac.lk)	April 2016
Conducted a 2-day workshop on report-writing and statistical analysis for Ranger officers of the Department of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka	March 2018
Conducted a 2-day workshop on report-writing and statistical analysis for Ranger officers of the Department of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka	September 2021

## **TECHNICAL SKILLS**

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- Proficient in several areas of statistical modeling and data science, including Bayesian and frequentist statistics
- Proficient in the use of several programming packages for data analysis, visualization, and typesetting (R, Python, SQL, Latex)

## **SELECTED EXTRA CURRICULARS**

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- Member of University of Colombo swimming team for the year 2013
- Member of University of Colombo English debating team for the year 2013

## REFERENCES

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**Prof. Malin Pinsky**

Associate Professor,  
Department of Ecology and Evolutionary  
Biology,  
University of California Santa Cruz, CA  
USA  
+1 848 932 8242, [mpinsky@ucsc.edu](mailto:mpinsky@ucsc.edu)

**Prof. Dilrukshi de Silva**

Professor in Zoology (Retired),  
Department of Zoology and Environment  
Sciences,  
Faculty of Science,  
University of Colombo,  
Sri Lanka  
+ 94 77 734 5534, [dilki\\_ds@hotmail.com](mailto:dilki_ds@hotmail.com)

**Prof. John Wiedenmann**

Associate Professor,  
Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Natural  
Resources,  
14 College Farm Rd,  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
USA  
+1 848 932 3495, [john.wiedenmann@gmail.com](mailto:john.wiedenmann@gmail.com)