

## **AGAINST THE CURRENT: EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF ANGLERS ALONG THE MIAMI RIVER**

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This ethnographic study focuses on the fishing practices of riparian human neighboring communities along the Miami River, FL. Through participant observation and semi-structured interviews, we explored people's perspectives and experiences, including their motivations for fishing, barriers to access, and key concerns for the Miami River. Our study revealed that the engagement of locals with the Miami River for fishing is driven by multifaceted factors including social connections, emotional well-being, and the provision of sustenance. However, existing policies present challenges that compel many individuals to navigate intricate managerial and policy frameworks to sustain their fishing practices. The primary concern of locals is access to the Miami River, mostly attributed to confusing legislation and financial barriers. Considering our findings, our paper provides recommendations derived from participant and researcher conversations. Our study offers further evidence of the benefits of urban fishing and underscores the significance of informed management strategies in public spaces. This informed management is particularly crucial in the context of Miami FL, where expanding private spaces constrict public or open spaces reserved for alternative uses, emphasizing the need for management approaches that acknowledge the diverse motivations and benefits associated with local fishing practices along the Miami River.

PRESENTER BIO: Michael Borbolla is a Cuban ecologist and Ph.D. student at Florida International University, specializing in urban ecology and human-wildlife interactions in Miami. He has significant experience in South Florida's diverse ecosystems, leading projects on invasive species and urban fishing. Michael is dedicated to conservation, restoration, and promoting diversity in science.