



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers  
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**Simon Fraser U's Paul Kingsbury finds paranormal investigators are just like us:** In the last couple of years, SFU geography professor [Paul Kingsbury](#) has hunted ghosts, attended UFO conferences and interviewed alien abductees as a part of his research on paranormal investigators. When asked what had he discovered about paranormal investigators so far? "Paranormal investigators are just like anyone else in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds, education levels or psychological well-being. Most of them have had profound paranormal experiences and simply strive to learn more" he said. "They are driven by passion and do not charge money for their investigative services." When asked why he decided to study paranormal investigators. Kingsbury said "I wanted to choose a topic that will keep me fascinated, and was inspired by an opinion piece in the Globe and Mail. The article criticized how National Geographic TV was showing ancient alien shows and UFO hunter shows. The writer was concerned the shows could damage children's understanding of the world. I did not entirely agree with the writer because, as a cultural geographer, it is important to acknowledge how aliens and ghosts are significant cultural phenomena and matter a lot in many people's lives. That's when I figured I would really like to study the lived spaces of paranormal investigators and find out what drives them to do what they do." [SFU News](#)

**U Victoria's Chris Darimont on rock star' wolf of Juan de Fuca.** On a crisp Sunday morning last month, 50 birdwatchers boarded a tranquil tour of Victoria's Oak Bay. As the boat cruised through the islands, a two-kilometre-wide cluster known as the Songhees or Chatham Islands, the guide began his usual tale of local lore: "Five years ago, stories began about a wolf on the island. People in the city could hear him howling at night." Sightings were seldom, usually disregarded as a lost large dog, and even after countless tours, guide Brett Soberg had spotted the creature in the distance just twice before. "Literally seconds later, he meandered out of the bush and sat right down," he says. Needless to say, nobody cared anymore about birds. Coastal (or sea) wolves are the same species as the North American grey wolf, but ecologically and genetically distinct, says Chris Darimont, wolf expert and University of Victoria geography professor: "They're smaller, they eat mostly seafood, and they swim a bit better." Their range once stretched from southeast Alaska to northern Mexico; nowadays, about a 100 kilometres north of Vancouver is as far down the continent as most roam, making this wolf's island home exceedingly rare. "He dispersed from his family group and took some wrong turns," says Darimont. "Instead of finding a place with abundant prey and few people, he somehow wound his way through the suburbs of Victoria through parks and backyards. Then I imagine he saw a patch of green on the horizon and swam for it." [Maclean's Magazine](#)

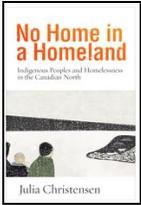
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**U British Columbia's Verena Seufert and Navin Ramankutty report organic is only one ingredient in recipe for sustainable food future:** Many people choose organic thinking it's better for humans and the planet, but a [new study](#) finds that might not always be the case. "Organic is often proposed a holy grail solution to current environmental and food scarcity problems, but we found that the costs and benefits will vary heavily depending on the context," said Verena Seufert, a researcher at the Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability (IRES). In their study, Seufert and her co-author Navin Ramankutty, Canada Research Chair in Global Environmental Change and Food Security at UBC, analyzed organic crop farming across 17 criteria such as yield, impact on climate change, farmer livelihood and consumer health. It is the first study to systematically review the scientific literature on the environmental and socioeconomic performance of organic farming, not only assessing where previous studies agree and disagree, but also identifying the conditions leading to good or bad performance of organic agriculture. Take two factors that are top of mind for many consumers: synthetic pesticide use and nutritional benefits of organic. Seufert and Ramankutty argue that in countries like Canada where pesticide regulations are stringent and diets are rich in micronutrients, the health benefits of choosing organic may be marginal. "But in a developing country where pesticide use is not carefully regulated and people are micronutrient deficient, we think that the benefits for consumer and farm worker health may be much higher," said Ramankutty. Another important measure of the sustainability of farming systems is the yield of a crop. To date, most studies have compared the costs and benefits of organic and conventional farms of the same size, which does not account for differences in yield. Previous research has shown that on average, the yield of an organic crop is 19 to 25 per cent lower than under conventional management, and Seufert and Ramankutty find that many of the environmental benefits of organic agriculture diminish once lower yields are accounted for. "While an organic farm may be better for things like biodiversity, farmers will need more land to grow the same amount of food," said Seufert. [UBC News](#)

**UQTR's Stéphane Campeau et carte interactive de l'IDEC:** Depuis 2002, l'équipe de recherche du professeur [Stéphane Campeau](#) effectue le suivi de la qualité de l'eau des rivières à l'aide de l'indice IDEC. Cet indice, développé au département des sciences de l'environnement de l'UQTR, permet d'évaluer l'état d'une rivière à partir de la composition des communautés d'algues (diatomées) qui tapissent le fond des cours d'eau. Les valeurs de l'indice varient entre 0 et 100, une valeur élevée reflétant un niveau d'intégrité biologique élevé et une bonne qualité de l'eau. L'IDEC fut utilisé par une trentaine d'organisations au Québec, incluant les organismes de bassin versant, les municipalités et les ministères provinciaux et fédéraux, afin de suivre l'état des rivières. L'indice est maintenant également utilisé par le laboratoire du gouvernement du Québec (CEAEQ) afin de suivre les travaux de restauration des cours d'eau en milieu agricole. Jusqu'à récemment, ces données n'étaient pas disponibles pour le grand public. La base de données est désormais accessible en ligne à partir de l'application Google Maps. Le public peut ainsi consulter les données de plus de 1200 stations d'échantillonnage dans l'Est du Canada. Dans bien des cas, il s'agit de la seule source d'information disponible concernant la qualité de l'eau, puisqu'un grand nombre de ces cours d'eau n'ont jamais fait l'objet d'un autre type de suivi. Les valeurs de l'IDEC sont divisées en quatre classes. La classe A (en bleu) correspond à une bonne qualité de l'eau. Les concentrations en phosphore, en azote, en matière organique et en pesticides sont généralement peu élevées dans ces cours d'eau. À l'inverse, les rivières de la classe D (en rouge) font partis des cours d'eau les plus dégradés de l'Est de Canada. La médiane des concentrations en phosphore, en azote et en matière organique est généralement élevée dans ces cours d'eau. La base de données de l'indice IDEC permettra de suivre l'évolution de l'état des rivières au Québec. En milieu urbain ou de villégiature, l'amélioration de l'indice nécessite en général que des modifications soient apportées aux systèmes de traitement des eaux usées (domestiques ou municipales) et à la gestion des eaux pluviales. En milieu agricole, une meilleure gestion des intrants agricoles et un meilleur contrôle du ruissellement et de l'érosion des sols et des berges sont incontournables. [Programme de géographie-UQTR](#)

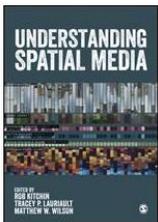
## New Books

**Julia Christensen. 2017. No Home in a Homeland. Indigenous Peoples and Homelessness in the Canadian North. University of British Columbia Press. 304 pages.**



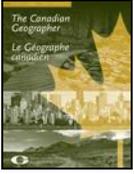
The Dene, a traditionally nomadic people, have no word for homelessness, a rare condition in the Canadian North prior to the 1990s. In *No Home in a Homeland*, Julia Christensen documents the rise of Indigenous homelessness and argues that this alarming trend will continue so long as policy makers continue to ignore northern perspectives and root causes, which lie deep in the region's colonial past. Christensen interweaves analysis of the region's unique history with the personal stories of homeless people in two cities -- Yellowknife and Inuvik. These individual and collective narratives tell a larger story of displacement and exclusion, residential schools and family breakdown, addiction and poor mental health, poverty and unemployment, and urbanization and institutionalization. But they also tell a story of hope and renewal. Emergency shelters in settler societies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States take in a disproportionate number of Indigenous people. Understanding what it means to be homeless in the North and how Indigenous people think about home and homemaking is the first step, Christensen argues, on the path to decolonizing existing approaches and practices. *Note: All royalties are being donated to NWT shelters.*

**Rob Kitchin, Tracey P. Lauriault and Matthew W. Wilson. 2017. [Understanding Spatial Media](#). Sage UK. 264 pages**



Over the past decade, a new set of interactive, open, participatory and networked spatial media have become widespread. These include mapping platforms, virtual globes, user-generated spatial databases, geodesign and architectural and planning tools, urban dashboards and citizen reporting geo-systems, augmented reality media, and locative media. Collectively these produce and mediate spatial big data and are re-shaping spatial knowledge, spatial behaviour, and spatial politics. [Understanding Spatial Media](#) brings together leading scholars from around the globe to examine these new spatial media, their attendant technologies, spatial data, and their social, economic and political effects. The 22 chapters are divided into the following sections: Spatial media technologies; Spatial data and spatial media; and, the consequences of spatial media. *Understanding Spatial Media* is the perfect introduction to this fast emerging phenomena for students and practitioners of geography, urban studies, data science, and media and communications. Canadian Geography chapter author's include: Peter L. Pulsifer, Carleton University and Glen Brauen, University of Toronto.

New in [The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien](#)



Terence Day. 2017. [Core themes in textbook definitions of physical geography](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI:10.1111/cag.12354View

Abstract: This paper documents and discusses textbook representations of the scope of physical geography. Eight themes in contemporary physical geography are identified from current textbooks, namely a spatial perspective, the concept of a “natural” world, impacts on people, process and system concepts, anthropogenic impacts, environmental change, linkages between systems, and physical geography as a science. The emergence of anthropogenic impacts as a theme challenges traditional notions of a natural world, and an increased focus on spatial perspectives and the concept of “place” challenges the idea of physical geography as a science.

Matthew G. Hatvany. 2017. [Imagining Duckland: Postnationalism, waterfowl migration, and ecological commons](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI:10.1111/cag.12352

Abstract: Foreign place names reflecting the names of American hunter-conservationists and places mark the geography of Western Canada. This exogenous place naming dates to the 1930s when one of Canada's most successful NGOs—Ducks Unlimited Canada—launched “The Lake that Waits” project. Emerging out of the Dust Bowl and declining waterfowl populations, the project combined geographical imagination, foreign toponyms, and ecological knowledge to incite American waterfowlers to invest in the rehabilitation of Canadian wetlands. It is insinuated that this renaming re-colonized in the name of nature conservation. When theorized within a postnational ecological and historical context, however, the use of foreign toponyms may be interpreted as a means to positively influence perceptions of identity and sense of place. It was a social construction of nature encouraging recognition of the shared ethical responsibilities of continental waterfowlers who needed to re-envision waterfowl migration within an ecological common—Duckland. Renaming was a means to effect both environmental and cultural change resulting in the conservation of millions of acres of waterfowl habitat, leaving an enduring mark on North American geography.

Ryan Walker, Loleen Berdahl, Erin Lashta, David Newhouse and Yale Belanger. 2017. [Public attitudes towards Indigeneity in Canadian prairie urbanism](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI:10.1111/cag.12360

Abstract: Prairie cities have large and growing Indigenous populations. The great resurgence of strong Indigenous cultures in Canada should foretell the impact Indigeneity will have over coming years across the full spectrum of urban geography. The study uses original 2014 survey data collected from seven prairie cities to examine the following question: What does the non-Indigenous majority public think about increasing the role of Indigeneity in the procedural and material approaches to urbanism in prairie cities? Based on our findings we suggest that public attitudes among the non-Indigenous populations of prairie cities are changing and becoming more positive towards trying new approaches to enabling Indigenous urbanism. Support is somewhat greater for municipal-Indigenous governance options than for specific actions to infuse Indigeneity into the design and naming of public spaces.



**U Waterloo's Nancy Worth** spoke with the [New York Times](#) on the trend that shows 56.5 percent of people in their 20s in the Toronto area still live with their parents, compared with 42 percent nationwide. Professor Worth said, despite negative stereotypes of lazy millennials free-loading in their parents' basements, many of these educated young professionals are actually making smart, strategic choices.

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### Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Jessica Blythe, Reuben Sulu, Daykin Harohau, Rebecca Weeks, Anne-Maree Schwarz, David Mills, and Michael Phillips. 2017. [Social dynamics shaping the diffusion of sustainable aquaculture innovations in the Solomon Islands](#). Sustainability 9:126. DOI:10.3390/su9010126

Emily E. Campbell, Jason Gilliland, Paula D. N. Dworatzek, Barbra De Vrijer, Debbie Penava and Jamie A. Seabrook. 2017. [Socioeconomic status and adverse birth outcomes: a population-based Canadian sample](#). Journal of BioSocial Science. DOI:https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021932017000062

Chris Garda, Heather Castleden and Cathy Conrad. 2017. [Monitoring, restoration, and source water protection: Canadian community-based environmental organizations' efforts towards improving aquatic ecosystem health](#). Water 9:212. DOI:10.3390/w9030212

Xiaodong Huang, Jinfei Wang, Jiali Shang, Chunhua Liao and Jianguai Liu. 2017. [Application of polarization signature to land cover scattering mechanism analysis and classification using multi-temporal C-band polarimetric RADARSAT-2 imagery](#). Remote Sensing of Environment 193:11–28.

Josh Lepawsky, Erin Araujo, John-Michael Davis and Ramzy Kahhat. 2017. [Best of two worlds? Towards ethical electronics repair, reuse, repurposing and recycling](#). Geoforum 81:87–99.

Andrea Olive and Katrina Jansen. 2017. [The contribution of zoos and aquaria to Aichi Biodiversity Target 12: A case study of Canadian zoos](#). Global Ecology and Conservation 10:103–113.

Erin K. Wilson, Paul S. Hill, Danika van Proosdij and Monique Ruhl. 2017. [Coastal retreat rates and sediment input to the Minas Basin, Nova Scotia](#). Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences. DOI:10.1139/cjes-2016-0177

Lei Zhou, Shan Yang, Shuguang Wang and Liyang Xiong. 2017. [Ownership reform and the changing manufacturing landscape in Chinese cities: The case of Wuxi](#). PLOS ONE 12. DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0173607

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### Other “Geographical” News

**Rapid decline of Arctic sea ice a combination of climate change and natural variability:** The dramatic decline of Arctic sea ice in recent decades is caused by a mixture of global warming and a natural, decades-long atmospheric hot spot over Greenland and the Canadian Arctic. [ScienceDaily](#)

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**Why a group of small Canadian universities believes the future is theirs:** Small liberal arts undergraduate universities are outliers in Canadian higher education, but harbour big ambitions to be its future. Four of them—Bishop’s University, Acadia University, Mount Allison University and St. Francis Xavier University—joined forces last year as the “Maple League” to raise their profile as an alternative to the “bigger is better” model that dominates undergraduate education in Canada. It’s a tall order. Provincial government financing of post-secondary education rewards universities with growing enrolment, with a “bums in seats” funding formula that produces large freshmen classes. [Maclean’s Magazine](#)

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### Some Not So “Geographical” News



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