

Vita

I was born and raised in Rome (Italy) and I have always been a naturalist. I began my career as a marine biologist but soon changed to ornithology and finally to mammalogy. I earned a B.S. and M.S. in biology from the University of Rome “La Sapienza” under the supervision of Prof. Luigi Boitani. I studied *Culpeo* foxes and small mammals in North-Central Chile for my Masters research. I collaborated with Special Forces to stop the poaching of migrating raptors in Southern Italy and to enforce CITES policies in Central Italy. In 2001 I moved to the US where I worked for the NSF-LTER network until 2004 when I started my PhD at New Mexico State University. I love hiking, rock climbing, ice climbing, skiing, caving, fishing, scuba diving, hang gliding, sailing,and everything else that keeps me busy and makes me feel alive.

My Current Project

Since the pioneering works of Charles Elton (1958) and David Lack (1954), perhaps one of the most challenging issues in modern ecology is to understand to what degree natural populations are characterized by dynamics resulting from complex nonlinear interactions among environmental factors. In 2004 I started my PhD project to investigate the relationships between spatial and temporal variations in climate and plant productivity to explain landscape-level variability in rodent assemblages inhabiting grassland-shrubland ecotones in the Chihuahuan Desert. Specifically, I am interested in understanding what factors are more likely to cause changes in rodent abundance, biomass and energy flux in space and time across these ecotones. I am also interested in understanding how rodents partition food resources under different conditions. Using nitrogen and carbon stable isotope analysis I will be able to estimate what proportion of C3 and C4 plants have been consumed by individuals of different populations in different habitats and understand their impact on vegetation.



