

Mark Lewis

I'm the Canada Research Chair in Mathematical Biology at the University of Alberta.



First I teach. My classes range from freshman biology students learning calculus to PhD students learning how to apply mathematical methods to environmental problems. Another way I teach is through mentoring researchers. These researchers range from undergraduates to graduate students and postdoctorals (post-PhD). I mentor researchers by helping them develop new research skills.

My hometown was Victoria. My love was ecology and the environment. I started as a biology student at the University of Victoria. My courses led me to understand how mathematics can be very useful in ecology. I went on to take a lot of math and computer science courses. Although they were hard at times, I found them to be exhilarating, as if I was being given new-found powers.

I came to mathematics from an applied perspective. I saw that it was a powerful lens through which I could understand processes in biology. Somewhere along the way I came to enjoy mathematics as an end in itself, but I'm the happiest when I'm working on an applied biological problem where mathematics plays a key role.

Often a team involves a bunch of different kinds of scientists, ranging from biologists to mathematicians to government researchers. Along the way, we solve some truly interesting problems to do with ecology and the environment, and how humans are changing the world

I like to spend time with my family. I enjoy the outdoors, whether hiking, skiing or canoeing. I enjoy the travel that is part of my job. Every summer I try to visit the ocean and do some kayaking. Winter time finds me playing on a curling team in the evenings. It is a remarkably quantitative game, with many possible strategies.