



From Land to Sea: How Animals Remake Themselves for Life in the Water

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Abstract: Whales, seals, penguins, and the extinct marine reptiles called mosasaurs all have something surprising in common: their ancestors lived on land. Over millions of years, each group made the journey back to the water, rebuilding their body for aquatic life once more. Dr. Kiersten Formoso, assistant professor at Rutgers University and head of the new Formorphology Lab, studies how these dramatic transformations happen. Her work asks a big question: does an animal's starting body plan steer where evolution takes it, or do the forces of water eventually push very different animals toward the same solutions? In this talk, she'll share how her lab uses fossils, anatomy, and physics to answer questions about animals no one has ever seen alive, including new work estimating how fast giant mosasaurs could lunge at their prey. She'll also talk about her own path into science, what it's like to run a research lab, and advice for students thinking about research of their own.

Wednesday, October 21st | 2:00pm–3:15pm | Science Hall 126 & Zoom

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