

The Future of Print Report: March Mammal Madness

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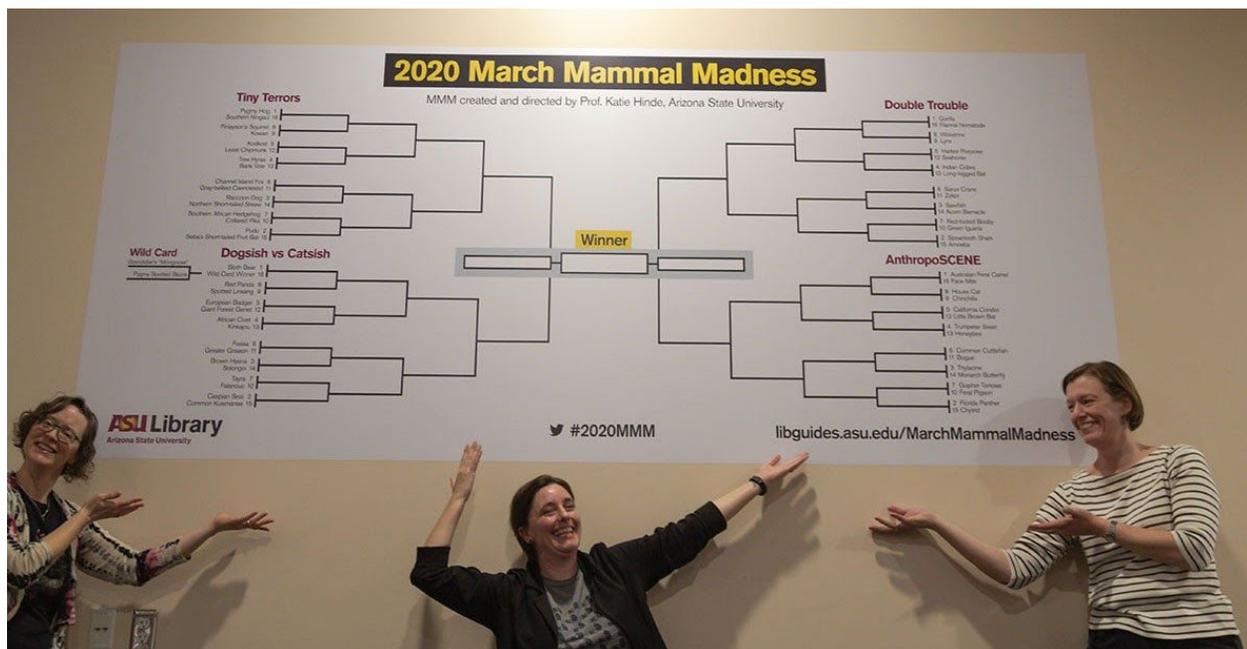


Photo of Anali Perry, Dr. Katie Hinde, and Dr. Anne Stone posing with the 2020 bracket

About the Future of Print

ASU Library was awarded a \$381K grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to experiment with different ways in which libraries present print materials to the public. We know that information is more digitally accessible than ever before. As students turn to what is quick and convenient for them, ASU Library is exploring how to present our print materials in ways that remain engaging and relevant to the twenty-first century user. Through a series of book displays, The Future of Print team hopes to gain a sense for how students perceive print collections, how they use the library, and what it takes to engage them in physical books. For more information on our projects, visit

<https://lib.asu.edu/futureprint>.

Background

In 2013, Dr. Katie Hinde, Associate Professor in ASU's School of Human Evolution and Social Change, launched the first March Mammal Madness tournament on [her blog](#), in collaboration with professors Kristi Lewton (Boston University), Joshua Drew (Columbia University), and Christopher Anderson (Dominican University). They created a bracketed competition pitting mammals against one another in a simulated environment. Mammals would move up the bracket based on biological research accounting for various attributes that the animals exhibited in the wild. For example, a combination of diet, size, strength, among other factors resulted in the gorilla outlasting the other mammals to become the 2020 champion. Since 2013, the [team has expanded](#) to over 20 people, including an art team, led by artist Charon Henning, a roster of scientist narrators, curriculum developers, and a librarian.

The tournament takes place in real time on Twitter over the month of March. After each evening's encounters, the results are posted on the blog, the library guide, and via fan-created YouTube videos that recap each battle and receive between 13,000 to 20,000 views each. Anali Perry, the Head of Learning Services and Scholarly Communication Librarian at ASU Library, maintains a [library guide](#) with instructions and background information to answer any questions. This annual competition now attracts national participation by allowing educators, schools, libraries, and the general public to download a bracket, lesson plans, and other suggested activities to play along. Participants are encouraged to conduct their own research, increasing their mammal knowledge. Specifically, they are able to learn about animal extinction and how mammals interact with and adapt to their environment.

The Collection

After being involved with this project for several years, Anali had the idea to highlight relevant library resources by creating a featured collection. Inspired by other featured collections around the new Hayden Library, she approached the Open Stacks curation team to propose a March Mammal Madness book collection. We were of course eager to support this project and explained what we would need to make this happen, chiefly a list of materials with barcodes.

Anali then collaborated with Dr. Katie Hinde, Jessica Light (Professor and Curator of Mammals at Texas A&M University), Dr. Anne Stone (Professor in the School of Human Evolution and Social Change), and Brian Tanis (Instructor at Oregon State University) to select a list of books. From the Library, librarians Joyce Martin, René Tanner, Eric Prosser, and Rachel Martinez also contributed book titles, resulting in [a complete list of 112 books](#). The collection features books about mammals, as well as themes that have

been explored over the past several years of the tournament, such as climate change, human effects on environments, conservation, history, mythology, art, and more, in order to connect participants to library resources.

A total of six items were loaned during the month of March. This number was no doubt largely affected by the unexpected closure of the Library on March 18th.

Figure 1

Title	Author	Loan Date
A Primate's Memoir	Robert M. Sapolsky	3/1/2020
As Long As Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock	Dina Gilio-Whitaker	3/16/2020
How to Clone a Mammoth: The Science of De-Extinction	Beth Alison Shapiro	3/13/2020
Large Carnivores and the Conservation of Biodiversity	Justina Ray; Kent H. Redford; Robert Steneck; Joel Berger	3/1/2020
Tree Squirrels	Colleen Stanley Bare	3/19/2020

This table shows the six items loaned during the month of March along with their loan dates.

While it is difficult to tell how many people participated in the tournament, there were 180,286 library guide visits during the month of March. This library guide now has over 212,000 site visits showing, continued engagement around this topic despite the tournament's end. We also know that in 2019, 3,172 educators participated, reaching over 245,483 students. Though it is difficult to compare this year to previous years, we do know that our number of participants has continued to increase. Over the years, the tournament has received national coverage, including [NPR](#), [the Verge](#), [National Geographic](#), the [Washington Post](#), the [Wall Street Journal](#), and [Nature News](#). This means that large numbers of participants are being directed to the library website and learning about library resources that can support their interests. We can continue to raise awareness of the many formats, subjects, and tools that the Library has to offer in the tournament's future years.

Conclusion

March Mammal Madness is a month-long event that reaches not only the ASU community but also other institutions, libraries, and communities. Over time, the ASU Library has become an essential collaborator, providing educational resources and information to those wishing to participate. Being able to use library collections is a great opportunity to reach and engage users, complimenting the information shared through social media, videos, and Dr. Hinde's blog posts. Moving forward, the Library plans to continue using our liaisons, collections, and space to support this project.