

January 29, 2018 | By Robert Monroe

## Rosenblatt Lecture: What Evolution Really Tells Us About Sex, Diet and How We Live

**Free public presentation by evolutionary biologist Marlène Zuk  
February 8**

Where do society's assumptions about ideal diets, clothing, lifestyle, and mating choices come from?

Marlène Zuk, a professor in the College of Biological Sciences at the University of Minnesota, will separate myths from what scientific evidence suggests about human hardwiring at the 12th Richard H. and Glenda G. Rosenblatt Lectureship in Evolutionary Biology at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego.

The talk is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Feb. 8, 2018, at the Robert Paine Scripps Forum for Science, Society, and the Environment (Scripps Seaside Forum) on the Scripps Oceanography campus (8610 Kennel Way, La Jolla, CA 92037). The event is free and open to the public with seating available on a limited basis.

People often incorrectly assume that from a biological standpoint, humans are meant to live as they did in prehistoric times as evidenced by "caveman" or "paleo" diets.

Zuk and other biologists argue that the assumption fails to consider that humans never stop evolving in response to their environment. She will discuss her 2013 book "Paleofantasy: What Evolution Really Tells Us About Sex, Diet and How We Live," which considers what science has to say about the rationale behind popular lifestyle trends.

As described by the book's publisher, "Zuk takes us to the cutting edge of biology to show that evolution can work much faster than was previously realized, meaning that we are not biologically the same as our caveman ancestors. Contrary to what the glossy magazines would have us believe, we do not enjoy potato chips because they crunch just like the insects our



Marlène Zuk

forebears snacked on. And women don't go into shoe-shopping frenzies because their prehistoric foremothers gathered resources for their clans. As Zuk compellingly argues, such beliefs incorrectly assume that we're stuck—finished evolving—and have been for tens of thousands of years. She draws on fascinating evidence that examines everything from adults' ability to drink milk to the texture of our ear wax to show that we've actually never stopped evolving. Our nostalgic visions of an ideal evolutionary past in which we ate, lived, and reproduced as we were "meant to" fail to recognize that we were never perfectly suited to our environment. Evolution is about change, and every organism is full of trade-offs.

From debunking the caveman diet to unraveling gender stereotypes, Zuk delivers an engrossing analysis of widespread paleofantasies and the scientific evidence that undermines them, all the while broadening our understanding of our origins and what they can really tell us about our present and our future."

The lectureship is named after Richard Rosenblatt, the renowned ichthyologist and curator emeritus of the Scripps Marine Vertebrate Collection who passed away in October 2014, and his wife Glenda, who died in April 2014.

Admission and parking for the event are free. A reception with light refreshments will follow.

To learn more about the Rosenblatt Lecture: <https://scripps.ucsd.edu/people/awards/rosenblatt>

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