During the early modern period, the deerskin trade stretched across East and Southeast Asia, binding hunters, merchants and consumers together in sprawling networks. Propelled by a voracious demand for soft and pliable leather, hundreds of thousands of skins were shipped out each year from Ayutthaya (Siam), Cambodia and Taiwan to Japan’s booming ports and cities. The scale of the trade meant that it became a driver for change and conflict along each stage of the wider commodity chain. The relentless demand for deerskins prompted environmental devastation as hunting grounds were depleted or completely hunted out. In ports across the region, the deerskin trade became a site of ferocious competition between Asian and European merchants for control over this important commodity. And on the seas, violent clashes generated a string of legal petitions that filtered into port cities and inland courts across the region as different groups of plaintiffs fought over the twin issues of blame and restitution. This talk focuses on the war over deerskins fought out between the Dutch East India Company and the Zheng maritime network based in Taiwan. I argue that this conflict triggered a process of claiming over territorial waters, over sea-lanes and over bodies as very different polities attempted to respond to the escalation of violence.