



# A FOCUS ON NATURE CAREERS HUB

# HOW TO KNOW A ROLE IN CONSERVATION IS RIGHT FOR YOU

## RUSSELL BARNETT – NATURAL HISTORY TV RESEARCHER, BBC



I was lucky to have the opportunity to do work experience in several different types of media- both with wildlife and non-wildlife themes- in order to make sure wildlife television was the direction I wanted to pursue. If that's not an option, there are loads of resources online where people talk about their careers that could help you decide. Or you could go to the industry's networking events and talk to people in entry level roles to see how they find it.



## CATHERINE GEMMELL – SCOTLAND CONSERVATION OFFICER, MARINE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

My role has changed to much since I first started 6.5 years ago and I have been lucky enough to be given the freedom from the Marine Conservation Society to shape the role to my strengths as long as it still achieves its objectives. This flexibility is really important for me, but I know other colleagues prefer a more structured development plan for their work and progress. We are all wonderfully different but I think everyone does have a good 'gut instinct' and you know if you are in the right place or not. Although some days can be very stressful and after some meetings you want to go scream into a pillow for 30 minutes I still get excited about coming to work. If you are excited about the role and about the organisation then you know you are onto something right for you and make sure you keep checking in with yourself that you are still excited as people and roles do change over time. I think it is always worth giving anything a go if you are interested and are given the opportunity, once you are in the world of policy as well you start to realise how many different roles and opportunities there are that might suit you better – never be afraid to try something new!

## CATRIONA CORFIELD – HEAD OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, THE WOODLAND TRUST



I think what is right for you isn't fixed. If it's something you are passionate about and you can make a difference in, it's right for you. But that can change at different points in your career.



## NICOLA LYNES – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER, SUPPORT STAFFORDSHIRE

Do what you enjoy, not what you think you "should" be doing, or what other people suggest you do. Enjoying your job is so important, we spend so much time at work that it has to be something you like spending your time doing.

## LUCY MCROBERT – AUTHOR



Authoring in conservation is not one role - it's something that sits alongside lots of other roles usually, so don't get hung up on just being an author. The chances of that happening are slim. Read what's popular in the genre at the moment, be creative and wait for the right idea to come along. A publisher may approach you with an idea, which is amazing - just remember, the intellectual property will stay with them and you probably won't get as much advance.



## JULIA MIGNÉ – DIRECTOR, CONSERVATION OPTIMISM

PREVIOUSLY SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, CHESTER ZOO

It's all about trial and error! I thought I wanted to be a researcher and then realised while doing my dissertation that I'd rather be a science communicator instead. Get internships or work experiences in different places to get a feel of what different roles entail. And if you want to be a science communicator, start writing/podcasting/making videos about topics you're passionate about and get feedback from your friends and families.

## DAWOOD QURESHI – FREELANCE JOURNALIST



Think about what you're most passionate about, and what you would want to learn about the most, or perhaps what subject you want to explore or study, or maybe you want to practise more practical skills, or work with people, bringing awareness to the environment and animals, or perhaps you are looking to become a film maker? Anything is possible in the conservation world, you can hail from anywhere, it just depends on what you want to do, so you can start to grow your experience in various skills and start to apply for roles you'll be good at.



## EMILY LOMAX – PROJECT MANAGER, WOODLAND TRUST

PREVIOUSLY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, RSPB

Don't put so much pressure on yourself. I was so naïve and ideological in what I thought I wanted to. Then I tried it out and I realised it wasn't for me... so try it out if you can! And enjoy the process. People change in what their priorities are and what's important to them so embrace that – it doesn't have to be fixed. I didn't really know what I was good at until my 30s as I was confident enough so instead, I focussed on what I enjoyed. Ask for opportunities, seek secondments – don't be afraid to move around. You might end up back where you started but you'll be much more confident afterward than thinking 'what if'.

## CHLOÉ VALERIE HARMSWORTH – ARTIST/POET



The right role for you is almost always the one you have the most passion for. The one that brings you to life. People will see that passion bursting out of you and appreciate it. Passion will take you far in your career and in your life. It will give you the strength and motivation to forge your path, in whatever direction you want to take.

There are so many amazing people out there doing wonderful things because they love and care about nature, and I find it endlessly inspiring. It's an honour and delight to be part of that world.



## HOLLY BESTLEY – SENIOR LEARNING OFFICER, LONDON ZOO

It's my honest belief that whatever your skill set and other interests, there will be an animal conservation related job that combines these things together. Interested in food? Become a zoo nutritionist. Coding? Conservation technology is a vital growing sector. Pursue all your interests and think creatively about how you could make this work for the environment. If the job doesn't exist yet, why not make it? Or look for a similar adjacent role that you could adapt over time to utilise your skills.

# HELEN BRADSHAW – REGIONAL FIELD PROGRAMME MANAGER FOR THE UK AND SITE ECOLOGY, CHESTER ZOO



Try things out - linking in with local groups is an excellent way to learn, and to find out what interests you the most. You also get to see what you really don't like - field work sounds great, but night after night of bat surveying through May to August does not make for a great social life and it may not be for you if you just don't enjoy it. You have to be able to take the desk time with the survey work as an ecologist and it's not an easy juggle. Your skills may lie in data analysis and that's a huge growing area in conservation and very exciting, follow your interests - conservation needs passionate people who love putting their skills to work!