



***Student and voluntary research placement 2019-2020***

# ***Ecology and Conservation***



The Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust, based at Paignton Zoo, owns three nature reserves in South Devon:

**Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve** - the largest natural lake in south-west England, surrounded by reed beds, marshes and woodland habitat.

**Primley Park and Clennon Gorge** - both adjacent to Paignton Zoo in Torbay with a variety of grassland and woodland habitats.



The **Field Conservation and Research** Department is responsible for managing the Paignton reserves, monitoring wildlife populations and conducting ecological research at all three sites. The Department also conducts conservation research in other parts of southwest UK and overseas.

Placements students will be primarily carrying out ecological research on any of these reserves plus the zoo site.

## **PAST PROJECTS**

Several students have received BES small project grants and achieved awards, including best speaker at the Annual BIAZA Research Symposium. Past projects include:

- Territory mapping of the European badger (*Meles meles*) on a zoo site.
- Using yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* as a meadow restoration tool.
- Biology and habitat requirements of strapwort *Corrigiola litoralis*, an endangered plant of the Slapton Ley shoreline.
- Feeding preferences of bumblebees on species rich grassland.
- The use of linear features by bats in response to habitat and artificial lighting



## **POTENTIAL PROJECTS**

Recent topics for research include meadow restoration in Primley Park, conservation grazing of Clennon plateau, bat foraging in the zoo and reintroduction projects for strapwort and hazel dormice. We also carry out regular monitoring of various populations such as butterflies, reptiles and bats within the reserves and Paignton Zoo site. Research projects will fall within these broad areas.

## POST DESCRIPTION

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The posts are exciting opportunities to learn ecological research and monitoring techniques in the field. You will also be trained in other transferable skills such as conference speaking. You will agree an individual training plan and have a full training record when you leave.

You will be a member of the Field Conservation and Research Department and you will spend the majority of your time collecting, analysing and interpreting data as part of high quality research projects and carrying out ongoing ecological monitoring on the zoo and reserve sites.

You will also be expected to be an active member of the Department and WWCT generally, which may involve helping with other UK conservation projects, giving talks to school groups, presenting at conferences and meetings, etc.

- Posts are offered on a voluntary basis.
- Most posts are for 6 months during the Spring/Summer. However, occasionally 10-12 month placements are available starting in September.
- The working week is 35hrs and times are flexible depending on the needs of particular projects. There are 20 days holiday p.a. *pro rata*
- Free accommodation is available for a small number of posts based at Paignton Zoo and is allocated at the discretion of the WWCT. Other reasonably priced accommodation is available close to the zoos.

## FIELD CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

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The experience and expertise of the Field Conservation and Research Department members is extensive and diverse. Key staff involved in ecology and conservation are:

**Dr Tracey Hamston** – UK Conservation Officer

**Dave Ellacott** – Reserves Warden

**Dr Andrew Bowkett** – FCR Programmes Manager

### HOW TO APPLY

The application form for applying for one of our research placements can be found on our website:

[www.wwct.org.uk/research/placements](http://www.wwct.org.uk/research/placements)

There are three application forms on the site: one for advocacy research, one for zoo-based research and one for **ecology-based research**. Please complete and submit the relevant form.

We also require a one-page covering letter explaining why you would like the placement, which should be sent, by email, to the WWCT Secretary [trust.secretary@wwct.org.uk](mailto:trust.secretary@wwct.org.uk)

**The deadline for applications is 9am on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

**Interviews will be held during the week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

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**Visit our websites** [www.wwct.org.uk](http://www.wwct.org.uk) [www.paigntonzoo.org.uk](http://www.paigntonzoo.org.uk) [www.livingcoasts.org.uk](http://www.livingcoasts.org.uk) [www.newquayzoo.org.uk](http://www.newquayzoo.org.uk)

The Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust, Paignton Zoo Environmental Park, Living Coasts and Newquay Zoo are registered education and scientific charities dedicated to protecting our global wildlife heritage. Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust, Paignton Zoo Environmental Park, Totnes Road, Paignton, Devon, TQ4 7EU.