

# ZSL Wildlife Careers Conference



30<sup>th</sup> October 2025  
9.00am-5.00pm



Time	Location	Activity
9.00am	Huxley Lecture Theatre	Arrivals & Registration
9.45am		Welcome & Introductions
10.00am		<b>Panel 1: Animal Care &amp; Veterinary</b> Careers Talk and Q&A with Animal Care and Veterinary Experts
11.00am		<b>BREAK</b> Participant networking in Bartlett Room
11.30am	Prince Albert Suite	<b>Panel 2: Conservation, Science and Policy</b> Careers Talk and Q&A with Wildlife Conservation & Science Experts
12.30am		<b>LUNCH</b> Lunch served in the Prince Albert Suite. Networking stands with ZSL and other conservation organisations. Attendees free to explore the zoo.
1.30pm		Split into workshop groups
2.00pm		Locations around London Zoo
3.00pm	<b>Careers Workshop 2</b> See overleaf for workshop choices	
3.45pm	Prince Albert Suite	<b>BREAK</b> Time to travel back to the Prince Albert
4.15pm		<b>Panel 3: Getting into the Industry</b> Advice on getting into Animal Care and Conservation from senior managers
4.45pm		Next Steps & Closing Remarks

Attendees can attend two hands on career workshops during the afternoon. For those who bought their tickets early enough, you will have received a sign-up link for the workshops.

Find out which workshops you were allocated or sign-up if you haven't had a chance to yet, in the Huxley Foyer the morning of the conference.

- 1 Conservation Decision Making**

People working to preserve biodiversity constantly need to make management decisions. These decisions are often complicated by conflicting objectives, time pressures, limited resources, and incomplete knowledge. Recognising this complexity, conservation increasingly uses a range of principles and tools to make decisions in difficult situations. This interactive, discussion-focused workshop provides a quick primer in the use of structured decision making for conservation, giving participants the opportunity to work through planning for a real-world conservation challenge.
- 2 Designing Meaningful Conservation Education Activities**

Training future conservationists and creating advocates for nature is critical to creating a world where wildlife thrives. Join Steph from ZSL's Conservation Education Team for this workshop exploring how to plan meaningful activities to connect people to nature and encourage positive change for our planet. You'll get hands on with our tried and tested development process as well as the five pathways to Nature Connectedness as you design your own activity to create change.
- 3 Designing Zoo Exhibits for Visitors**

Get hands-on with this fun, creative session and discover what it takes to be a 3D Zoo Designer, creating experiences for visitors. Team up and take on a challenge to create weird and wonderful ways to share zoo stories, from graphics and soundscapes to touch objects and mood lighting.
- 4 Enrichment Design**

Join our keepers to design some enrichment for our animals. Depending on the session you'll be focusing on our primates and predators, or our flock of macaws. Used to encourage natural behaviours and make them think, you'll see how important enrichment is for animals across the zoo as you craft challenging feeders out of wood, twine, and other materials.

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## Extinct and Endangered in the ZSL Library

Join ZSL Librarian Ann Sylph as she reveals what our library collection can reveal about species we've lost over time and how this knowledge can support us to protect species in the future. Includes time to explore rare books and illustrations from the biggest zoological collection in the UK!

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## How to house a snail? Designing animal enclosures

Join Ross, our invertebrate experts to learn how to build the perfect home for an animal! Attendees also get the opportunity to explore animal diets and craft some for animals across the zoo.

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## Telling conservation stories through social media

How do you tell wildlife's stories in a digital world? Meet our digital team and learn how they share the secrets of the animal kingdom via our online platforms including TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and X. Gain some top tips and tricks to tell nature's stories through social media.

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## Through the microscope - Veterinary Pathology

In this workshop we will look at how vets are able to diagnose diseases in deceased animals through postmortem examinations, and how this information feeds into zoo care, conservation and scientific research. This will include the use of images, videos and digital microscopy of dead animals and diseased tissues which some participants may prefer to avoid.

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## Tour of the ZSL Vet Hospital

From rhino cataract surgery to swabbing snails, our veterinary teams care for over 20,000 animals across our conservation zoos. Come take a look at ZSL's veterinary hospital, home to our team of vets and vet nurses as they provide frontline care for our Zoos animals, help support wildlife research and reintroductions and teach veterinary skills around the world.

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## Zoo Research Methods for Animal Care

An introduction to some of the key data collection methods used as part of research and routine evidence gathering in zoos, with a focus on behaviour sampling and non-invasive health sampling. The session will also allow for time to discuss research prioritisation and the breadth of zoo science happening in modern conservation zoos.

Below is a full list of speakers taking part in panel discussions

## Panel 1: Animal Care & Veterinary

### Cat Dixon – Zookeeper, Invertebrates & Fish

Cat Dixon has been a keeper for 14 years and is now Team Leader of the Tiny Giants Team at London Zoo. She started her career at Sea Life London Aquarium, before moving to London Zoo five years ago where she fell in love with invertebrates too.

### Gary Ward – Curator of Birds

Gary Ward is the Curator of Birds at the Zoological Society of London and has been in this role since 2019. Gary has been working with birds in zoos and conservation projects for 32 years, starting in New Zealand where he grew up.

### Stefan Saverimuttu – Veterinary Officer

Hailing from Australia where he did his veterinarian training, Stefan moved to the UK after being lucky enough to get the job at ZSL. He was drawn here by the organisation's diversity of species and it's long successful history in science and conservation.

### Jordan Vile – Veterinary Nurse

Jordan qualified as a Registered Veterinary Nurse in 2022 with the passion to work with exotic species. Jordan has undertaken additional certificates in veterinary nursing to improve her knowledge. In 2023 Jordan was lucky enough to gain a job as a RVN at ZSL and currently works along side a incredible team.

## Panel 2: Conservation, Science & Policy

### Ava Jenkins - Wildlife Vet and Research Associate

Having previously studied Zoology and graduating from Nottingham vet school in 2022, Ava spent 18 months in small animal practice in London and now her current role involves sampling British wildlife for the Darwin Tree of Life project with IOZ. Her life is now a field vet on the road, getting up close and personal with our beautiful native wildlife!

### Bethan Laughlin – Senior Policy Specialist

Bethan Laughlin is Senior Policy Specialist at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), where she works at the intersection of science and policy to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises. Her focus is on embedding nature-based solutions into national and international policy, ensuring nature is put at the heart of global decision-making.

## **Nikolet Kostur – PhD Student**

Originally from Portland, Oregon (USA), Nikolet Kostur is a PhD student with the London NERC DTP, based at King's College London, the London Zoo, and the University of Miami. She studies marine communities on coastal defense structures—seawalls and eco-coastal 'SEAHIVES'—in subtropical, soft-sediment habitats to inform designs that better support resilient urban marine life.

## **Cat Hickey – Head of Conservation Education**

Cat is Head of Conservation Education at ZSL overseeing the Training Conservationists impact area. She has a BSc Genetics, MSc Biodiversity and Conservation and her career began in ring-tailed lemur research, researching at the Duke Lemur Centre and in Madagascar. After this she transitioned to conservation education working at York University and Leeds University focusing on removing barriers for young people.

## **Panel 3: Getting into the Industry**

## **Helen Downton – Director of People**

Helen is ZSL's People Director which means that she is the lead and Executive member for our People across ZSL - this includes volunteers and staff. She's passionate about supporting people to thrive in the workplace and loves working with an organisation that is truly dedicated to its' purpose to drive and support a world where wildlife thrives, ensuring that we have a world where we all thrive.

## **Dan Simmonds – Zoological Operations Manager**

Dan is London Zoo's Zoological Operations Manager, overseeing the day to day running of the animal keeping teams. Originally working as a trader in the City of London, he started volunteering at London Zoo in his late 20s and then worked as a primate keeper before moving into a management role.

## **Joe Pecorelli – Freshwater Programme Manager**

Joe Pecorelli is Freshwater Conservation Programme Manager at ZSL. He's on the steering group for several national freshwater citizen science programmes, a professional eel measurer and concrete riverbank remover. He is also a Trustee of the Friends of River Crane Environment and currently helping the Greater London Authority to develop their plan to improve the health of rivers in London.



Find out below who is teaching each of our Workshops

## 1. Conservation Decision Making – Beth Smith & Caio Kenup

Dr Bethany Smith is a Postdoctoral Researcher at ZSL who specialises in applying decision science support tools to conservation planning, with expertise in stakeholder engagement and wildlife monitoring to inform strategies for improving human-wildlife coexistence.

Dr Caio Kenup is a Postdoctoral Researcher at ZSL, passionate about wildlife conservation and statistical modelling. His work focuses on integrating ecological data and quantitative methods to support decision-making in wildlife management.

Bethany and Caio recently spent two years developing a National Recovery Strategy for Red Squirrels in England and have worked on recovery planning for various species including red-billed choughs, sihek, tara iti, tamaraw, and lions.

## 2. Designing Meaningful Conservation Education Activities – Stephanie Pace

Stephanie has been working in the conservation education sector for 18 years, including over a decade at London Zoo and five years working on in situ conservation projects in Southeast Asia. She holds a BSc in Biology and a MSc in Psychology and is particularly passionate about how connecting young people with nature supports wellbeing and conservation action.

## 3. Designing Zoo Exhibits for Visitors – Alice Adams & Cris Storey

Cris Storey and Alice Adams work in the Creative Studio (exhibitions team).

They love creating new exhibits for zoo visitors to stimulate all their senses.

Except taste. They don't ask visitors to lick stuff. But they have to consider that they might.

## 4. Enrichment Design – Amy McKillop & Jessica Ray

Jessica Ray is a zookeeper on the Penguins & Flying Birds section at London Zoo, as well as a member of the Behaviour Management Committee. She currently cares for a wide range of bird and mammal taxa, and is focused on training, enrichment and creating fulfilling lives for the animals in the teams care.

Amy McKillop is a zookeeper in the Predators & Primates section at London Zoo. She leads on engagement opportunities within the team, supporting activities and events across the zoo for a range of audiences.

## 5. Extinct and Endangered in the ZSL Library – Ann Sylph

Ann Sylph manages the ZSL Library and is passionate about zoological art and women's roles in zoology.

## 6. How to House a Snail – Ross Hickles

Ross Hickles is the live food co-ordinator for London Zoo and for the BIAZA Terrestrial Invertebrate Working Group. He has worked in Zoos since 2008, joining ZSL in 2018. His role is to provide high welfare and high nutritional live-food (like crickets) to animals across site.

## 7. Telling conservation stories through social media – Jack Bacchus & Freddie Patmore

Our dedicated social media executive for ZSL, London and Whipsnade Zoo accounts, Jack works closely with Zookeepers, scientists and vets to share ZSL conservation stories. From providing behind-the-scenes Zoo insights to helping ensure Moo Deng's fame inspires protection for pygmy hippos, through social media we're growing a fanbase committed to protecting wildlife.

Freddie is ZSL's digital content manager, overseeing our social media footprint and website content. She leads in-house content creation for our digital channels from the search-engine-optimised written website copy through to more complex video and photography content

## 8. Through the microscope - Veterinary Pathology – Simon Spiro

Simon is the veterinary pathologist for ZSL, the vet responsible for diagnosing disease and monitoring the health of animals by performing post mortem examinations. As well as the zoo animals, Simon is also the pathologist for ZSL's cetacean strandings investigation programme (CSIP), investigating the deaths of beached whales and dolphins around England and Wales. He has a background in virology and leads a wide variety of research projects on animal health and disease.

## 9. Tour of the ZSL Vet Hospital – Joanna Noble

Jo has worked as a Vet Nurse at ZSL for 6 years and is still intrigued by it every day. Every day is different and presents new challenges. She particularly enjoys adapting 'normal' hospitalisation, training, anaesthesia monitoring, or veterinary care practices, to all the weird and wonderful species held at ZSL. She has recently contributed to a Zoo and Wild Mammal formulary which will be released next year and hopefully go towards improving the welfare of animals in other collections beyond ZSL.

## 10. Zoo Research Methods for Animal Care – Lewis Rowden

Lewis Rowden is the Evidence-based Animal Care Manager for the Zoological Society of London, responsible for the zoo-based research at London and Whipsnade Zoos as well as managing the team of expert officers that coordinate the animal welfare, nutrition and behaviour management across the two sites. These roles focus on implementing best-practice scientific principles into both ex-situ care and species recovery work.

Prior to starting at ZSL in 2017, he worked as an animal keeper and then zoological registrar for Paulton Zoo and Living Coasts. Outside of ZSL, he Chairs the Research Committee for the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is part of many other groups relating to zoo science, animal care and conservation



Across lunch and the afternoon you'll have the opportunity to speak to a range of organisations at our networking stands:



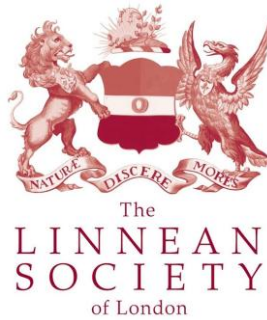
**Zoological  
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Volunteering  
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