

# ZSL Wildlife Careers Conference



30<sup>th</sup> October 2025  
9.45am-5.00pm



Time	Activity
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>
11.30am	<b>Panel 2: Conservation, Science and Policy</b> Careers Talk and Q&A with Wildlife Conservation & Science Experts
12.30am	<b>LUNCH</b>
1.30pm	Split into workshop groups
2.00pm	<b>Careers Workshop 1</b> Telling conservation stories through social media
3.00pm	<b>Careers Workshop 2</b> Through the microscope - Veterinary Pathology
3.45pm	<b>BREAK</b>
4.15pm	<b>Panel 3: Getting into the Industry</b>
4.45pm	Next Steps & Closing Remarks

**EVENT END**

Two of the careers workshops will be streamed across the webinar link during the afternoon, exclusively for online participants.

**1** **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.

**2** **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.

## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

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 its 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.

## **WORKSHOP HOST BIOGRAPHIES**

Find out below who is teaching each of our Workshops

### **1. 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

### **2. 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.

