

## **DURRELL WILDLIFE CONSERVATION TRUST - WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS PROGRAMME**

The Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, registered as a charity in 1963, manages a worldwide species recovery programme. Durrell's headquarters are at Jersey Zoo, which serves as a centre for breeding, research, professional training and fund raising. A limited number of work experience places for students are available each year.



Students stay for a minimum of two months and a maximum of a year, during which time they gain practical experience in the work of the Trust in the conservation and captive management of endangered species. Students are expected to help carry out everyday duties such as cleaning and food preparation, working closely with the keepers, and are given a unique insight

into animal management and the onsite contributions to global conservation. Students may have the opportunity to carry out a research project. Please note that any projects carried out must be approved by Durrell staff before arrival and Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust is under no obligation to mentor projects. Placements are coordinated by the Durrell Conservation Academy.

It is important to note that the Trust cannot provide either funding or accommodation. Placement students must therefore be self-financing, and the costs of living in Jersey should be considered before applying. Some students find part-time jobs to help support their placement. Due to Jersey employment laws Durrell is only issued a certain amount of licences each year for non-Jersey residents studying relevant degrees. Before accepting your placement you must ensure that you are able to commit to the full length of time, otherwise you may be depriving someone else of the opportunity.

### **Requirements**

- Applicants must be at least 18.
- Applicants should be studying or have recently finished a relevant course of study.
- A high degree of fitness is required as the work is physically demanding.
- Any medical problems, allergies, disabilities etc. which may affect the student's work must be explained at the application stage.
- Applications are assessed on their merits, and successful candidates should confirm their acceptance of a place as soon as possible.
- A good command of English is essential.

## **Application process**

We take applications in the autumn for the following June and September placements. We ask interested students to send in a CV and covering letter. If the application is shortlisted students are then asked to attend a Skype interview. Placements can start from May/June for a short summer placement, or September for a 9-12 month placement, and will require an agreement with the university. Students can sometimes also start at other times. The length of placement you apply for will not affect your chances of success.

## **Commitment by Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and students**

The Trust will endeavour to organise an appropriate programme of work experience for placement students in order to ensure that each student receives a wide-ranging education in captive animal management and conservation. Durrell staff will provide guidance and support to students undertaking a research project on a Durrell priority topic during their placement. The placement programme coordinator will also undertake to provide any assessments of students' work required by their university or college. Students are expected to conduct themselves professionally and to work to the same standards as permanent staff. The Trust also requires a copy of any publications, reports, articles, dissertations, etc, which come out of work conducted here. Separate guidance on research projects is available if required.

## **Departmental assignments**

Students are assigned to placements according to their course requirements and interests. Students spend at least two months at Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. Students must realise that places in each department are limited and that it may not be possible to meet all requests.

## **Hours of work and time off**

Students work a full-time, five-day week (Animal and Veterinary Departments: 0800-1700 in winter and 0800-1730 in summer; Conservation Learning Department: 0900-1700) and days off are scheduled by the appropriate Department Head; these may not include weekends. Students may also occasionally be asked to work with permanent staff outside normal working hours if necessary. A minimum of two weeks advance notice, and preferably more, must be given of holiday time. Students coming for only part of the year are asked to take no more than an average of 2.5 days holiday per month of their placement period.

## **DURRELL WILDLIFE CONSERVATION TRUST - PLACEMENT PROGRAMME DEPARTMENTS**

### **Animal departments**

Spending time in the animal departments will enable students to gain first hand experience of working with a variety of animal species. The role involves the following:

- Assisting with routine tasks on section such as food preparation, enclosure cleaning, animal feeding, behavioural observations, enclosure maintenance and watching veterinary procedures.
- Opportunities to learn practical captive husbandry skills (nutritional requirements, environmental requirements, normal behaviour, reproductive management etc)
- Students will also learn about the biology and conservation issues relating to each species they work with.

#### **The Bird Department**

The bird department has ten members of staff and can work with 4 students at a time. Roughly divided into two, one section consists of wildfowl, cranes, ibis, flamingos and parrots, while the other comprises the passerines, pink pigeons, pheasants and hornbills. The department works with over 50 species of bird and has, over the years, worked on recovery programmes for many species. These include the pink pigeon,

Madagascar teal, Waldrapp ibis, Meller's duck, Mauritius kestrel, Bali starling, Montserrat oriole, St Lucia parrot and echo parakeet. Students can expect to be involved with routine work such as feeding, food preparation and general upkeep of aviaries. There may be some restrictions on student access to aviaries, particularly during the breeding season. Time spent working in the bird department can give a valuable insight into zoo work and the conservation management of birds in captivity.



#### **The Mammal Department**

The Mammal Department currently has fifteen members of staff and is divided into three sections: 1) apes; 2) macaques, mongooses, bears and other South American mammal species; 3) lemurs, bats, new world monkeys. At any one time we typically have one student on section 2 and three on section 3. Students are normally assigned to only one, or at most two, sections during their stay. Students should also note that it is rarely possible to work on the ape section.

## The Herpetology Department

The Herpetology Department has five members of staff and can only take one student at a time. This department holds a diverse collection of amphibians and reptiles, as well as several invertebrate species, and is actively involved in a number of conservation projects focusing on species from around the world. Students can expect to be involved with a variety of activities, including daily husbandry routines for some of the species in our collection (please note that there are restrictions on which species students can work directly with), general upkeep of enclosures, and other routine work essential to the day-to-day functioning of the Department. The range of jobs a student is allowed to do will depend on demonstrated skills and reliability, and will be reviewed throughout the placement.

## Chough project placement



We have two placements available each year to work on the red-billed chough reintroduction project. This project is just one of many within Jersey's "Birds On The Edge" project ([www.BirdsontheEdge.org](http://www.BirdsontheEdge.org)) run in collaboration with the National Trust for Jersey and States of Jersey Department of the Environment. Choughs have been absent from the Channel Islands for nearly a

century and with the UK population in serious decline this is an exciting opportunity to restore an enigmatic species.

Durrell houses a captive collection of choughs at Jersey Zoo and at an off-site aviary near Sorel Point on the north coast of Jersey. The released birds now number nearly 40, and are intensively monitored. The student placement will assist the Field Manager in carrying out these activities. Each student selected will spend six months with the project, from September to March or March to September.

Activities will be focused around captive husbandry, radio-tracking and recording basic behavioural data in the field. Training will be given in radio-tracking, habitat assessment and understanding chough behaviour. The student may also be required to work onsite within the captive collection during periods of low activity in the field. Potential tasks include chick food provisioning, aviary maintenance and nest-camera monitoring.

The position will require data entry using Microsoft Office and potentially GIS software. Therefore, it is desirable that the successful candidates are competent in using these packages. This role will also involve representing Durrell and the Birds On The Edge project in the media and engaging with the public. Therefore, good written and verbal communication skills are required.



Applicants should have a full driving licence and means of transport is desirable. A mileage allowance is provided where appropriate. The release site is a 10 minute drive from the zoo and not accessible by public transport, and the birds also roam further afield.

## Other departments

### The Veterinary Department and Laboratory



The Veterinary Department, staffed by two veterinarians, a microbiologist and a veterinary nurse, is responsible for the health of the animal collection in Jersey and in captive breeding programmes abroad. For clinical practice, the department only takes 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year veterinary students and graduates. Students will shadow the veterinary staff and will be involved in all aspects of health care from clinical and

laboratory diagnosis to treatment, preventive medicine and anesthetics. Students will be expected to carry out a short research project of benefit to the Trust; because this takes time, preference will be given to students asking for longer stays of at least two months.

Other students may work in our laboratory logging in samples and assisting the microbiologist in analyses. Students will initially set up direct preparations, flotations and inoculating agar plates, but progress over a period of time to independently conducting analyses according to skill levels, and may conduct a research project. The laboratory can take one student at a time.

### **The Conservation Learning Department**

The Learning Department has three members of staff and can work with one student at a time. The department's work is roughly divided into two; one section consists of formal teaching, while the other covers informal education. The department is looking to enhance our ability to connect people to nature in both the short and long term and is keen to evaluate the impact of our activities. Students in the department will have the opportunity to be closely involved in this process, as well as gaining practical experience and an insight into how a zoo-based learning department operates. There will be opportunities to help shape and run events, building to running taught sessions, evaluating projects and getting people better connected to nature (and looking after five cockroaches).

### **The Marketing Department**

Students will work as part of the marketing team where they will have the opportunity to get involved in the following areas; PR and marketing campaigns; managing Durrell's website and assisting with social media tools; be involved in market research and learn how Durrell's conservation work can be effectively communicated to appropriate target audiences; and help with Durrell's fundraising events. The chosen individual should have excellent communication skills, a keen interest in wildlife conservation and be able to work well as part of a team and independently.

## **FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

### **Reference Material, Library and Computer Facilities**

Durrell's main library facilities and computer facilities are at the Durrell Conservation Academy, Les Noyers, next door to the zoo. The Sir William Collins Memorial Library comprises a collection of scientific periodicals and journals. The Phillips Reference Library holds a collection of books, and special bibliographic files (on species, habitats, etc). Loans from these collections may be possible for placement students, by arrangement with the library supervisor. There is a computer lab equipped with 20 computers. They are networked with internet connection, Office software and a range of specialist software relevant to conservation. Free wifi is also available. Limited quantities of photocopying can be undertaken in the Trust's main office. A charge may be made for large quantities.



### **Animal records system**

Since 1990, the Trust has maintained a computerised records system and uses the industry standard ZIMS animal records management system. Up-to-date information is

readily available on individual animals in the collection. Information from before 1990 is on cards, which can be inspected by arrangement.

## **Other activities**

The Trust frequently hosts visiting scientists and conservationists, many of whom give talks during their stay. Trust staff also give talks on their own work and organise discussion sessions on topics of interest. Talks by our senior management team are organised for students throughout the year to give an insight into how a conservation organisation is run. Students are encouraged to attend any of these activities.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **Accommodation**

There are bed and breakfasts and guest houses located nearby. Others are located further away and some form of transport is necessary. An accommodation list is provided on acceptance. There is heavy demand for places, and so booking well in advance is essential.

### **Cost of living**

While some costs are lower in Jersey than on the mainland (petrol, alcohol, cigarettes, etc.), basics tend to be slightly more expensive. Rents are quite high, and you can expect to spend £80-£120 a week in rent depending on the size and facilities.

### **Access to the zoo**

Students have free access to the grounds during their stay and are entitled to the same discounts as apply to the Trust's permanent staff in Durrell's restaurant and shop.

### **Clothing**

The Trust provides sweatshirts and T-shirts for students during their placement. For work, you should bring sensible clothing (long trousers for winter, shorts if desired in the summer) and footwear (e.g. walking boots). Students are expected to be neat and tidy at all times.

### **Health and security**

Whilst all reasonable precautions are taken to ensure safety and security, the Trust cannot accept responsibility for any loss, injury or illness however caused. Anyone

working in the zoo grounds is covered for general accident by the zoo's own insurance. Belongings should also be insured. A tetanus injection should be obtained well in advance of arrival.

**If you are working with the bats a rabies vaccination is also necessary.**

## Visas

Visas may be required for some nationalities and intending visitors should check this well in advance. Depending on nationality, a visa may also be required to enter the United Kingdom.

## Travel arrangements and local transport

There are direct flights between Jersey and most regional airports in the United Kingdom, and from some regional airports on the continent. There are also regular sea services by ferry and high-speed catamaran from the south coast of England, to St Malo and Dinard in France, and to the other Channel Islands. As Jersey attracts a large number of tourists in the main summer season, reservations should be made well in advance at this time of year. Taxis are available from all ports of entry, and a bus service from St Helier, the main town. Durrell is situated in the north-eastern part of the island, i.e. about 5 miles (8 km) north of St Helier and the docks, and about 10 miles north-east of the airport. Bus services to all other parts of the island are linked through St Helier, although there is a limited evening service.

