

ZSL SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION EVENT

Holistic approaches to conservation

Tuesday 11 February 2020

Huxley Lecture Theatre, Zoological Society of London,
Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY

AGENDA

Chaired by Dr Andrew Terry, Director of Conservation and Policy, ZSL

Receive the following communications

Dr Samuel Merson, Mongolia Project Coordinator, ZSL

*Working with herders to conserve Mongolia's wildlife and preserve
traditional livelihoods*

Jake Williams, Deputy Conservation Design and Impact Manager, ZSL

*Tackling human-wildlife conflict for equitable protected areas and ongoing
tiger recovery in Nepal*

Dr Claudia Gray, Conservation Science Manager,

EDGE of Existence Programme, ZSL

EDGE species, local communities and conservation action

Alison Debney,

Senior Conservation Programme Manager for UK & Europe, ZSL

How the Essex Oystermen are driving the return of our native oyster

ABSTRACTS

Working with herders to conserve Mongolia's wildlife and preserve traditional livelihoods

Dr Samuel Merson, Mongolia Project Coordinator, ZSL

Since Mongolia's transition in the 1990s from a socialist to free-market economy it has undergone a variety of social, and environmental changes. This has had broad implications for Mongolia's wildlife, its globally important grassland steppe ecosystems, and the livelihoods of the herder communities that rely upon them. This presentation will discuss Mongolia and its environmental issues, as well as several of ZSL's projects, highlighting the important role that communities play in conservation in Mongolia. ZSL is currently implementing projects to address some of Mongolia's most pressing environmental threats, from community protected area management, to wild Bactrian camel conservation. By working alongside herder communities, we hope to find sustainable solutions to these complex problems and give herders a platform to drive conservation in Mongolia.

Samuel Merson, originally from Australia, is the Project Coordinator for ZSL's Mongolia Programme. He completed his PhD studying the conservation threats to Madagascar's largest carnivore, the fosa (*Cryptoprocta ferox*). During his research he developed broad interests in rural human-wildlife co-existence and using camera-traps to better understand this relationship, and the impact it has on wildlife. Since 2018, he has been working for ZSL's Mongolia programme on projects spanning community protected area management, the illegal wildlife trade, and camera-trap monitoring of Bactrian camel. Sam is a member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, and the Small Carnivore Specialist Group.

Tackling human-wildlife conflict for equitable protected areas and ongoing tiger recovery in Nepal

Jake Williams, Deputy Conservation Design and Impact Manager, ZSL

Devoting scarce conservation resources to community development work requires a strong justification. This talk will set out one way in which ZSL have identified specific and targeted work with local people as an efficient way to help halt the global decline of ecosystems.

Nepal's protected areas stand out as world leaders in important respects, not least for their success in supporting a near-doubling of tiger numbers in Nepal since 2009. However, people living near to protected areas now face escalating risks of human-wildlife conflict due to tiger population growth. Uneven sharing of these risks, just as with other costs related to protected areas, threatens to undermine long-term support for protected areas. ZSL is therefore working with the Nepal Government to develop community-led scalable solutions to human-wildlife conflict. This work, along with parallel streams, aims to help build more equitable protected areas, future proofing Nepal's protected area network and supporting ongoing tiger recovery.

Jake Williams is the Deputy Conservation Design and Impact Manager at ZSL. Jake's role is to support ZSL's Conservation and Policy programmes to design effective conservation interventions based on

robust analysis of the impact of our work. He has previously worked in the UK government on European environment policy, and supported businesses to understand their impact on natural capital. Jake is a member of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, and the Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group.

EDGE species, local communities and conservation action

Dr Claudia Gray, Conservation Science Manager, EDGE of Existence Programme, ZSL

EDGE species are Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered, meaning that they represent truly unique, irreplaceable evolutionary history that we could easily lose from our planet forever. The EDGE of Existence programme supports promising local conservation leaders to help ensure the survival of these weird and wonderful animals. This talk will describe the way in which the EDGE of Existence programme builds local capacity through training and supporting EDGE Fellows across Asia, Africa and Latin America. In turn, these Fellows build strong relationships with key stakeholders and become ambassadors for their species, the habitats they use and the communities that live alongside them. We will explore the complexities of conserving the Chacoan Peccary, a large pig-like mammal with a memorable hair style and impressive abilities to survive in dry conditions. A diverse range of interdisciplinary work has been carried out by Micaela Camino, a previous EDGE fellow, and her network, to support local indigenous rights, combat habitat loss and gain valuable insights into the lives of the secretive Peccaries.

Claudia Gray is the Conservation Science Manager for the EDGE of Existence Programme at ZSL. The programme targets Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) species in need of urgent conservation attention. Claudia's role is to oversee the scientific research carried out by the local conservation leaders supported by the programme, as well as the scientific research underpinning how EDGE identifies conservation priorities. She has previously worked on the global effectiveness of protected areas and conservation strategies within oil palm landscapes of Sabah, Borneo.

How the Essex Oystermen are driving the return of our native oyster

Alison Debney, Senior Conservation Programme Manager for UK & Europe, ZSL

In conservation we often talk about 'outreach' - reaching out to communities, industry, and the public on why we should be working together to reduce the threats to wildlife. What about the opposite, as a colleague coined the phrase - 'inreach'? When a community reaches out to Conservation NGOs to help them protect and restore wildlife which is important to them. Ten years ago, the oystermen of Essex understood that unless they did something there would be no future in native oysters. Native oysters are down to 5% of historic numbers. The oystermen took a brave step and reached out to conservationists; together we lobbied for the public oyster fishery to be closed. The Blackwater Oysterman Association also provided evidence for the establishment of the Marine Conservation Zone to protect the last remaining native populations. We are now on a shared journey to restore self-sustaining populations of native oysters in Essex to provide a sustainable fishery, ecosystem services

and increase biodiversity. We may talk a different language at times – them ‘oyster stocks’, us ‘oyster populations’ - but ultimately, we have the same end point of there being more oysters in the sea.

Alison Debney is the ZSL Senior Conservation Programme Manager for UK & Europe and is a technical specialist in estuarine and wetland conservation. Alison has 25 years’ experience in delivering conservation projects around the world focussing on the restoration and sustainable management of aquatic habitats ranging from mangroves, flooded forests and urban rivers. Her drive is to create healthy and resilient ecosystems with beneficial outcomes for both wildlife and people. Alison is the chair of the Essex Native Oyster Restoration Initiative and co-founder of the Native Oyster Network – UK & Ireland. Alison also sits on the Advisory Board of the Europe Native Oyster Restoration Alliance.

Join us at our next event

Marine habitat restoration in the UK: how to move forward and stop treading water

10 March 2020, 6pm – 7:45pm

For decades we have been compensating against detrimental human impacts on the marine environment, leading to very limited progress in recovering the condition and extent of important marine habitats. This meeting will highlight the need for active restoration (rather than natural recovery) using three habitat-focused case studies – native oyster beds, seagrass and saltmarshes. These examples will present new conservation science and restoration methods, and help us to identify best practice, opportunities to act, and ways to scale up recovery to ecosystem-level.



ZSL Library Events

The library will continue their monthly talks at **4:45pm before each Science & Conservation Event** this year, each one focusing on different examples from their Special Collections! No need to book, just come along, or find out more here... www.zsl.org/about-us/zsl-library-collection.

ZSL Wild Science Podcast

Listen to our award winning **ZSL Wild Science podcast** episodes produced by Dr Monni Bohm and Eleanor Darbey here... www.zsl.org/zsl-wild-science-podcast.

Please feel free to contact the Scientific Events Coordinator, Eleanor Darbey (eleanor.darbey@zsl.org), if you have any queries about our events.