

Student Conference on Conservation Science 2010

WORKSHOP OUTLINES

There will be nine workshops held on Tuesday 23 March at 14.00 to 15.30 and after the Poster Session at 18.45 to 20.15 on Wednesday 24 March. Some workshops will be offered in one of these sessions and some in both, depending on availability and demand. We will inform you about how to sign up for workshops when you arrive at the conference on the morning of 23 March. Meanwhile, PLEASE USE THESE OUTLINES TO HELP YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND WHICH ONES YOU WOULD MOST LIKE TO ATTEND.

Workshop A: Practical Conservation Genetics

Bill Amos

Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge

The role of genetics in conservation is often misunderstood. Some seem to believe genetic analysis is close to magic, while others take the view that gathering genetic data is an expensive waste of effort. Equally, some see genetics as playing a central role in dictating the health of a population, while others feel it is less important. This workshop aims to give an overview as to what can and cannot be done using current methods. It will also explore some of the key areas of misunderstanding. Although the primary presentation will be in the form of a lecture, I hope people will bring along their own questions that can be discussed in an open forum.

Workshop B: Use of evidence-based conservation (session 2 only)

William J. Sutherland, Lynn Dick, Steph Prior, Rob Pople, David Showler,
Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge

Evidence-based conservation provides a mean of evaluating, reviewing and disseminating global information to improve conservation practice. In this workshop we will describe the principles of evidence-based conservation, how it can be used to improve practice and how you can participate.

Workshop C: Planning a conservation research programme (session 1 only)

*William J. Sutherland
Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge*

Some conservation research programmes are unsuccessful due to unpredictable circumstances such as illness, unusual weather or unforeseeable political problems. Many others could never be successful as they were poorly planned. A small amount of sensible planning can make considerable differences. In this workshop we will use a series of exercises to demonstrate a process called reverse planning.

Workshop D: Raising funds for your conservation project

*Dr Rosie Trevelyan,
Tropical Biology Association, Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge*

Getting money for your project can be a matter of being in the right place at the right time. This workshop assumes you are not. Why is it that everyone you meet seems to have a grant and you do not? I will outline how to write a grant proposal, giving examples of good practice and bad practice and some tips on what referees like and dislike. We will also look at fund-raising strategies. Finally, we will put theory into practice by trying out some of the techniques introduced to-day.

Workshop E: An introduction to systematic conservation planning

*Bob Smith
Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK*

Systematic conservation planning is the most effective way to design protected area systems and other conservation networks, and these techniques are used by a large number of national conservation agencies and international NGOs. This approach is also a successful example of the inter-disciplinary nature of conservation science and provides important opportunities for further research.

This workshop will start with a brief introduction to the subject, and will be followed by a group exercise that illustrates some of the important issues in conservation planning. The exercise is based on a case study, and participants will investigate how to produce a cost-effective planning system that is both useful and scientifically defensible.

Workshop F: How to write a scientific paper, or How to avoid Snoopy's problem...

Martin Fisher

Editor of Oryx, Fauna & Flora International, Cambridge



Would you like this to be you? Are you determined that your first scientific paper will be rejected (so many are!)? Attend this workshop to find out how to ensure that this happens... or perhaps even how to avoid it...

Common pitfalls, glaringly obvious errors, verbosity - all these and more easy strategies to ensure that you receive your first rejection slip will be covered in painful detail...

It's the final year of your PhD, you've finally gathered some data, and you are going to be famous... well, at least you plan to write your first scientific paper... Do yourself a favour, do the Editor a favour, attend this workshop!

Workshop G: Economic Analysis of Ecosystem Services (session 1 only)

Ian Bateman

*Centre for Social and Economic Research on the Global Environment
University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK*

The workshop will provide an overview of the application of economic analysis techniques to ecosystem service assessments with specific reference to the ongoing UK National Ecosystem Assessment. In discussing the methodology being used for this undertaking the talk will consider recent work on the incorporation of issues such as spatial variation within such analyses and given examples of how competing land uses and the issue of knock-on and feedback effects might be tackled. The workshop will also tackle the issue of valuation and its limits by considering an application to biodiversity.

Workshop H: Making the most of your data: how to approach statistical analysis for conservation

Alison Johnston

British Trust for Ornithology, Thetford, Norfolk

The use of appropriate statistical methods is an essential part of conservation science. However, the increasing number and complexity of statistical methods available can make it difficult to choose the right ones and to interpret the results correctly. The topic of this workshop has been selected with input from conference delegates, and will focus on some basics of statistical analysis for conservation: Is a p-value of 0.06 significant? How can you compare models? What assumptions are you making about your data without realising? This workshop will hopefully leave you better equipped to approach your own analyses with more confidence, and better aware of some of the issues and difficulties in statistics.

Workshop I: Working with the press to publicise conservation science

(Session 1 only)

David Aldridge

Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge

Working with the press can provide an important route to publicising research, and such publicity can also help to attract project sponsorship. However, working with the press can also have pitfalls, which need to be avoided. This workshop will fall into two parts. First, we will consider how different elements of the media may portray your work by drawing from personal experiences and by using some recent examples. Second, we will discuss how to write a Press Release and then go on to produce some draft releases based on the work of some workshop attendees.