



Natural Talent Case Study Template

Name; Lorna Blackmore

Age; 24

Traineeship; Pollinators of Created Meadows

Dates of traineeship; 25/01/16 - 25/01/17

About your traineeship



Can you give an overview of your Natural Talent UK traineeship? (What organisations are you placed with/type of work you will be involved in?)

My traineeship is involved with learning about and raising the profile of lesser-known pollinating insects in created wildflower meadows. I will be working with a multitude of different partner organisations in order to aid conservation efforts for these important insects. Primarily I will be based at the World Museum in Liverpool where I will learn specialist insect ID skills with their entomology team using their extensive insect collection. Other partners in the project are the Landlife National Wildflower Centre and the Merseyside Biobank. With Landlife I will learn skills related to the rearing of wildflowers commercially and contribute knowledge of how pollinators use the created meadows sown by the organisation. I also intend to contribute all of my species records to the Biobank so that the distribution and abundance of these pollinators can better inform their conservation in future.

Why did you apply for a Natural Talent traineeship?

I am really passionate about conserving pollinating insects and I am excited to learn more about them and their ecology. I find the lives of these insects, and learning about how we can best protect them through land management, fascinating. In the past I have enjoyed sharing my knowledge and experiences with the public to enthuse them on pollinators and look forward to raising their profile in future.

What kind of employment were you in before undertaking a Natural Talent traineeship?

Before becoming a trainee I was employed in a variety of places: in ecological consultancy, as a co-leader for a citizen science project, as a research assistant, working in a birds of prey centre and in everyday jobs like working in a call centre.

What voluntary experience had you done prior to your traineeship?

I have volunteered extensively for a variety of organisations but primarily Butterfly Conservation, the RSPB and TCV. In the past I have ran stalls, led guided walks and presented talks to raise public awareness on conservation issues. I have also done lots of practical conservation work such as organising and carrying out pollinating insect surveys (moths, bees and butterflies), removing invasive plant species and habitat management of lowland peat bogs.



What are you most looking forward to during your traineeship?

Learning new skills, investigating what pollinators use created meadows and getting to work with experts in the field. I'm really excited to be given the opportunity to work with pollinating insects and hope that my work will be able to help to provide advice and guidance which could conserve their populations.

What skills do you anticipate this traineeship will give you?

I anticipate that I will learn specialist pollinating insect identification skills and to become acquainted with collections - how to preserve and categorise specimens. I also hope to learn some botanical skills as I wish to investigate how pollinators, such as bees, visit different flowers in created meadows by identifying the pollen they have collected. This involves learning how to identify pollen grains though using microscopes and pollen preparation. The created meadow sites provided by Landlife will also allow me to better understand the process of habitat creation and management. I also expect through my work with Biobank that I will learn how to manage and interpret large datasets of species records as well as to learn specialist mapping software.

How do you feel your traineeship benefits the conservation sector in the United Kingdom?

I feel my traineeship will contribute to conservation by increasing identification skills of difficult to identify insect pollinator groups. My work with created meadows will hopefully help inform conservation for these pollinators by helping us to understand which pollinators use these plots, what flowers they visit and what factors affect which insects use them. So that future seed mixes and management can be tailored to the needs of a range of different pollinators.

I also feel that conservation in the UK may also benefit from my traineeship because I will interact with the public about pollinators. Acting to increase knowledge and understanding of what these groups need may help to raise the profile of pollinators. This may act to encourage people to take action through wildlife gardening or by supporting charity work that helps towards reversing pollinating insect population declines.

What career path do you see yourself pursuing and how will this experience will help you?

I wish to pursue a career in entomological research. I feel this position will aid me by giving me the necessary research and insect identification skills required for many PhDs in entomology. I believe this experience in running my own project with multiple partners will also contribute to my collaborative and communicative skills both of which are essential in the success of any conservation endeavour.