



Natural Talent Case Study Template

Name; Ryan Clark

Age; 22

Traineeship; Entomology - Buglife and Natural England.

Dates of traineeship; 25/01/2016

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 with Buglife (The Invertebrate Conservation Trust) and Natural England and focuses on invertebrate conservation. I will be based with both of these organisations in Peterborough. It will look at the surveying and conservation of a variety of under recorded groups in Britain, including dead wood beetles. I will also be involved in the conservation of priority invertebrate species and developing databases of invertebrate-habitat and invertebrate-resource associations in order to understand their needs better. I will also be involved with engaging others with invertebrates and sharing my passion and knowledge of these wonderful animals.

Why did you apply for a Natural Talent traineeship?

My interests in natural history started with birds and butterflies and has since widened. I now record every taxonomic group I can, annually submitting thousands of records of thousands of species. I have always been fascinated by invertebrates and have been disheartened by how little they are taken into account when conservation measures are implemented. I applied for this traineeship as it would help develop my skills in order to help me get into invertebrate conservation and pass on my passion and knowledge to others. The opportunity to work with Buglife and Natural England is astonishing and I can't wait to start.

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

I have been working part time as a local authority ecologist, making sure ecological implications are taken into account when developments take place. Through this work I have also been working on a number of other projects to enhance the ecology of Buckinghamshire. In the last year I have also done some consultancy work surveying reptiles and amphibians. I have also done some freelance work for the Wildlife Trusts to develop resources for their website on British bees.

What voluntary experience had you done prior to your traineeship?

I have carried out voluntary work for a variety of organisations and groups. I volunteered one day a week for around a year with the Vale Countryside Volunteers, a local group that carries out practical conservation work including everything from coppicing and wildflower management to pond clearance and the creation of otter



holts. I have also been doing some survey work for my local Wildlife Trust to survey the wildflowers and insects on one of their new sites. I am also the coordinator of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland's New Year Plant Hunt and the membership Coordinator for A Focus on Nature, the network for young wildlife enthusiasts in Britain.

What are you most looking forward to during your traineeship?

I am looking forward to every part of my traineeship! However I am especially looking forward to the fieldwork and surveying invertebrates in weird and wonderful places.

What skills do you anticipate this traineeship will give you?

One of the main skills which I anticipate that this traineeship will give me is identification skills, of a wide variety of taxonomic groups. It will also give me the skills to analyse, interpret and present invertebrate data, for a variety of purposes. I also anticipate coming out of this traineeship with more confidence and improved presentational skills, enabling me to engage others with invertebrates.

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

Despite invertebrates being the most specious group in the United Kingdom, they are often overlooked in many conservation measures. In 2011 the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) released a report which stated that there is a huge skills gap in species identification, especially of invertebrates, balanced against the specialist requirements for this taxa. They also highlighted that there is a shortage of people able to survey, monitor and analyse data with relation to invertebrates. This traineeship helps to address this issue which will benefit conservation as a whole in the United Kingdom.

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

I see myself in a career surveying invertebrates and interpreting these results to inform habitat management and conservation, for an NGO. The skills I learn here will give me vital survey experience and the work with Natural England's invertebrate associations database will help me analyse species assemblages.