



# ASAB Careers Case Study

## Science Communications Manager

Emma Ackerley - Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

### What are the main duties of your job?

First and foremost, I help ensure our mission and global sustainable Fisheries Standard is clearly communicated. As part of that I'm responsible for the communications of our Ocean Stewardship Fund and the various global projects it supports. I write features, opinion articles, news stories, blogs etc. and do a lot of fact checking. I support PR, marketing, and social media content. I also commission and coordinate the production and design of briefings and reports on key topics for our stakeholders.

### What was your career path to get

**this job?** This is a long story... I volunteered in Fiji for a marine conservation project at 18 and became a qualified scuba diver after finishing my A levels. I then completed a zoology degree and my first job after university was a Field Assistant for a PhD student studying behavioural ecology of dwarf mongoose in South Africa. Africa certainly got under my skin, and after spending a lot of time in the bush I became enamoured with baboons. So after a year or so of saving, working on a recycling campaign in Manchester, a few waitressing jobs and a couple thousand hours of volunteering – I had enough money for my masters to study wildlife conservation. I went to Bristol and began planning my project. I'd experienced human-wildlife conflict first-hand living in South Africa and read a lot around the failed solutions. So, I was interested in how the virtual fence technology could deter baboons from entering urban environments. I worked on this for a while and then ferociously applied for primate jobs following my masters. I think I lacked the finances, network and linguistic skills to obtain a primate job – as well as a stubbornness that I deserved to be paid more than a stipend. All this time I have worked for Conservation-Careers.com writing blogs, completing interviews and I'd always enjoyed communications and public speaking. A lot of human-wildlife conflict issues if you dig deep enough are typically human-human conflict, and so effective communication is so vital in this area. So, I moved into my first salaried post as a Communications Assistant for my local Wildlife Trust in Lancashire. I worked there for a year before moving to London to work for ZSL (Zoological Society of London) as their Conservation & Science Communications Press Officer. After two years I joined the Marine Stewardship Council as part of their Science Communications team. It's taken me about 10 years from 18 to 28, to get where I am – and I'm really proud of that.

You need to  
be detail-

orientated, creative &  
open-minded.

This is because the fishing industry is very complex. There are millions of people around the world that rely on fish for their livelihoods and as a source of local protein. Solutions need to balance both the needs of marine life with the needs of people – and that's what true sustainability looks like.

**My Mum thinks I...**



**What I actually do...  
Sit behind a desk reading  
300-page long fishery  
assessment reports...**

**My friends think I...**



**What is your dream job?** Conservation Community Engagement Manager – working with communities and running behaviour change campaigns and educational/empowerment to try and alleviate human-wildlife conflict issues with primates/marine animals. Essentially stakeholder engagement, though it's not a well-paid, common, or likely a permanent job when on offer.

Average salary for this role: £35,000-£40,000 in London and probably around £25,000-£30,000 outside of London

**Where do you see yourself in ten years time?** Head of Communications and Campaigns for an international conservation NGO – preferably one that has primate and marine based projects I can talk about.

**When you tell people what you do for a living, they usually say ...**“oh that's sounds interesting” which really means “that sounds complicated and I don't really understand what you do” - then I talk about the story behind ecolabels, the impacts of what we eat, and the world of fisheries, until I see their eyes glaze over.