



PhD student

Georgia Hennessey - The University of Sussex

What are the main duties of your job?

My main role is to conduct research on the behaviour, ecology and conservation of bees. My main topics of research are how weather affects bee foraging behaviour, learning more about how to conserve two species of rare solitary bee and examining the differences in plant preference between honey bees and wild bees. My job also extends to public engagement, education others about my research and publishing scientific papers.

What qualifications and experience did you need to get this job?

The qualifications I needed to get this role are an undergraduate degree and a masters degree. I personally have a BSc in Zoology and a masters in Evolutionary and Behavioural Ecology. To get a PhD position having the qualifications isn't necessarily enough. They like to see your enthusiasm, and having experiencing working in a similar field is needed. I had field work experience abroad, collecting data on animal behaviour and learning field survey techniques. I also worked in the UK in a native conservation centre where I was largely involved in public engagement and surveying the local woodland



My friends think I am... living the student life.


My mum thinks I... work in a high tech lab using expensive equipment, saving the world one discovery at a time.

What are the best bits of your job?

For me the best bits are being out and about conducting field work. One of my projects requires me to travel to the beautiful Seaford head, located on the Southern Coast. Here I conduct transects trying to locate the rare and beautiful solitary bee *Anthophora retusa*. I love being outside collecting data.

And the most challenging parts?

I personally find the most challenging part of my job is the fact that you are your own boss. I have supervisors that are there to guide me in the right direction, however it is up to me to make sure the work gets done and I keep on track. This can make it a little tricky to keep motivated, but the way to overcome this is to make sure you set goals for yourself and stick to them.



Average salary for
this role
£14,000

What kind of progression opportunities are there?

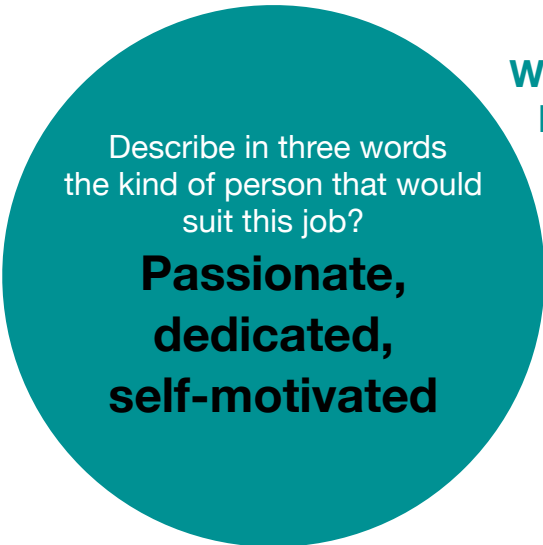
After completing a PhD there are loads of different opportunities available. If you want to stay in academia you can apply for a post - doctoral position, where you can continue research in your current field or if you have transferable skills you may even be able to move to a different area of research. If after the four years you've had enough of academia having a PhD gives you lots of transferable skills, especially with data analysis. People have gone into working for the civil service, insurance and related to biology, field assistants and conservation officers.

Where do you see yourself career-wise in ten years?

If I decide to continue in academia, which I think I would like, in ten years I would hope to either be completing a post doc or working for a conservation charity.

What is your dream job?

A senior conservation officer within a charity, ideally the Zoological Society of London if I'm being picky!



Describe in three words
the kind of person that would
suit this job?

**Passionate,
dedicated,
self-motivated**

When you tell people what you do for a living, they usually say ...

“Oh wow, bees, that's very exciting!”
Then followed either by “I hear bees aren't doing so well at the moment” or “I have a friend who keeps bees!”