

CAREERS IN NATURAL HISTORY

So you had a great time taking your photos and learning about nature – what next?

Natural history is a specialisation of a wide array of careers across the film, photography and television production, conservation, communications, environmental consultancy and government agency sectors. If you're passionate about nature, there is a role for you. Although often people call these "green careers", most careers in the future will have some role to play in looking after the planet.

Natural History Film and Television Roles

These are specialised roles relating to film and television production. There are *MANY*, including:

- **Camera and drone operating** - captures footage for film shoots. In natural history this can involve a lot of travel and time away, but you also get to be right there in the action in the most beautiful parts of the world. Often a freelancer working on individual productions.
- **Sound recordist** - responsible for using microphones to capture audio for the shoot and cataloguing the recordings for editors. Freelance and often short contracts mean self-promotion to maintain a steady stream of work is essential.
- **Editor (and assistant)** - responsible for selecting and cutting together footage from a shoot, with audio. Often freelance but hired for the edit after the shoot has finished, so potentially a little less travel.
- **Producer/director** - responsible for the content and narrative of the film or an episode of a series. Often hired per series. They work with an editorial team to devise themes and sequences of episodes. Lots of travel and time at home in the production edit.



- **Production coordinator** - a very organised person who makes sure all the different parts of a shoot happen at the right time, in the right place, and safely (wild animals and environments can be dangerous!).
- **Talent manager** - working for a production company, they arrange all the new hires (e.g. all the freelancers above) for different productions, matching the skillsets of the people in their portfolio to what is required for the shoot. Well-connected, outgoing folk that everyone wants to be friends with!

Many people carve out long careers spanning one or many of these roles. For a specialisation in natural history, however, you may need a qualification or experience showing your expertise in nature itself. The best way to get this is to get out there into nature. Volunteering for a conservation charity as a young person can be an excellent way to learn from others, gain experience and knowledge.



Conservation and Communication Roles

If you want to have an impact and make a change, conservation or communications around natural history might be for you. Roles might include:

- **Fundraising officer** - you may work for a charity or freelance to help them raise funds from different areas. Strategy, project management and communication skills are important in this role.
- **Volunteer coordinator** - if you like organising people or things, this might be for you! Charities often need to organise a large number of volunteers, so this role is all about keeping them organised, happy and productive.
- **Conservation officer** - you may work directly on one of the conservation projects a charity works on. Often a qualification about or experience with nature will be required for this e.g, animal handling licences, degree or equivalent in wildlife conservation.
- **Communications specialist or strategist** - you might work for a charity, or freelance, that works with charities to run campaigns. Knowing how to market and sell an idea and how to connect with audiences in the general public is key in this role, as well as understanding communication approaches e.g. social media and digital marketing.

Traditional routes aren't the only way

They say that we don't yet know all the jobs that may be invented in the future. When it comes to forging a career in natural history, we'd offer the following tips:

- 1 Choose the path that's best for you at the time** - it's like buses. You get the one going in your general direction, and then walk the rest of the way to your unique destination.
- 2 Blend your interests and use your experience** - people who do things differently or try new things are often the most interesting. Try blending different passions.
- 3 Get skilled up** - try lots of things that might be useful and keep your skill-base broad. The central skills are the most useful - spoken and written communication, knowledge about nature and the issues it faces, understanding how to represent this in media, learning how to tell a good story.
- 4 Perseverance** - the key to success often isn't what you've done, but that you've been doing it the longest. Hang in there and don't give up, even if it means adjusting course slightly.
- 5 Manners and charm** - be gracious and thankful. People will remember you well and you'll get more jobs if you work well with others rather than creating conflict. Often this requires some compromise and flexibility.
- 6 Self-belief** - set your target and manifest it. Sadly manifesting general doesn't just happen without you doing a bit of hard graft first. Keeping your eyes open for those opportunities is the key.
- 7 All else fails, do it yourself** - if you're struggling to bag that opportunity, try doing it yourself. Advances in technology like social media have meant you have more power at your fingertips than any young person before you. So instead of waiting around for someone to give you your dream, you might just need to start doing it yourself. Maybe don't get into the cages with any lions, though!

Careerpilot

careerpilot.org.uk

For more information on the different roles available to you that involve nature, try the following resources on Careerpilot:

Careers in TV and film:

www.careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors/media

Careers relating to protection of nature:

www.careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors/strengths-and-values/i-want-to-protect-nature

More information on green jobs generally:

www.careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors/green-jobs

Schools and Colleges - find out more about our green jobs teaching resources, webinars and the Green Champion Award for schools in the West of England region here:

www.careerpilot.org.uk/adviser-zone/introducing-green-jobs/green-jobs-in-the-west-of-england