

Module code: MOD011357	Version: 1 Date Amended: 11/Apr/2025
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1. Module Title
Wildlife Conservation and Trade

2a. Module Leader
Steven Allain

2b. School
Writtle School of Agriculture, Animal and Environmental Sciences

2c. Faculty
Faculty of Science and Engineering

3a. Level
7

3b. Module Type
Standard (fine graded)

4a. Credits
15

4b. Study Hours
150

5. Restrictions			
Type	Module Code	Module Name	Condition
Pre-requisites:	None		
Co-requisites:	None		
Exclusions:	None		
Courses to which this module is restricted:	MSc Animal Welfare and Conservation and MSc Conservation Education and Engagement		

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

6a. Module Description

Wildlife has been a vital resource for human society for thousands of years. However, when utilisation leads to overexploitation, the consequences can be severe, not only for the resource itself, but also for the wider environment and, ultimately, human welfare.

In this module, you'll investigate the scientific, cultural and ethical drivers that underpin the protection of landscapes and their wild animal populations. Examples will be used throughout to demonstrate approaches employed to promote and support effective species and habitat conservation. In cases where rates of exploitation are unsustainable, the management and conservation of species must be addressed. Using specific case studies, this module explores a range of methods used in the sector for habitat conservation, including systematic conservation planning, landscape-scale approaches, adaptive management, protected area design, habitat restoration to inform management practice. Issues relating to minimum viable populations and minimum viable areas are also examined. You'll explore the importance of the socio-economic and cultural context in habitat conservation, along with relevant international legislation and organisational efforts and practices. Finally, you'll be introduced to the concepts of 'sustainability', 'biodiversity' and 'wildlife trade', and consider the importance and value of biodiversity to human welfare.

6b. Outline Content

This module will explore conservation, the protection of animals and the conservation and management of habitats, and introduce the wildlife trade. In particular this module will explore a range of different approaches to habitat management and the use of protected areas, looking at issues including rewilding, community conservation, inclusive practices, adaptive management and conservation planning. The course will also look at both the legal and regulated side of wildlife trade, as well as the illegal and unregulated trade in wildlife. Through exploring both sides of the wildlife trade debate we will discuss sustainability, biodiversity, threats to populations, and drivers of change. This module will also explore how conservation and the trade in legal wildlife can be beneficial from a conservation standpoint. These will include discussions about in situ and ex situ conservation, as well identifying consumer trends and strategies for behaviour change.

The following topics will be delivered as appropriate:

Threats to Wildlife and Biodiversity

A quick overview of the historical development of conservation science, before exploring the impacts of habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation on wildlife populations. Climate change and its effects on species and ecosystems; twinned with additive effects of invasive species, pollution, and overexploitation.

Conservation Ecology and Principles

Population dynamics and species viability. Overview of habitat restoration and the importance of connectivity within the environment. Ecosystem-based approaches to conservation, moving away from the single-species concept and a critique for why. The role of local and indigenous communities in conservation and balancing conservation goals with human livelihoods.

Policy and Legislation

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA), a global audit of the World's ecosystems, identified that ecosystems have declined more rapidly and extensively over the past 50 years than during any other comparable time in human history. Such decline has resulted in the extinction of species at a rate that surpasses that of historic background levels, perhaps by as much as three orders-of-magnitude. Other important global frameworks include the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Ramsar Convention, and those used to designate protected areas. Overview of national conservation policies and governance, linked to the role of NGOs and international organisations in conservation efforts.

Impacts of Wildlife Trade

It is important to first define trade and its scope into the two different kinds: legal and illegal wildlife trade. From here students will explore historical perspectives and cultural significance of wildlife trade globally. Overexploitation is a huge concern for the conservation of some species, impacting species populations and leading to habitat destruction. Case studies include iconic species (e.g., elephants, pangolins, and exotic pets).

Drivers and Dynamics of Wildlife Trade

There are a diverse range of economic, cultural, and technological factors fuelling demand for wildlife produced. Students will learn how to undertake supply chain analysis: harvesting, trafficking, and distribution networks.

Policy and Legal Frameworks

International agreements, such as CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) help to regulate wildlife trade. National and regional policies regulating wildlife trade, including enforcement challenges and mechanisms. Students will learn how to use the CITES trade database when querying a species of their choice.

Future Challenges and Innovations in Conservation

Technological innovations in monitoring and regulation use of technology in tracking wildlife trade (e.g., DNA barcoding, blockchain, and AI tools), or wildlife populations in the wild. Role of conservation NGOs and citizen science in monitoring efforts with case studies. Demand reduction campaigns and public awareness, the strategies for species recovery and habitat protection. Innovations for promoting sustainable wildlife use.

6c. Key Texts/Literature

The reading list to support this module is available at: <https://readinglists.aru.ac.uk/>

6d. Specialist Learning Resources

None

7. Learning Outcomes (threshold standards)

No.	Type	On successful completion of this module the student will be expected to be able to:
1	Knowledge and Understanding	Evaluate the design and planning of protected areas for wild animals and the different approaches used to protect wildlife populations.
2	Knowledge and Understanding	Evaluate and explore the utilisation and exploitation of wildlife, including the strategies to limit the impacts of the illegal wildlife trade and the legislation enforcing this.
3	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the ecological, biological, and socio-economic principles underpinning wildlife conservation.
4	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the ecological, biological, and socio-economic principles underpinning wildlife conservation.

8a. Module Occurrence to which this MDF Refers

Year	Occurrence	Period	Location	Mode of Delivery
2026/7	ZZF	Template For Face To Face Learning Delivery		

8b. Learning Activities for the above Module Occurrence

Learning Activities	Hours	Learning Outcomes	Details of Duration, frequency and other comments
Lectures	33	1-4	Lectures, seminars, workshops, tutorials once a week.
Other teacher managed learning	3	2,4	Training sessions on how to use recording technology to create a podcast.
Student managed learning	114	1-4	Self-directed learning.
TOTAL:	150		

9. Assessment for the above Module Occurrence

The assessment for some modules includes a presentation (see below for details on how this particular module is assessed). We recognise that presenting, especially to a large group, can cause significant anxiety or distress for some students. If this may affect you, please contact your Module Leader or the Disability and Neurodiversity Service as early as possible. We will work with you to consider appropriate reasonable adjustments. Depending on your individual needs, these might include, for example, presenting to a smaller group or presenting only to a member of academic staff.

Assessment No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcomes	Weighting (%)	Fine Grade or Pass/Fail	Qualifying Mark (%)
010	Coursework	1,3	40 (%)	Fine Grade	40 (%)

Students are tasked with writing a popular science article on a topic related to global wildlife conservation of their choice. This should explore an important environmental issue and translate complex scientific information into an engaging, accessible format suitable for a general audience. Students should ensure their topic is specific enough to explore in detail but broad enough to engage a wide audience. The article should be written for a general audience with an interest in science and the environment but without specialised knowledge in the field, in the format of a blog post such as Mongabay or publications such as National Geographic or New Scientist. Students should also use visuals where possible and information from a number of primary sources.

Assessment No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcomes	Weighting (%)	Fine Grade or Pass/Fail	Qualifying Mark (%)
011	Coursework	2,4	60 (%)	Fine Grade	40 (%)

Students are tasked with producing an engaging and informative podcast episode (20 mins in length) focused on a topic of their choice related to wildlife trade (either legal or illegal). Students will work in pairs or groups of three to research, record and edit the podcast with the intention of it being released to the wider public. In their discussion, students should propose practical solutions or highlight key actions relevant to their chosen topic. This assignment will help students to develop their skills in research, storytelling, and public communication, as well as their ability to critically evaluate the ecological and conservation issues surrounding the wildlife trade. The podcast should be suitable for a general audience and showcase a balance of scientific rigor and accessibility – students should use a conversational tone but ensure scientific accuracy. The podcast should be submitted as an MP3 or WAV file, along with a written transcript for accessibility and assessment purposes (in PDF or Word format). Students are permitted to include music or sound effects as long as they have ensured they have permission or use royalty-free content.

In order to pass this module, students are required to achieve an overall mark of 40% (for modules at levels 3, 4, 5 and 6) or 50% (for modules at level 7*).

In addition, students are required to:

- (a) achieve the qualifying mark for each element of fine graded assessment as specified above
- (b) pass any pass/fail elements

[* the pass mark of 50% applies for all module occurrences from the academic year 2024/25 – see Section 3a of this MDF to check the level of the module and Section 8a of this MDF to check the academic year]