MSc Wildlife Management and Conservation

Awarding Institution: The University of Reading
Teaching Institution: The University of Reading
Faculty of Life Sciences Programme length: 12 months
For students entering in 2004 Date of specification: 30 Jan 2002
Programme Director: Dr G.J. Holloway
Board of Studies: Dr G.J. Holloway (chair), Dr A. Callaghan, Dr A.G. Stephens, Dr S.P. Hopkin, Dr K. Norris, Dr F. Nowell, Dr D. Savva, Prof R.M. Sibly

Summary of programme aims

The purpose of the course is to prepare graduates from appropriate disciplines (e.g. biological, agricultural or environmental sciences) for employment in a variety of conservation or wildlife management related careers or to continue to PhD. The course provides both the theoretical and the practical experience required for the students to realise their potential and to discover where their talent lies in the multidisciplinary fields or conservation biology and wildlife management.

The expected outcomes are that students should acquire and demonstrate in the context of wildlife management and conservation:

- Appreciation of the philosophical context in which wildlife conservation is carried out both in the UK and overseas.
- Understanding of the essential principles of research design in conservation biology and wildlife management.
- Appreciation of a range of wildlife issues both in the UK and overseas.
- Competence in a range of research methods for data collection and detailed expertise in a subset relevant to the student's own research interests.
- Expertise in data management and analysis, and awareness of issues affecting data interpretation.
- Understanding of the legal and ethical issues in the conduct and dissemination of a research programme.
- Competence in research management and in written and oral skills for communicating research output wildlife conservation issues.
- Awareness of issues relevant to the pursuit of a career in wildlife conservation or management.
- Acquisition of a broad range of transferable employment-related skills.

Transferable skills

By the end of the course, the students will have developed the following transferable skills:

- Ability to use computers for statistics, data analysis and communication.
- Ability to use databases and other library resources.
- Writing skills: writing of articles for a scientific and a broader audience, abstraction of other's work from written and oral material, critically reviewing the work of peers.
- Ability to make oral presentations.
- Ability to work as a member of a group.
- Ability to write concisely (e.g. posters or short articles) for a non-scientific audience.

Programme content

		Credits	*Level*
ASMA01	*Data preparation and handling for research project*	10	M
AMMA05	*Aquatic Resources*	10	M
AMMA09	*Vertebrate Pests and their Control*	10	M
AMMA10	*Population Dynamics*	10	M
AMMA11	*Conservation Genetics*	10	M
AMMA12	*Species and Habitat Conservation*	10	M
ASMB01	*Quantitative Methods for the Life Sciences*	10	M
GGMG01	*GIS for Environmental Management*	10	M
AMMB06	*Practical Wildlife Management*	10	M
AMMB08	*Mammal Conservation*	10	M
AMMB10	*Pollution and Wildlife*	10	M
AMMB11	*Current Issues in Conservation*	10	M
AMMC01	*Research Project*	60	M

Part-time arrangements

There is no possibility of undertaking the course on a part-time basis

Progression requirements

Acceptance onto Term 2 modules is conditional on the student having submitted all assessments in Term 1 modules. The Research Project will normally be the last piece of work to be submitted for assessment (by dissertation)

Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching is by a variety of methods, including lectures, small group seminars, discussion sessions, practicals, individual feedback on written work and one-to-one advise. Assessment procedures mirror the diversity of teaching methods and include scientific essays, oral and poster presentations, pamphlet production, essay based examinations and submission of project dissertation.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

Mark	Interpretation
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
Failing categories:	
40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degrees
To pass the MSc students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 70 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

Admission requirements
Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained an honours degree in a suitable subject, for example biological science, agricultural science or environmental science. Applicants should have gained or expect to gain a class mark of 2(1) or better (i.e. 60%+ [or international equivalent, e.g. B+ US letter grade]). Applicants holding 2(2) degrees may also apply and each case will be considered on its own merits. The admission tutor for this course is Prof R.M. Sibly.

Support for students and their learning
University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Support for graduate students in the School of Animal and Microbial Sciences is similarly aimed at both learning and pastoral support. Learning support includes the use of a workroom dedicated to postgraduate students with networked PCs and printers, scanners, provision of photocopy cards and inter library loans (limited number), and ready access to members of staff who are all respected scholars in the fields taught. Pastoral support augments the University care system with each student being allocated a Personal Tutor within the School.

Career prospects
Students will have good prospects in careers that involve the management of wildlife or conservation. Career prospects in research related academic fields are also good. One average, 2 or 3 students go on to do a PhD each year and most of the remainder go on to secure a position in the conservation sector.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements
A number of students carry out projects abroad every year.

Educational aims of the programme
The students are required to operate at a more advanced level than in an Honours degree, with emphasis on the integration of the various issues and factors influencing conservation biology.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
1. A broad variety of methods in, and approaches to, wildlife management and conservation biology. 2. Advanced principals of qualitative and quantitative research methods used in wildlife management. 3. The use of computer software designed to analyse and present data, to prepare presentations, and to word process. 4. Ethical, legal and economic issues as they relate to practical wildlife management. 5. Theoretical issues as they relate to wildlife management research. 6. Individual qualities required to carry out conservation work under field conditions. 7. Approaches available to communicate concepts to a non-scientific audience both orally and written.	1-5 are covered in lectures and seminars, and are further supported during the project work and thesis preparation. 4 is covered by visiting speakers and members of staff. 6 is covered by field trips and practical work under field conditions, including the project work. 7 is supported by small group seminars, the production of a poster and pamphlet, and the preparation of material designed for publication in popular magazines. *Assessment* 1,2,4 and 5 are assessed through continuous coursework and examinations. 3 is assessed through continuous assessment and the project thesis. 6 is assessed through field trips and the project thesis. 7 is assessed through seminar presentations and coursework.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
1. Understand the theoretical framework(s) in which research in wildlife management and conservation is carried out. 2. Give an account of the basics of research design, data capture, and analysis as they apply to wildlife management. 3. Understand the basis on which evidence based decisions are made in wildlife management. 4. Select from a number of possible methods the one most appropriate to a particular data set or a given research question. 5. Critically evaluate the design and conduct of conservation research. 6. Write well-structured and well-argued scientific essays. 7. Present convincing and well-structured arguments to non-scientific audiences. 8. Summarise complex arguments in the form of posters or pamphlets.	1-5 are developed in lectures and seminars. Coursework essays give the opportunity for formative feedback in support of 6 and 7. 7 is supported by feedback on small group oral presentations and feedback on written assignments designed for popular magazines. Feedback on poster presentations and pamphlet construction support 8. *Assessment* 1-6 is assessed through coursework and examination. 6-8 is assessed through coursework 7 is also assessed during student run seminars

C. Practical skills – able to:

1. Perform advanced searches for information relevant to specific topics.
2. Choose and apply appropriate data preparation and analytical procedures.
3. Plan and carry out research into wildlife management and conservation issues.
4. Collect and manage data.
5. Write up empirical conservation research.
6. Carry out habitat management for wildlife conservation purposes
7. Carry out wildlife surveys.
8. Identify species from a variety of taxonomic groups.
9. Use items of equipment, such as radio-tracking kit, mist nets and small mammal traps.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

1 is practiced throughout the course in conjunction with the preparation of coursework and the thesis.
2 and 4 are achieved through dedicated seminars and practicals, and during the preparation of the project thesis.
2-5 are undertaken during the project period and thesis preparation.
6-9 are practised during dedicated practical sessions.

Assessment

1 is assessed through the submission of coursework and the project thesis.
2 and 4 are assessed through coursework, examination and the project thesis.
2-5 are assessed through the project thesis.
6-9 are assessed during dedicated practical sessions.

D. Transferable skills – able to:

1. Communicate concisely or at length to scientific or non-scientific audiences.
2. Give oral presentations.
3. Work as part of a group.
4. Plan and implement a project.
5. Solve practical problems.
6. Use IT to write, to present information visually, to manage and analyse numeric data, to communicate, and to find information.
7. Manage time.
8. Condense complex orally delivered information.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Transferable skills are integrated in subject based teaching. 1 is learned, with formative feedback, through essays and other written assignments.
2 is included in seminars
3 forms a natural part of several of the modules.
4 and 5 are included in the project.
6 and 7 pervade all parts of the course.
8 is supported by formative feedback on research seminars written by the student.

Assessment

1,2,6 and 8 are formally assessed as coursework.
4 and 5 are assessed through the project thesis.
Time management (7) and group working (3), though not formally addressed, are necessary for the successful completion of the programme.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme handbooks.