

Megan Baldissara



mbaldissara2@huskers.unl.edu;



www.linkedin.com/in/megan-baldissara;

PROFILE

- Ph.D. Assistantship in Wildlife Ecology at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (USA).
 - Distinction in MSc Conservation and Biodiversity with thesis on behaviour and cognition of blue tits depending on environmental conditions at the University of Exeter (UK)
 - First class honours in BSc Biological Sciences at the University of Plymouth (UK)
 - Passionate about conservation research, having successfully worked in Europe and Africa to research wildlife.
 - Bilingual: Proficient in English and Italian.
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EDUCATION

PhD in Natural Resources - Conservation, University of Nebraska - Lincoln, USA; 2021 - Present

- Courses with relative grades: Landscape Ecology (A+), Ecological Statistics (A), Applications to Remote Sensing (A+) and Digital Badges in Production Agriculture in Nebraska: [Crops](#) and [Livestock](#)
- Teaching Assistant for the Wildlife field techniques course, assisting students in monitoring squirrels.
- Graduate student representative helping to host and coordinate weekly seminars held by the University.
- **Thesis:** [Identifying and Prioritizing Habitat for Pheasant Conservation and Management in Agriculturally Dominated Landscapes](#). Fieldwork and remote sensing data are currently being collected for this project.

Master of Science in Conservation and Biodiversity; University of Exeter, UK; 2019 - 2020

Distinction

- 14-day field course in Kenya to research African biodiversity and understand human-wildlife conflicts.
- Field trip to the Royal Botanic Kew Gardens (London, UK) to study global plant conservation actions.
- Module on planning and leading conservation projects; Grade: 97/100 in the exam.
- **Thesis:** Independently conducted a study on the cognition and behaviour of blue tits (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) depending on environmental conditions. Data from circa 60 birds performing different behavioural tests was collected from images and video recordings and analysed with Excel and R. I obtained a distinction.

Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences; University of Plymouth, UK; 2015 - 2019

First class honours

- Fieldtrips in the UK and the Azores to survey, measure and research local fauna.
- **Thesis:** Independently planned, conducted and analysed a study on the effectiveness of a new method (chew cards) to monitor the abundance of the invasive grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) in the UK. The behaviour of squirrels interacting with chew cards was studied with Excel, R and GIS. I obtained a first mark.

Awards:

- Added to Dean's list for **exemplary performance in each year of the undergraduate course**.
- Awarded the Microbiology Society Undergraduate Prize for **best undergraduate performance**.

EXPERIENCE IN NATURAL SCIENCE – CONSERVATION

Field Biologist and Field Coordinator; Made in The Wild, Namibia and Zimbabwe; July - August 2022

- Coordinated the field course titled: “How to be a field biologist” teaching fundamental skills on how to survive in the wild, identify and survey common African wildlife species and create conservation projects with local communities. General conservation and animal biology notions were also taught.
- Assisted students making sure that their needs were provided for, ensuring their physical and mental health.
- Collected camera trap data to remotely assess biodiversity and its correlation with habitat

Squirrel Research Assistant; The Lancashire Wildlife Trust, UK; November 2020 – July 2021

- Remotely organised and analysed, with Excel and GIS, grey squirrel control data to inform the control strategy of this invasive mammal and provide evidence for funding applications.

Project Coordinator Assistant, Made in the Wild, UK; February 2021 – July 2021

- Remotely assisted in the management and coordination of a field course in Zimbabwe for students interested to pursue a career in wildlife research, conservation and media.

Summer Field Biologist; The Painted Dog Research Trust, Zimbabwe; August 2019

- Set, collected and analysed camera trap data in Hwange National Park (area: 14,651 km²) under challenging tropical conditions, to monitor the movement behaviour of the threatened painted dog (*Lycaon pictus*) and other carnivores. This work resulted in painted dogs being protected from poachers.
- Started a new long-term project on the knobthorn tree (*Acacia nigrescens*)' population dynamics. Analysed distribution, age and physiological data using R and GIS to understand the tree's population change with time.
- Engaged with local school children in activities communicating conservation science.

Geographical Information Science (GIS) and Predation Research Student Placement; The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT), UK; September 2017– September 2018

- Please refer to [this annual review](#): under Partridge and Biometrics and Predation Research sections for precise descriptions of project outcomes.
- Analysed camera trap images (about 50 thousand images), GPS data, scats, stomach contents and hair to understand fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) population dynamics aiding fox population management decisions.
- Participated in more than 20 voluntary bird, mammal and [invertebrate surveys](#) (e.g. partridges and hares) using various techniques such as walk and car transects, bird netting and pitfall traps.
- Generated landscape and wildlife maps and analysed spatial data with ArcGIS.





Research Assistant; Operation Wallacea, Romania; July 2016





- Quantified spatial change in different taxa, using a wide variety of ecological survey techniques. The surveys included assessing the value of meadows by surveying key plant species, Pollard counts and sweep net surveys of butterflies, point count and mist net surveys for birds, surveys for herpetofauna, small mammal trapping plus marking and camera trapping for large mammal species.





ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE, ACHIEVEMENTS and ABILITIES

- Participated in the 2021 Wildlife Society annual conference which I am a member of since 2021
- Member of the American Association of Geographers (2021 – present)
- Proficient in Microsoft office (e.g. Outlook, Excel and Word), GIS and R and basic coding skills in Google Engine
- Italian Driving licence (2014 - present), USA driving license (2021- present) and 4 by 4 driving certificate (2017)
- English tutor (2016 – 2021)
- Fundraiser for the Painted Dog Research Trust (2019-2021)
- Attended weekly scientific seminars by the Linnean Society of London (2015-2020)
- Student ambassador: organised open days and gave talks to students (2018-2020)
- University team basketball captain. Organised games, transport and referees (2015-2019)
- First Aid certificate (2019)
- Cultural exchange in USA (2013/2014) and China (2017)

REFERENCES

 Dr. Daniel Uden
 Professor at UNL
 duden2@unl.edu
 +1 402-472-3424

 Dr. Greg Rasmussen
 Head of the Painted
dog Research Trust
 greg@painteddogrese
 arch.org

 Dr. Julie Ewald
 Head of GIS at GWCT
 jewald@gwct.org.uk
 +44 1425 651 005