

Writing your C.V. for a Conservation Career

Write a C.V. for conservation that shows your skills, interests & impact

What conservation organisations look for

Most conservation organisations aren't expecting years of experience - they look for evidence of:

- interest and passion for nature/wildlife
- willingness to learn
- teamwork & communication
- reliability and responsibility
- observation & problem-solving
- initiative (self-driven actions)
- care for animals/environment
- respect for safety & welfare

Think about areas of your life where you demonstrate some or all of these things:

What counts as experience?

Formal experiences could include:

- Zoo/animal care work experience
- Wildlife related youth programmes
- Conservation volunteering
- Working or volunteering in animal shelters
- Environmental project work
- Science clubs or Eco/Sustainability clubs

Semi-formal experience:

- DofE volunteering
- Scouts/Guides
- School leadership roles

Hidden informal experience that counts in conservation:

- Birdwatching/ID skills
- Nature photography
- Citizen science (e.g iNaturalist)
- Gardening or allotment work
- Caring for family pets (observation skills)
- Researching environmental topics
- Community litter picks or campaigning
- Climate activism or youth voice forums





C.V STRUCTURE

Name & Contact

Personal Profile/Motivation

Skills (mapped to evidence)

Experience

Projects & Volunteering

Education & Key Courses

Achievements/Awards

Interests (relevant)

Name:

Contact:

Personal profile section

Ask yourself:

- Why do I care about conservation?
- What interests me?
- What am I hoping to learn?

Example for a zoo placement:

I'm passionate about wildlife conservation and hope to gain experience supporting animal care and behaviour research. I enjoy working outdoors, learning new skills and supporting team goals.

Example for environmental NGO volunteering:

I'm motivated by climate and nature protection and enjoy helping with community engagement and communications. I'm confident presenting and working with others.

Skills section

Map your activities to [Skills Builder Framework](#)

Here are some examples of how you can do this:

- **Listening:** observing animal behaviour, following instructions, safety briefings
- **Speaking:** giving presentations, leading eco-club activities
- **Problem Solving:** designing a survey, testing solutions
- **Creativity:** posters, photography, biodiversity campaigns
- **Adapting:** dealing with weather, setbacks, tricky tasks
- **Planning:** evidence of progression, self-improvement
- **Leadership:** running a club, mentoring younger students
- **Teamwork:** collaborating on fieldwork or school projects

Example

Skill: Teamwork

Evidence: *Worked in a group of 4 to run a litter-pick campaign in our local park; coordinated volunteers and recorded waste data.*



Experience section (unpaid included)

Try to bullet point a list that shows **action + outcome**.

Format:

Verb + Task + Impact

Example:

- **Identified** garden **birds** weekly **using an ID guide** and **recorded results for a citizen science project**.
- **Assisted** with **caring for rabbits** at an animal shelter, **including feeding, cleaning and enrichment**.
- **Partnered** with local council **to install bird boxes**; monitored nesting **success across spring term**.

These are real conservation outcomes, even if small.

Education section

If you can, try to find links to conservation pathways:

List GCSEs being taken (or taken):

- Biology
- Geography
- English
- Maths
- Art
- Design & Tech
- Media etc.

Add lines about why your subject is relevant to conservation:

- *Geography - learning about ecosystems and climate impacts*
- *Art - improving wildlife drawing & observation skills*
- *Media Studies - learning digital storytelling for campaigns*

Volunteering and Projects section

In conservation careers, volunteering and projects show:

- ✓ Commitment to nature
- ✓ Initiative (you didn't wait to be told)
- ✓ Real-world understanding
- ✓ Practical skills
- ✓ Reliability

Format:

Use action + impact

Examples of Volunteering Experience

Volunteer, Local Wildlife Trust – March–July 2024

- *Assisted with invasive species removal and habitat maintenance.*
- *Recorded butterfly sightings as part of a monitoring survey.*
- *Worked in a team of 8 volunteers during weekend conservation days.*

Eco-Committee Member, School Sustainability Team – 2023–Present

- *Helped organise a plastic-reduction campaign across the school.*
- *Designed posters and delivered assemblies to 300+ students.*
- *Led a litter survey and presented findings to senior leadership.*

Example Project Entry:

Independent Project: Urban Bird Survey – Spring 2024

- *Conducted weekly bird identification surveys in local park.*
- *Recorded species diversity and compared findings to national data.*
- *Presented findings in Geography coursework presentation.*

Achievements and Awards section

In conservation, awards can show:

- ✓ Commitment
- ✓ Consistency
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Academic strength
- ✓ Skill development
- ✓ Resilience

Before writing this section ask:

- What have I done that shows I care about nature?
- Where have I given my time to help something?
- What have I completed that shows commitment?
- What have I been recognised for?

When writing your examples, keep concise, but show relevance.

Example:

Achievements & Awards

- *Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award – 2024 (Volunteering with local environmental group/Chester Zoo).*
- *School Science Award – 2024 (Recognised for independent research project on pollinators).*
- *Wildlife Photography Finalist – Regional Youth Competition 2024.*
- *Eco-Committee Leadership Recognition – 2023.*

Or show what impact it had:

- *Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award – Completed 3-month volunteering placement with conservation group, supporting habitat restoration work.*
- *Science Award – Designed and presented research on soil health and biodiversity.*

Interests section

Avoid including things like “reading & watching TV”, instead try see if you can use:

- wildlife photography
- amphibian ID
- gardening/cultivation
- hiking & outdoor navigation
- eco-campaigning
- pet care & enrichment
- science communication
- digital skills

Common mistakes when writing your C.V.

Try to avoid:

- ✗ apologising for lack of experience
- ✗ listing only paid work
- ✗ not showing motivation
- ✗ forgetting transferable skills
- ✗ writing bland or generic profiles
- ✗ skipping outcomes (“why this mattered”)

Useful key terms when writing your C.V.

- habitat management
- welfare & enrichment
- animal husbandry
- biodiversity
- monitoring/surveying
- engagement/education
- fieldwork
- data recording
- sustainability
- climate action
- GIS/mapping
- citizen science
- rewilding
- campaigns & advocacy

Personal Statement

Questions to consider

1. Why do I care about nature?

Start with motivation, conservation organisations care about this. If you can answer this clearly, your personal statement will sound real, not generic.

2. What have I already done?

All experience matters, however big or small. E.g. Have I taken part in a litter pick? Have I done Duke of Edinburgh? Am I in eco-club or a school sustainability group?

3. What skills do I use without realising?

Think beyond “qualifications.” E.g. Do I enjoy working outdoors? Can I work as part of a team? Now ask: Where have I shown this skill?

4. When have I shown responsibility?

Commitment is often more important than experience. E.g. Have I had a leadership role at school? Do teachers rely on me? Have I committed to something weekly or monthly?

5. When did I solve a problem?

Conservation is full of unexpected challenges, think about examples of when you used initiative, creative thinking and overcame a problem.

6. How do I work with others?

Teamwork is huge in conservation. Think of times where you’ve worked as part of a team. E.g. Have I completed group coursework? Have I been part of a sports team or club?

7. What subjects connect to this role?

You don’t need all top grades, but you do need relevance. Ask yourself, ‘How does this subject link to the job I’m applying for?’

8. What have I achieved?

Think wider than academic awards. E.g. Have I been recognised for effort? Have I fundraised for a cause?

9. If an employer asked me...’Why should we choose you?’

Try the following: You should choose me because I am _____, I have shown this by _____, and I am excited to learn _____.