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**Post Doctoral Research Assistant**

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| **Job level** | **PDRA** | **Reports to** | **Professor Samuel Turvey** |
| **Directorate** | **Science** | **Function** |  |
| **Contract** | **Fixed Term Contract** | **Location** | **Regent’s Park** |

**Responsibility for resources**

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| **Direct line reports** | **None** | **Responsibility for other resources** |  |
| **Financial resources** | **Responsible for reporting on grant expenditure and activities as required by the funder; responsible for raising additional project funding** |

**Our vision and mission**

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is an international conservation charity, driven by science, working to restore wildlife in the UK and around the world. Our vision is a world where wildlife thrives and every role, every person in every corner of ZSL has one thing in common – we are all conservationists, and passionate about restoring wildlife.

**Purpose of the role**

ZSL is seeking a Postdoctoral Research Assistant (PDRA) to work on a long-term project funded by the Arcus Foundation entitled “Building a Future for the Hainan gibbon”. The role will be a 2-year fixed-term position, but with the possibility to extend this position. It is based in the UK (in London / hybrid working), but with the potential for extended periods of time to be spent in China.

The Hainan gibbon is the world's rarest primate, with only a single Critically Endangered population of c.45 individuals still surviving in one forest area in Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park, Hainan, China. There is an urgent need for evidence-based research to understand the status and ecological requirements of this population, and for the identification of appropriate management and recovery strategies based on best-practice conservation science.

The project provides an opportunity for an early-career researcher to play a key role in the conservation of a Critically Endangered species, by conducting novel scientific research and by providing direct support and coordination of activities aiming to recover this tiny population. The PDRA will establish a new scientific baseline on the patterns and factors underpinning Hainan gibbon landscape and habitat use; the species’ population dynamics (including new group formation); its response and resilience to environmental change; and ecological scenarios that can promote gibbon recovery. There will also be potential to engage with other conservation research activities in Hainan. The PDRA will also provide training and support for collaborating researchers and students at Hainan University and other Chinese institutions, and will engage with conservation decision-makers to ensure that scientific findings are used to guide evidence-based conservation planning (e.g., provide recommendations for habitat restoration). This work will form a key component of wider efforts to support evidence-based conservation and awareness-raising for Hainan gibbons, and to coordinate knowledge and expertise between stakeholders involved with gibbon conservation in China and elsewhere across Asia.

**Key responsibilities**

* Spatial and ecological analyses of existing datasets compiled by project partners in Hainan (monitoring data for gibbon groups and individuals, vegetation data, canopy camera trap data)
* Lead on writing and submission of scientific papers, as well as technical documents and reports as required
* Training and supervision of students in the UK and/or China
* Share and explain project findings with policy-makers in China (e.g. governing authorities)
* Further dissemination of project results, e.g. through presentations at academic and conservation conferences, media and public engagement
* Support or coordination of conservation activities associated with the project in China and internationally, including capacity building, co-organizing conservation meetings and workshops, policy advocacy, and/or public outreach
* General administrative support for the project
* Grant applications for additional project activities

The duties and responsibilities described are not a comprehensive list and additional tasks may be assigned from time to time that are in line with the level of the role.

**Person Specification**

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| Experience | |
| Essential | * PhD in conservation biology, population ecology, landscape ecology or similar * Strong quantitative analytical skills in relevant ecological areas |
| Desirable | * Experience of fieldwork or research placements outside the UK * Prior involvement with conservation project(s) involved with recovery of tiny populations * Basic Chinese (Mandarin) language skills, and/or the motivation to learn |
| Knowledge and skills | |
| Essential | * Ecology and conservation of threatened species * Population dynamics * Conservation management and action planning * Key issues in conservation in Asia * Use of statistical analysis software packages * Effective oral and written communication skills * Self-motivated and able to lead project work * Ability to spend extended periods of time independently outside the UK, within different working environments and cultures * Cultural sensitivity and willingness to work with people of different backgrounds |
| Additional requirements | |
| Essential | * The position will be office-based, but considerable travel is likely to be required * Strong commitment to creating a culture that lives ZSL values and commitment to safeguarding, equality and diversity (collaborative, inspiring, inclusive, innovative, impactful and ethical) * To comply with and promote Health and Safety policies and procedures |