

# FUR, FEATHERS & FUTURES

Welcome to our first edition of Fur, Feathers and Futures: our Higher Education Animal Welfare Student Newsletter! As Head of School for Animal Welfare and Veterinary Nursing it gives me great pleasure to contribute to this wonderful way of celebrating our higher education students' success! All of our degrees are awarded by the University of Northampton, and you really should check out how our degree students are set on track to come the 'pack leaders' of the future!

*Carley Daniels*



Watch  
Sophie's video  
about studying  
her degree at  
Moulton

**Sophie's success: since graduating from her BSc Zoology with 1<sup>st</sup> class honours** Sophie has gone on to work in Chester Zoo whilst completing her MRes in Biological Sciences and gaining a UCV Silver award for making a difference!

**HE students present at international UFAW conference representing Moulton College and the University of Northampton!**

HE students - Anabella Skelham and Charlotte Sheridan presented their research at the UFAW 19<sup>th</sup> international student conference (hosted by Moulton College) which was well received by animal welfare experts and researchers alike, well done!



**19th STUDENT ANIMAL WELFARE  
CONFERENCE**

Sponsored by the Universities Federation  
for Animal Welfare

Hosted by Moulton College (via Teams)  
Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025 – 12-3pm



# Our 2025 Wildlife Expedition to Costa Rica



There's something unforgettable about waking up to the loud whooping bark or roar of Howler Monkeys (*Alouatta palliata*) echoing through the forest at 5 a.m.

In the heart of Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula, it's not an alarm clock but nature that stirs you from sleep—raw, alive, and completely unfiltered. For our group of 13 Applied Zoology and Animal Behavioural Science degree students, this was the sound that woke them on their first morning on a journey that would open their eyes, minds, and hearts to human-wildlife interconnectedness and the importance of science and conservation. Interested...??

Click to read the full blog post







# Biodiversity at Moulton College: A Living Laboratory for Conservation and Learning

At Moulton College, biodiversity isn't just a buzzword, it's a living, breathing part of our campus and curriculum. Spanning over 456 hectares, our estate is home to a remarkable variety of species, habitats, and student-led research projects that contribute to both ecological health and hands-on education.

## **A Legacy of Biodiversity Monitoring**

Our biodiversity journey began decades ago, with early wildlife surveys dating back to 1983. These historical records laid the foundation for ongoing monitoring, which has evolved through the integration of modern tools like camera traps, footprint tunnels, and ecological software. Despite gaps due to staff turnover, recent efforts have reignited our commitment to biodiversity tracking.

## **Student-Led Discoveries**

From moth light traps to aquatic invertebrate surveys, students in our Animal Behavioural Science and Applied Zoology degree programs have played a pivotal role in biodiversity monitoring. Highlights include:

- **Bird Surveys (Spring 2025):** Students recorded high avian diversity across woodland, farmland, and even anthropogenic areas, using apps and statistical tools to analyse species richness.
- **Aquatic Surveys:** Kick sampling revealed rich invertebrate communities in both stream and pond habitats, with detritivores forming the backbone of local food webs.
- **Mini Farm & Arboretum Project:** Students proposed habitat enhancements like wildflower strips, log piles, and wetland patches to boost biodiversity near the college entrance.

## What We Found

Our species records span over 250 plant species, 200+ invertebrates, 50 birds, and 30 mammals including several species with high conservation status (Table 1).

Table 1: Species with high conservation value spotted on the campus in the last five years

Scientific Name	Common Name	Wildlife and Countryside Act <sup>1</sup>	UK BAP Status <sup>2</sup>	IUCN Red List Status <sup>3</sup>	UK Birds of Conservation Concern <sup>4</sup>
<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn owl	Schedule 1 - Protected	Not Listed	Least Concern	Green
<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Duncock	Not Listed	Priority Species (formerly listed)	Least Concern	Amber
<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Linnet	Not Listed	Priority Species	Least Concern	Red
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard duck	Not Listed	Not Listed	Least Concern	Amber
<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Moorhen	Not Listed	Not Listed	Least Concern	Amber
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Songthrush	Not Listed	Priority Species	Least Concern	Amber
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling	Not Listed	Priority Species	Near Threatened	Red
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Woodpigeon	Not Listed	Not Listed	Least Concern	Amber
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Wren	Not Listed	Not Listed	Least Concern	Amber
<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Yellowhammer	Not Listed	Priority Species	Not Listed	Red
<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Eurasian Otter	Schedule 5 - Protected	Priority Species	Globally: Near Threatened UK: Least Concern	
<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	European Hedgehog	Not Listed	Priority Species	Vulnerable	
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	English Bluebell	Schedule 8 - Protected	Not Listed	Not Listed	

1. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, UK Public General Acts 1981 c. 69. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents>

2. JNCC 2024. UK Biodiversity Framework. Published May 2024. Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-biodiversity-framework>

3. IUCN 2025. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2025-1. Available at: <https://www.iucnredlist.org>

4. Stanbury, A., Eaton, M.A., Aebischer, N.J., Balmer, D.E., Brown, A.F., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D.G., and Win, I. (2021). Birds of Conservation Concern 5: The status of bird populations in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. *British Birds* 114: 723–747. Published December 2021.

## Challenges & Opportunities

Balancing scientific rigour with educational goals presents unique challenges. Variability in survey methods, limited access to specialist equipment, and seasonal constraints all impact data quality. However, these hurdles also offer learning opportunities and underscore the need for a centralised biodiversity database and standardised protocols.

## Looking Ahead

We’re committed to enhancing biodiversity through:

- A central reporting system (e.g., Microsoft Forms or iRecord)
- Biodiversity champions within our Sustainability Pillar
- Updated habitat mapping e.g. UKHab and targeted species surveys
- Rewilding projects with student involvement

These steps align with our goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and reinforce our role as a hub for sustainability-focused education.

See the photos to go with this blog post here: [Biodiversity at Moulton College](#)

# Student Article - Dissertation Research

Victoria Morrison, a 2024 graduate of the BSc in Animal Behavioural Science and Welfare, conducted research in her final year that has inspired her to enter the veterinary profession. She has started in a new role as a veterinary care assistant but is hoping to progress much further and take her passion for animals into specific roles caring for exotics.

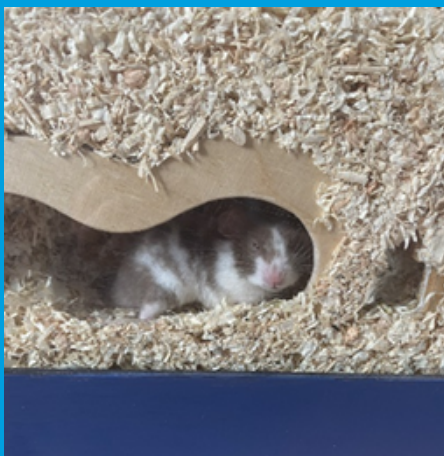
Victoria, says “Dissertation projects can enhance employability by developing applicable skills such as research, problem solving, and communication, especially in the veterinary industry”. She is hoping to publish her work at a later date, maximising its impact.

Her project focussed specifically on the care provided for hamsters.

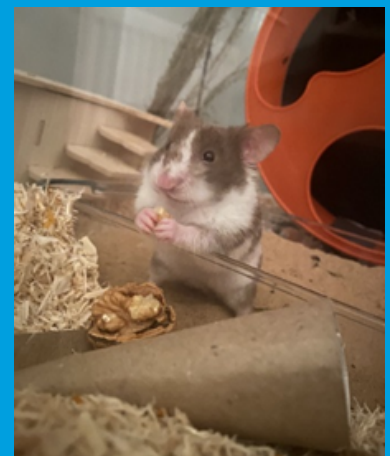
Despite being one of the most popular household pets, they are misunderstood and often provided improper care standards.

Pet shops often advertise them as low maintenance pets that require minimal care. Their small size can appeal to young children with the misconception that they require little space. However, All species of hamsters require a minimum of 100cm by 50cm of unbroken floorspace with at least 20cm of deep bedding and environmental enrichment to encourage mental stimulation.

Victoria’s research explored concepts such as welfare, husbandry and veterinary knowledge. She confirmed that there are many uncertainties around hamster-care standards, especially provision of veterinary care. She also identified a link between substandard enclosures and poor enrichment, showing that those who use wire cages, which are not recommended, also provided lower levels of enrichment.



Victoria hopes that this new knowledge will go some way to helping improve the welfare of hamsters, especially if communicated by veterinary carers and nurses and she plans to be at the front of the initiative as she embarks on her new role.





# Other experiences our degree students get with us

Raptor Foundation - Animal Behavioural Science and Applied Zoology students had a behind the scenes day with the charity's team learning about how they operate, rescue & rehabilitate birds of prey including comprehensive information on nutrition & health care



Guest Speaker - Katie Chapman from Woburn Safari Park - Head of Conservation, Research and Zoo Licensing

Guest Speakers - Wen Yan - Veterinary Training Manager for Animals Asia and Dr. Bao Lei - Nanjing Agriculture Animal Pharmaceutical discussing perspectives on animal welfare in China.



## 2025 Prize winners

Charlotte Sheridan - Excellence in Higher Education

## HE inter-college competition prizes

Ellie Gayton - Judges 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize

Zach Dear - Audience 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize

Jack Bullock - Audience choice 3<sup>rd</sup> prize

# Celebrating our student success!

CONGRATULATIONS to our graduates for 2025!!	
BSc Zoology (inc top-up)	
Cerys	Burt
Evie	Frankmann
Isobel	Perkis
Charlotte	Sheridan
James	Wheeler
Hollie	Liddle
Louisa	Parker-Allen
Jack	Bullock
Zach	Dear
Keeley	Russell
George	Crick
Connie	Steventon
BSc Applied Animal Studies (inc. top-up)	
Annie	Skelham
Ellie	Gayton
Vicki	Morrison
Lily	Stratton
FdSc Zoology	
Emma	Sambridge
Joshua	Child
FdSc Applied Animal Studies (now FdSc Animal Behavioural Science & Welfare)	
Eleanor	Holland
Imogen	Hale
Crystal	Stewart

Overall award percentage of good degrees from School of Animal Welfare (1st or 2.1)		
Overall	62.50%	10 out of 16
Zoology		
Zoology - overall	58.30%	7 out of 12
BSc	62.50%	5 out of 8
Top up	50.00%	2 out of 4
Animal		
Animal - overall	75%	3 out of 4
BSc	100%	2 out of 2
Top up	50%	1 out of 2

## Areas of year on year improvements in our NSS Scores (2025)

- **Academic Support:** satisfaction jumped from 69% to 89.6%
- **Assessment & Feedback:** satisfaction up from 66.9% to 85% now above national benchmark.
- **Student Voice Satisfaction:** Up by 12.3%
- **Mental Wellbeing Communication:** Achieved a perfect 100% score, outperforming the sector by 15.7%.

100%



Three of our fabulous Level 6 Applied Zoology students embarked on a personal challenge: Jack, James and Zach climbed Mount Snowdon on the 7th November. This was part of their fundraising initiative to raise vital funds for an expedition in Costa Rica.

# How can you get involved?

Follow us on social media



Attend one of our HE taster sessions to take part in real, live lessons!

Come to one of our open events and see us in person [click](#)

Apply for one of our courses through [UCAS](#) and come to our applicant day

Become one of our Higher Education Ambassadors or [Employer Stakeholders](#) to contribute to what our degree students need to be industry ready!