



L-Università ta' Malta
Institute of Earth Systems



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Graduated with a B.Sc. (Hons) in
Earth Systems in November 2016

"I decided to study for the B.Sc. in Earth Systems because the course had just opened and seemed to cover a diverse range of natural topics that interested me. Up until then (and probably during the first year or two of the course) I had no idea what I wanted to focus on, let alone which career path I should choose, and I will admit, starting out with the course didn't make this any clearer. However, I always tended to gravitate to studying something which interested me, rather than just choosing a degree based on the amount of money I would make from it in the future. Although I found the B.Sc. tough, and was surprised at the challenges which the first year brought me (especially physics & chemistry, neither of which I had ever done before), I think that the large work load, long university hours, and strenuous exams prepared me well for my M.Sc. in the UK, and in work life thereafter. During a summer I conducted an internship with Sharklab and gained my first ever practical experience working with animals and in a research organization.

"Once we covered the unit on conservation, I had a realization that this area of work might be something that would interest me in. With the help of Dr Conrad throughout my dissertation, I managed to delve into the issue of illegal wildlife trade, and realized that this area is something I definitely want to work in. Although difficult, doing research on my dissertation topic was a highlight of the course and brought me to where I am today. Apart from this, our field trip to Iceland was also probably one of the most memorable experiences, as being outdoors in nature and actually collecting data was such an innovative and ideal way to learn. The group of lecturers that taught our course, in particular Prof. Cassar, Dr Conrad and Dr Micallef, made our experience and gave me a good taste of university life.

"Once I completed the course, I went on to travel central America and Asia and volunteered in Thailand with elephants. I studied for an M.Sc. in Global Wildlife Health and Conservation at the University of Bristol and conducted a behavioural thesis on a group of semi-wild Asian elephants in northern Thailand. Following this, I spent three months living in a remote beach village in Costa Rica, collecting data on Olive Ridley turtles and their hatchlings. Work here involved conducting night patrols, tagging nesting turtles, collecting data on the turtle, protecting the eggs by translocating them

either on the beach or into our hatchery, and collecting data on hatchling success. Once I finished my three months with turtle research, I conducted field research on hand-raised sloths that were collared and released. I used radio telemetry in order to track the sloths, and would spend approximately 9 hours nightly observing their behaviour. Eventually I got a paid job as a volunteer coordinator at Alturas Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehabilitation Center, also in Costa Rica. After a few months, I was promoted to Program Coordinator and am now in charge of developing the sanctuary and our animal protocols, our volunteer and internship programmes, and caring for the welfare of our rescued animals and rehabilitated wildlife.

“Whilst completing my dissertation during my B.Sc., I developed a passion to aid in exposing the illegal wildlife trade. Now, working at one of the busiest rescue centres in the country, the majority of our rescues have been confiscated from the illegal pet trade and from Costa Rica’s black market, and I feel content and satisfied that I am helping the cause.

“Eventually, I would like to branch out and work with global organisations, such as Bornfree, that rescue wildlife from illicit trade and unfavourable conditions, and rehabilitate the animals into a sanctuary haven.

“You might not initially have a clear idea or vision of what you would like to do with this degree, but as long as there is passion and an urge to improve our earth in any way, be it the ocean, our soil or our animals, do it - and make a change!”