PROJECT TITLE: Resilience and Risk in the Anthropocene: Quantifying Biodiversity Responses to Human Pressures

Project Science Theme: Evolution and Biodiversity

Project keywords: Biodiversity, Anthropogenic, Extinction, Resilience, Vertebrates

Lead Institution: Bristol
Lead Supervisor: Dr Christopher Clements, Bristol, School of Biological Sciences
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Co-Supervisor: Prof Robin Freeman, Zoological Society of London, Institute of Zoology
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Project aims and methods:

Quantifying the impacts of anthropogenic pressures on global biodiversity is critical if we are to identifying the mechanisms driving diversity loss and - crucially – inform strategies to reverse current biodiversity trends. This project will use the Human Footprint Index (HFI) in combination with the world's largest database of biodiversity change (>1.8M abundance time series from >390,000 unique locations on 6700 species) to – for the first time – assess whether the HFI impacts the trend, resilience, and extinction risk of vertebrates globally. The student will be embedded in a research group focussed on quantifying human impacts on biodiversity and will spend time visiting collaborators at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), University of Exeter, and University of Barcelona, providing opportunities to experience research approaches and network across multiple international organisations. To ensure the student gains a broad suite of research and applied skills the supervisors will provide training in: R, ArcGIS, advanced Bayesian Statistics, resilience theory, quantifying extinction risk, and high impact paper writing. This project will work closely with the conservation focussed project partners ZSL and the West of England Combined Authority, allowing the student to liaise directly with with policy makers and work on public outreach projects.

Project Collaborative partner:

Institute of Zoology (ZSL) will provide discounted costs for attending workshops (where applicable).

Useful recruitment links:

For information relating to the research project please contact the lead Supervisor via: c.clements@bristol.ac.uk

Bristol NERC GW4+ DTP Prospectus:
https://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research/great-western-four-doctoral-training-partnership-nerc/

How to apply to the University of Bristol:
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/apply/

The application deadline is Thursday 8 January 2026 at 2359 GMT