

# UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies Training and Research Programme

## Information Paper

# UKOTA Scholarship update from Helen Larzleer

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**UKOTA Scholarship update from Helen Larzleer**  
**University of Reading – Applied Ecology and Conservation**

This course has been very interesting so far. A downside I have found is that there is an almost exclusive focus on British flora and fauna, however the techniques (observation, data collection etc) taught in the programme can be easily used in any area of the world.

As this programme is an applied course, there is little lab work, and lots of field work. I've found this to be a really strong point. There is also a good emphasis on managing parks and woodlands, and working to balance the needs of the user and the needs of the environment which should be particularly useful in many of the OTs.

Through this course I was able to participate in the Tropical Field Biology course to Borneo this summer, which was truly a once in a lifetime experience. The only marked coursework for this trip was the final report. In the end mine came to 11,000 words, and I received an A. This was good practice for writing my final project!

During the Borneo trip I was able to secure the course organiser as my third year project advisor, and we have begun planning my project. I was glad to have started this process so early as, in keeping with the goals of my scholarship, I am hoping to collect the data for my project (likely focusing on Dragonflies) on the island of Montserrat. During the JNCC OT student workshop last Easter I learned that Montserrat was a good candidate for capacity building of this kind, and have since been in touch with Mrs Janice Panton, the Montserrat UKOTA representative.

If all goes well I shall do my data collection there this summer. I am also hoping to work with Janice and the Government of Montserrat to explore the possibility of working with them after my graduation. If possible, I can design my work to be the first stage of a longer project that will benefit the ecology and people of Montserrat, and fulfil the goals of the scholarship.

Obviously this plan depends on the future goals of the Government of Montserrat, and if I cannot work for them directly after graduation then other plans may involve working with the JNCC in the UK, or exploring opportunities on other OTs.