



Simon – Tim Moya Associates

Job Title: Principal Ecologist

Imperial Course Title: Ecology, Evolution and Conservation (MSc)

Graduation Year: 2007

○ **What has been your career path up until now?**

Prior to the MSc, I gained a BSc in Biology from the University of York, graduating in 2005. I then spent a summer undertaking a project surveying ponds on farmland, gaining the higher level stewardship scheme. I then worked in York for DEFRA in their learning and development team, i.e. not in an ecology-related role, in order to raise funds to undertake the MSc course.

On graduating from Imperial College I applied for jobs as and Ecological Consultant and within a month or so I was given a position within the ecology team of a large engineering consultancy. Over the following 5.5 years I gained experience in a wide variety of ecology surveys as well as report writing and project management. In 2013 I joined Tim Moya Associates as their Principal Ecologist to lead and develop their ecology services.

○ **What does your job involve?**

Working as an Ecological Consultant is an exciting job for any wildlife enthusiast as you get close-up experience of a variety of species, particularly, amphibians, reptiles, bats, badgers, birds and plants. As with any wildlife related occupation, the hours are often 'unsociable' and can involve travel throughout the country. Some ecologists are able to forge a career as specialist surveyors, but the majority of roles require a certain degree of time in the office organising surveys, writing reports and communicating with clients. As my role is now as the head of a small ecology team, I have responsibility for finances, marketing and project management as well as still getting my hands dirty on surveys. During the summer 'survey season' a typical day might involve working in the office during the day and then heading out to undertake surveys in the evening, for instance, great crested newt surveys, which involve placing traps in the evening, searching for newts by torch light once it gets dark and then returning early in the morning to pick up the traps.

○ **What are your future plans?**

At Tim Moya Associates our plan is to expand the ecology team over the coming years, increasing the size of the team and the breadth of work we're involved in. It is an exciting position to be in. Personally I am always looking to develop my skills and expertise. I currently have survey licences for great crested newt and barn owl and am aiming to gain my bat licence by the end of the year.

○ **What part of your course did you particularly enjoy?**

I enjoyed the whole MSc course, from the practical elements to the theory. The highlight for me was undertaking my project fieldwork in Australia, studying fig wasps.

- ***What skills did you develop within your degree that you find useful in your present role?***

My current role requires the reporting of ecological surveys in a scientific format and I think the MSc course was important to learn that skill.

- ***Were you involved in any extracurricular activities?***

While I was studying at Imperial I played for the University men's basketball team. It meant travelling from Silwood into London every week for training and matches but we won the league undefeated so it was worth it. I think it's important to get involved in extra-curricular activities to get your mind away from studying occasionally.

- ***Did you use the Careers Service or go to Careers events? E.g. job fairs, employer talks etc.***

I don't think I used the Imperial careers service. I think nowadays most vacancies are advertised online but I can see that careers fairs would be valuable to meet and talk to potential employers in your chosen field.

- ***Could you give us one or more career tips for Imperial graduates?***

If you have an idea of what career you'd like to get into, I'd say it's well worth trying to get some kind of experience other than just the taught elements of your course. For instance, graduates looking for jobs as ecological consultants can give themselves an advantage by volunteering with local conservation groups such as the local Bat Group or Amphibian and Reptile Group. Apart from being an interesting extra-curricular activity, being involved with these groups can give you a head start on survey techniques and on your CV it shows that you're genuinely interested rather than just studious. Particularly when there are a lot of applicants for a job - that little bit of extra experience may be all it takes to secure an interview above applicants whose experience is limited to the modules of their degree course.