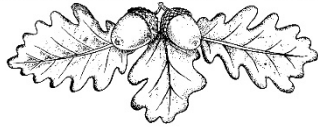

CHARLOTTE'S REPORT

Masters in Primate Conservation Grant with the Jim Cronin Memorial Fund

Jim Cronin Memorial Fund



Charity No 1126939



I'm incredibly grateful to the Jim Cronin Memorial Fund, who is funding 50% of the course fees for my masters in Primate Conservation (Human Primate Interface). Completing this course as a part-time student while continuing to work as a member of the PCS at Monkey World is not the easiest route to take, but I believe it is going to pay off greatly, not only for my professional development but also for primate conservation in general.

I started the course at the end of September, and I have already met many world-renowned primatologists, submitted my first assignment and visited Apenheul park in the Netherlands. One of my first tasks was to write a short research paper on a topic of my choice that would be suitable for submission to a scientific journal. Quite a daunting task for someone who hasn't written any scientific material for a few years! The title of my paper was "A review of the primate genus represented by #petmonkey on Instagram: implications for conservation and welfare". Shockingly, I had access to over 8,000 posts in which primates from a wide variety of species were being kept as pets. Capuchins (Cebus & Sapajus) were the most frequently represented primates under this hashtag, followed closely by chimpanzees, squirrel monkeys and lemurs. I made suggestions and recommendations as to how social media sites could improve their guidelines and reporting systems to help protect primates from this trade. Unfortunately, until the law has been changed, we are unlikely to see a decrease in the number of posts relating to pet primates on social media.

With my first assignment completed and submitted, I was ecstatic to find out that I had achieved a distinction (72%)! This was a welcome relief that boosted my confidence for the rest of the course. The masters is designed so that throughout our modules, we are setting ourselves up for our final

thesis project. My second assignment which went towards the Primate Diversity and Conservation module, was to produce an annotated bibliography on published research surrounding the topic of my thesis project. As I am not due to conduct my thesis until 2021, I chose to investigate conservation education. After analysing some 50 scientific articles (not including the ones I didn't use for the assignment) and writing almost 20,000 words my bibliography was finally finished. I was very pleased to see the back of it! My grade for this assignment finally came in and I had achieved 69%.

The final component of the module I was working on was two taxonomy tests in which I had to learn the scientific Latin names of every primate genera, and then an example of a species for each of those genera, as well as being able to identify them from a single image. My flat was covered in post-it notes for about two weeks solid, and I was even reciting Latin in my sleep! Amazingly, I got 88% over the two tests, which meant that I had concluded the first module averaging 71%! Over the Christmas break from university, there was no rest for the wicked as I still had the 54 chimpanzees at Monkey World to care for.

With the Christmas period over, it was back to student life again, and this next semester was going to be much more challenging with two modules to complete. Having to be in Oxford for a 9am start meant leaving Dorset at 6am to get there in time! Right now, I'm working on Research Methods, Captive Management and Rehabilitation, and I will be keeping you updated as to how it is all going throughout the year. I will also be giving a talk at the charity's Education Centre about my studies, so look out for that in the future!

Year 2 Update

Dear supporters,

After what has felt like the longest 7 months, dealing with lockdowns and working through a pandemic, I am finally back to university to complete my final year of the Msc in Primate Conservation at Oxford Brookes University. However, when I say I am “back” to university, things are far from how they were in my first year. Currently I am sat in a communal study area at university, on my first trip up to Oxford for this academic year. For the previous two weeks, I have been “attending” university from the comfort of my bedroom (and sometimes, still in my pyjamas in bed!) as much of the course has moved online in order to facilitate teaching in the current climate. This semester I am studying two modules, ‘People-primate interactions’ and ‘International legislation, humans and wildlife’. Both of these modules are being delivered face-to-face, as the cohort is only small, however all lectures are being recorded and uploaded online for students who are unable to attend due to shielding/self-isolation or other travel restrictions. These two modules start at 9am, which means in order to arrive on time I have to leave home at 6.30am. As you can imagine, I am making the most of the online version of the lectures to avoid such early starts! Today I decided to get up and make it for my first face-to-face lecture. Everything is very surreal: there are far fewer students wandering the corridors; everyone has to wear a face mask at all times; the lecture theatres are set up so that you have to sit 2m away from each other; and there is a designated 10 minutes at the end of each lecture in order for everyone to properly sanitise their work stations. It’s certainly a difficult time to be a student, one of the key aspects of learning is working in groups and having discussions about materials and published research; because of the restrictions in place to protect everyone, this is almost impossible to achieve. Even now as I write this I am sat in a private booth, where normally 4 or 5 students could gather to work, but instead nobody is allowed to join me. Despite all of the new changes in place, I am excited for the rest of the academic year and the content of information I am due to learn. I hope that through these difficult times you are all keeping safe and well, and I am continually grateful of your support for the Jim Cronin Memorial Fund, which in turn has enabled me to study this Masters!