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**Post Doctoral Research Assistant**

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| **Job grade** | **Post Doctoral Research Assistant** | **Reports to** | **Javier Sanchez Romano, Research Fellow in One Health** |
| **Directorate** | **Science** | **Function** | **Research** |
| **Contract** | **[4 years Fixed term contract]** | **Location** | **Regent’s Park** |

**Responsibility for resources**

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| **Direct line reports** | **Staff** | **Responsibility for other resources** | **N/A** |
| **Financial resources** | **No budget responsibility** |

**Our vision and mission**

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is an international conservation charity, driven by science, working to restore wildlife in the UK and around the world. Our vision is a world where wildlife thrives and every role, every person in every corner of ZSL has one thing in common – we are all conservationists, and passionate about restoring wildlife.

**Purpose of the role**

The purpose of this role is to investigate how protected and conserved areas in Central Asia (i.e., Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) influence the emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases, contributing to the development of resilient landscapes within a One Health framework, that integrates effects on wildlife, humans and ecosystems.

The successful candidate will focus on sentinel species to understand patterns of disease risk and biodiversity dynamics. The role will involve both ecological and social science mix-method research, incorporating wildlife monitoring, pathogen surveillance, and human-wildlife interaction studies. The position requires collaboration with local communities, project partners, and governmental institutions, with an emphasis on capacity building and training to strengthen regional expertise in disease ecology and conservation.

The holder of this role is expected to produce outcomes that will contribute to the research reputation of IOZ (Institute of Zoology) and that will support the definition and implementation of ZSL’s conservation strategies.

**Key responsibilities**

* **Conduct field research:** Undertake wildlife monitoring efforts across Central Asia, focusing on a selection of sentinel species, and sample collection for pathogen identification.
* **Zoonotic pathogen surveillance:** Design and implement studies to investigate zoonotic pathogens.
* **Human-Wildlife interaction research:** Contribute to the design and implementation of questionnaires and surveys to assess human behaviour, land use practices, and their potential role in zoonotic spillover. Collaborate with project partners to ensure robust social science methodologies.
* **Data analysis and interpretation:** Analyse ecological, epidemiological, and social science data to understand the relationships between biodiversity, land use, and disease emergence.
* **Collaboration and networking:** Work closely with project partners and local communities to foster collaboration and share knowledge.
* **Dissemination of research:** Publish findings in high-impact, peer-reviewed journals and present research at national and international conferences. Contribute to science communication efforts, including public outreach and policy briefings.
* **Capacity building and training:** Contribute to training and capacity building efforts in the region by supporting local partners, researchers, and conservation practitioners, e.g., in field techniques, data management, and/or laboratory diagnostics.
* **Project Management:** Assist in the recruitment and supervision of postgraduate students, contribute to project reporting, and ensure that research milestones and deliverables are met on time.

The duties and responsibilities described are not a comprehensive list and additional tasks may be assigned from time to time that are in line with the level of the role.

**Person Specification**

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| Experience | |
| Essential | * A PhD in a relevant field and experience working in the area of One Health research. * Proven track record of publishing high-quality, peer-reviewed research in relevant areas. * Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with transdisciplinary teams, including local communities and governmental organisations. |
| Desirable | * Experience conducting field research in remote or challenging environments. * Experience working on zoonotic pathogens, particularly those associated with wildlife (e.g., rodents, bats). * Experience conducting social sciences research e.g. questionnaires, surveys, interviews in communities and with other stakeholders. * Experience with molecular techniques such as next-generation sequencing (NGS) or metagenomics. * Experience in field-based ecological research, including wildlife monitoring and sample collection. * Experience conducting fieldwork in Central Asia or similar environments. * Previous involvement in capacity building or training programs for local researchers or conservation practitioners. |
| Knowledge and skills | |
| Essential | * Strong knowledge of zoonotic diseases, and the One Health framework. * Strong scientific writing skills with the ability to produce high-quality publications and reports. * Ability to communicate confidently and clearly with a wide range of people, including effective report writing, presentation, and training skills. |
| Desirable | * Field skills in wildlife monitoring, camera trapping, and/or sample collection. * Experience working across natural and social science disciplines. * Proficiency in data analysis, e.g., statistical modelling and interpretation of ecological or epidemiological data, or qualitative data processing and analysis (e.g., NVIVO for surveys, interviews and other qualitative data, etc). * Proficiency in molecular diagnostic techniques, metagenomics, or next-generation sequencing (NGS). * Knowledge of GIS and spatial analysis tools. * Proficiency in Russian or local languages spoken in Central Asia. |
| Additional requirements | |
| Essential | * Willingness and ability to travel regularly to field sites in Central Asia, including remote and challenging environments. * Strong commitment to ZSL’s values, including collaboration, inclusivity, ethical conduct, and conservation impact. * Ability to manage multiple priorities and adapt to unexpected challenges in field and project settings. * Commitment to health and safety policies and promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in research. |