



# Ultimate Guide

Top 10 Conservation Job  
Application Mistakes to Avoid







## Avoid these mistakes...

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Did you know that about [90% of conservation job applications are of 'poor quality'](#), and that nearly [85% of conservationists are burnt out](#) from applying to conservation jobs unsuccessfully?

Many barriers can stop you from landing a conservation job – but sometimes the biggest barriers are your own assumptions. Here are the 10 biggest mistakes people make when applying for conservation jobs, and what to do instead.

Ready to demystify conservation job applications? Let's go!

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Are you searching  
for a job in  
conservation?

There are some  
common pitfalls  
which we can help  
you avoid!

Good luck in your  
job search...

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# HOW TO GET A CONSERVATION JOB

## Free Video Training Series

Learn how to quickly and easily start your career as a professional wildlife conservationist with Conservation Careers.

If you're a student, job-seeker or career-switcher you'll learn the golden rule for getting started, the key mistakes to avoid, and answer your biggest questions.

**[CLICK HERE](#)**

**[Get my free training!](#)**

**[www.howtogetaconservationjob.com](http://www.howtogetaconservationjob.com)**

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*"I can safely say that without this course, I probably would still be working in a pub in Manchester and applying for my dream jobs, unsuccessfully. I now work in one of the most beautiful places in the west of Scotland, get to see amazing wildlife every day. Thank you!"*

*- Kilian Hughes, UK*

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## 1. Worrying that there are not many jobs available

Wrong! The conservation industry is a booming sector, with more jobs available than ever before. At Conservation Careers we post about [250 new jobs every week](#), and we estimate that there are 36,500 conservation jobs available worldwide each year.

Why do people think there aren't many jobs out there? Because many employers (often small charities) don't have big budgets for advertising, and their opportunities don't get promoted widely online.


What to do instead:

- Focus on finding less competitive jobs
- Use a matrix to track job opportunities with specific employers – check out our webinar [How to Apply for Any Conservation Job](#) for an example!

Avoid these mistakes  
for a successful  
conservation  
job hunt!







## 2. Thinking if you put in enough applications, you'll get an interview

Produce quality applications for a better chance of getting an interview!

Wrong! Playing the numbers game doesn't guarantee success, and the likelihood is if you're firing out applications quicker than bullets from Arnie's Uzi 9mm then chances are you're (i) not spending much time on each application to ensure it's perfectly suited to the job you're after, and (ii) you're not very focussed and applying for lots of different types of roles.

Either way, there's nearly always going to be someone putting in a better application and with a more focused background to each job opportunity.

What to do instead:

- Give yourself time to produce quality applications. Each one takes time to build from the ground up!
- Focus on a fewer & better quality applications.





### 3. Reusing your CV or resume many times

Tailoring your CV  
or resume is  
easier than you  
think!

Just follow the  
steps in our  
online course

[How to Apply for  
Any Conservation  
Job](#)

Wrong! Every application needs to be carefully crafted to fit the role in question. This means totally reshaping your CV/resume (and cover letter) each time to ensure the best possible fit against the employer's criteria.

Using the same CV/resume each time means asking the employer to work too hard to find the evidence of your skills, and a higher likelihood they'll miss how good you are...

What to do instead:

- Learn to deconstruct a job application to understand exactly what the employer needs.
- Then write your 'How I help' mission statement, and build your application around this key message.
- Check out our webinar [How to Apply for Any Conservation Job](#) for examples of both!



## 4. Not using evidence

Wrong! Employers are considering investing in you, and they need to see concrete evidence that you meet their criteria, and can do the job.

Rather than a list of your duties or responsibilities, they need PROOF of what you've done, what you've achieved and the type of person you are.

What to do instead:

- Use an Evidence Matrix to set yourself up for success.
- Craft career success stories to showcase your evidence.
- Check out our webinar [How to Apply for Any Conservation Job](#) for examples of both!

**Example | Evidence Matrix**

Essential & Desirable Criteria	University of East Anglia	University of Aberystwyth	Marine Conservation Society (MSC)	Tropic Skincare
	MSc	BSc	Volunteer	Sales Ambassador & Team Leader
Experience of training and teaching, groups and/or individuals	None	None	- Seminars & webinars for Council & community groups - Workshops for primary schools	- Coordinating events - Managing a team of five

blue ventures

conservation careers

[CLICK HERE](#) to watch the video

Use evidence  
in your  
applications to  
showcase to  
employers what  
you can do!



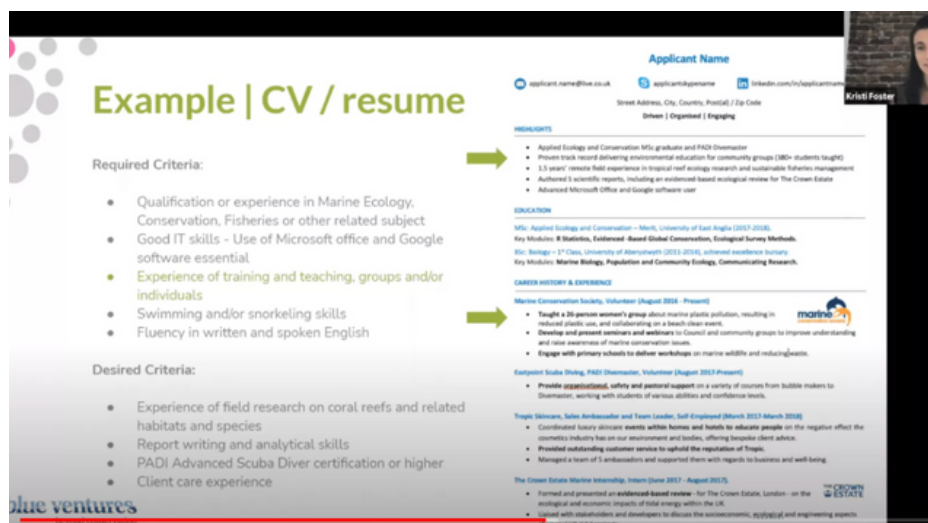
## 5. Making an employer's job difficult in shortlisting

Wrong! Employers spend about 3 minutes reviewing an application (sometimes fewer than 6 seconds!) If you want to be shortlisted, you need to make their job as EASY as possible, and help them find your evidence against their criteria at a glance

What to do instead:

- Identify your most relevant, impressive evidence.
- Summarise it at the top of your CV/resume and cover letter.
- Back it up with evidence in the form of career success stories.

Identify your most impressive evidence to make your employer's job easier



[CLICK HERE](#) to watch the video





## 6. Thinking more = better

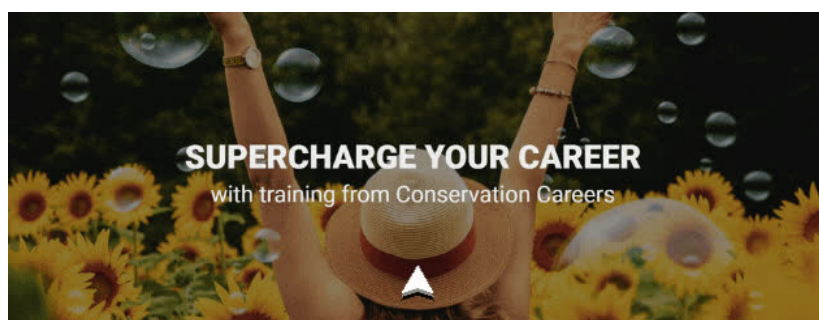
Wrong! While you're puzzling over how you can squeeze all 10 of your volunteer placements into page 2 by using size 9.5 font, an employer is spending their precious minutes (or seconds!) scanning for evidence of their top criteria.

What to do instead:

Use the test: 'Does this [paragraph / sentence / word] contribute to my message?' If it doesn't, remove it. Be ruthless!

The less information you include in your application, the more your key evidence stands out, and the easier the employer's job is. Less is more!

*Less is more  
when it comes to  
standing out*



**[CLICK HERE](#)** to start training







## 7. Using vague statements

Ask yourself,  
'Could somebody  
else write this?'

Wrong! Phrases like “passionate conservation graduate with extensive research experience” or “looking to apply my diverse fundraising experience to the conservation of wildlife” sound great... until you consider just how many other conservation job applicants could write the exact same statements.

What to do instead:

Use the simple test, ‘Could somebody else write this?’ If the answer is yes, you need to be more specific and use evidence to showcase your own unique value.



## 8. Not using an employer's language


Use keywords  
to speak the  
employer's  
language!

Wrong! If an employer listed ‘problem solving’ or ‘working to deadlines’ in their criteria, make sure those words appear in your application. This will 1) increase the chances of your application passing through any screening process, and 2) help the employer find evidence against their criteria at a glance.

What to do instead:

Look for keywords and keyphrases in the job advertisement and make sure you include them in your application!





## 9. Worrying that employment gaps are deal-breakers

Wrong! Employers aren't scanning your applications for career gaps – they're looking for evidence that you meet their criteria and can succeed in the job.

What to do instead:

Focus on showing what a great match you are for the role.

You can always answer questions during an interview if they come up.



## 10. Thinking that career switchers must compete with recently-trained graduates

Wrong! Most good conservation employers recognise the need for diverse skill-sets and experience, and intentionally seek team members who bring fresh skills and perspectives.

What to do instead:

Focus on what you have to offer that's unique, rather than what you think you might lack compared to other applicants.

Start landing more interviews!

Want to avoid all these mistakes and start landing more interviews? Learn how to make your applications stand out in our online course [How to Apply for Any Conservation Job](https://www.conservation-careers.com/courses/how-to-apply-for-any-conservation-job).

Start landing  
more job  
interviews with  
[How to Apply for  
Any Conservation  
Job](https://www.conservation-careers.com/courses/how-to-apply-for-any-conservation-job)



## 6. Useful Links and Free Stuff

To help you navigate your options, please select which best describes you:

**You want to work in conservation but you're feeling lost, disillusioned or confused?!?**

Check out our Kick-Starter training designed to help you understand the job market, to navigate your career options, and to get hired more quickly. It's designed for students, graduates, job-seekers and career-switchers. We're proud to say it also has 100% satisfaction and recommendation ratings. We know you'll love it. Find out more about our [Kick-Starter – Online Course](#).

**You need answers to top questions about working in conservation?**

Check out our free [Ultimate Guides](#) covering topics like the [Top Conservation Internships](#), [Paid or Free](#) and [Marine Conservation Jobs](#), and answering questions like [How to Switch Careers into Conservation](#), [Do I need a Master's Degree?](#) and much more!

**You feel ready to be applying for jobs in conservation?**

Check out our membership packages for job seekers which provide access to the world's biggest conservation job board – with over 15,000 conservation jobs shared each year – plus a range of other benefits. [Check out our monthly memberships here](#).

**You're submitting applications, but failing to get many interviews?**

Check out our FREE eBook Conservation Jobs: The Step-by-Step System to Get Hired as a Wildlife Conservationist – available on [Kindle](#), [EPUB](#) and [PDF](#). We can also review your applications, and provide 1:1 advice on how to improve them (and we don't cost the earth). Check out our [application support here](#).

**You've got an interview (well done!) and would like our help to prepare for it?**

We know what employers want, and have helped many people prepare for and deliver successful interviews. Check out our [interview preparation here](#).

**You feel stuck, are struggling with a difficult career decision, or need some clarity about your next steps?** We can help you form a clear plan of action so you can feel confident and take the next steps to make your dream career a reality. Check out our [1:1 career coaching here](#).

**[Find more of our Ultimate Guides HERE!](#)**





# DISCLAIMER

## About Conservation Careers

We are the #1 careers advice centre for conservationists – helping 700,000 conservationists in 178 countries across the globe.

We believe that all wildlife is beautiful and that it deserves great conservationists working to protect it. We have extensive international knowledge, experience and a network of contacts within the conservation career sector. This means that we can help job seekers and conservation organisations to form lasting relationships. We do this by providing careers advice and information to a network of dedicated conservationists across the globe.

## Have a question or suggestion?

Contact us at [mail@conservation-careers.com](mailto:mail@conservation-careers.com)

## The legal bit

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