RACHEL OWEN

RESEARCH FELLOW IN CANCER IMMUNOLOGY

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

"I love that my job lets me merge my lifelong interest in animals with laboratory research, and has wide ranging impacts."

Academic profile

Degree
BSc (Hons) Biochemistry (Biomedical Route)

Post grad
PhD in Cellular and Molecular Biosciences

Qualification/achievement you are most proud of
National finalist for Three Minute Thesis, 2018

Subjects you enjoyed at school
Biology, Physics, Music, Drama

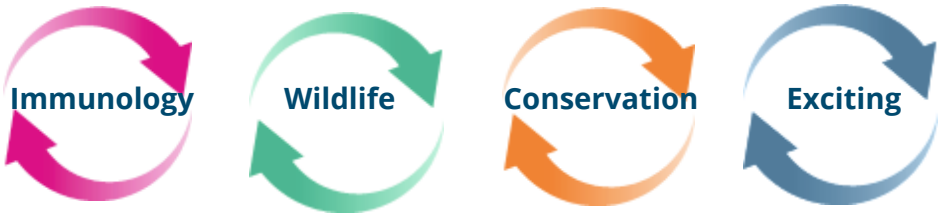
Career Summary

I have always been fascinated by animals and nature, and as a child I dreamed of being either a vet or David Attenborough! Throughout school I was naturally drawn to the sciences, and had a particular interest in Biology, and was encouraged to go into medicine. I soon realised I was more interested in the research side of medicine rather than clinical, and decided to undertake a degree in Biochemistry. I had a particular interest in cancer biology, and from early in my degree I wanted to eventually undertake a PhD in Cancer research. Whilst looking for PhD opportunities, I came across a project studying the immunology of contagious cancers in the Tasmanian devil, a project which brought my science journey full circle! I loved it so much I've stayed on as a Research Fellow and intend to continue studying immunology in wild species!

What inspired you?

I used to spend hours when I was younger watching nature documentaries and was endlessly fascinated with the natural world, and very curious about how things worked. I was naturally drawn to science at school and I think any teacher who ever had me in their class would tell you I would end up a scientist! The fact that I've managed to find a research area which combines my love of animals with laboratory research is the icing on the cake

Describe your job



Did you know .....

Did you know that the Tasmanian devil is the only mammal on earth to suffer from two contagious cancers? Devil Facial Tumour 1 and 2 are spreading rapidly throughout the wild population and putting the species at risk of extinction!

Top tip

Things not working out is not a reflection of your capabilities and is not a failure. Have confidence in your own abilities and stay persistent and you will always land on your feet!

Best thing about my job

I got the opportunity to go to Tasmania and trap Tasmanian devils out in the wild to monitor population density and disease levels and to collect samples for lab research. It was the most incredible experience of my life,

Find out more

- www.southampton.ac.uk/biosci/about/staff/ro1c19.page
- @Rowen_93
- www.morrisanimalfoundation.org/study/identifying-vaccine-targets-contagious-tasmanian-devil-cancers

Watch the video: