

## Research Experience Placement (REP) Scheme Project

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Durham University, Department of Anthropology

**Project Title:**

Camera-trapping to support MammalWeb and Britain's Greenest Prison

**Project Description:**

MammalWeb ([www.mammalweb.org](http://www.mammalweb.org)) is a citizen-science project established by Durham University to monitor the UK's mammals. Camera traps are deployed by research projects or by members of the public to capture images of wildlife. The resultant images are then uploaded to the MammalWeb platform where they are classified online. MammalWeb's objectives are to (i) deliver policy-relevant data on biodiversity to the regional and national records centres in the UK; (ii) demonstrate the wider potential of a citizen-based model for mammal monitoring; and (iii) engage members of the public in the wildlife around them. The proposed placement represents a unique opportunity to help support a new partnership between MammalWeb and HM Prison Deerbolt, a Young Offenders Institution. Through the partnership, MammalWeb will support the creation of the Deerbolt Wildlife Community Engagement Hub in the visitor centre. In turn, this will support Deerbolt's ambition to be Britain's Greenest Prison. We will install an interactive MammalWeb touchscreen information source in the visitor centre, allowing visitors to classify camera trap images taken on the grounds around the prison and so learn about local wildlife. For this to be successful we need to produce a large body of camera images prior to the launch. The objective of this 8-week placement will be to deploy and maintain 10 dedicated camera traps on the Deerbolt estate and to generate the camera trap images needed to initiate the visitor centre installation and to conduct analyses required to understand the value of data subsequently submitted via the interactive display screen.

**Skills and Career-Development Opportunities:**

The student will gain an understanding of the principles of camera-trapping and will learn to deploy and maintain camera traps and how to upload these images to MammalWeb and the Deerbolt project. They will also develop an appreciation of data management and analytical techniques as well as the pivotal role that citizen science can play in monitoring wildlife at large spatial scales.

**Wider context of research:**

All of the proposed fieldwork on the placement will take place outdoors where appropriate social distancing can be maintained. Cameras will be placed in the woodland surrounding Deerbolt Prison (with the camera positions refined over the course of the placement through repeat visits) with a subset of cameras modified for small mammal monitoring. All of these activities should remain feasible other than in the event of a strict national lockdown. Elements of the project (data upload and image classification) can be completed remotely. The placement student will also have the opportunity to join lab meetings (e.g. Conservation Ecology Group), as well as MammalWeb and Deerbolt

project meetings, and will also work alongside the PhD students on MammalWeb and related projects (including Iapetus students Sian Green and Samantha Mason)

**Project Timeframe:**

The 8-week placement can start as soon as the student is available. Fieldwork activities in July and August can be scheduled to ensure that the student can cohort-level events.