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**The Nature of Nature Conservationists: an investigation into value,
motivation and ontology within the field of nature conservation**

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Abstract

The way nature's value is expressed explicitly and implicitly in our culture and organisations has profound implications for how society values and conserves nature, develops educational policy, and influences personal understandings of the world. Nature conservation organisations have a pivotal role to play in shaping attitudes towards the natural environment. In this paper I investigate whether conservation organisations' expressions of nature's value resonates with individual nature conservationists conceptualisations of nature and its value. Narrative inquiry, through use of semi-structured interviews with twenty conservationists, is used to explore the lived experiences of people working in the field of nature conservation. While interviewees stated that the conservation organisations have good aims and aspirations, discussion of nature's value often appears restricted to scientific, economic and anthropocentric terms. I suggest acknowledgement of a range of values including personal, intrinsic and ecocentric understandings of the value of nature seems to be desired by those conserving the natural environment.

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Chapter One

Section One- Setting the scene

1.1 Introduction

Back in spring of 2009 my supervisor mentioned that the VINE project (Values in Nature and the Environment) was looking for some research to be undertaken into the aspirations of nature conservationists and the organisations they work for. Having been involved on the fringes of nature conservation for many years, through my work as a countryside ranger and an environmental educator, and feeling that the way nature conservation is perceived by society may influence the effectiveness of environmental education, I felt this was a project I would be interested in finding more about. Not knowing anything about the organisation, I decided to research some background information about VINE and the Nature of nature conservationists' project (VINE, 2009).

1.2 Through the VINE

VINE is a network which encourages nature conservation practitioners to explore ideas relating to the philosophy, ethics, culture and practice of nature conservation. The network started in 2006 through a series of informal discussions about why people were inspired to take up jobs in conservation. These discussions highlighted that the priorities and policies in the organisations people worked for often appeared unrelated to their own expressed values. There was a sense that

conservationists' connections to nature, and personal commitment to conservation work, were not fully valued or recognised within professional structures (Hanna, 2009). Consequently, VINE decided research was required to gauge nature conservation practitioners' views on the practice of nature conservation, exploring issues about working in the field and how these relate to personal beliefs, values and inspiration. This dissertation charts my investigation into the issues.

1.3 Developing the research

Before deciding to undertake this project I needed to develop more of an understanding of the field and find a focus for my research. With my particular interest in environmental education I first began to consider whether research of this kind would have any relevance to education, and if it did was it an area that could enhance understanding of professional development in the field, as well as contribute to the academic literature on the subject. Through reading of the literature, specifically with reference to environmental ethics and identity (e.g. Brennan & Lo, 2009; Clayton & Opatow, 2003; Rolston, 1994), I soon realised that the way nature's values are expressed explicitly and implicitly in our culture and through our organisations could have profound implications for how society views and conserves nature, and that this in turn may influence educational policy and philosophy, and our personal understandings of the world (Hards, 2011). Nature conservation bodies influence much of society's knowledge about wildlife and natural processes as they are responsible for conserving habitats and species; advising government, landowners and the public; and developing policy on the environment (RSPB, 2011). They inspire participation and knowledge about nature

across communities and, through their education policies, promote their 'brand' of nature and environmental awareness to schools, informal education groups and the public at large (RSPB, 2007, p. 29; Smyth, 2006, p. 250). These organisations could be perceived as encapsulating and encouraging development of certain values, through messages on specific projects, research priorities, and environmental campaigns (Rosa & Da Silva, 2005, p. 123). People working for the organisation may be assumed to have similar values which inspired them to choose their career paths. However studies have shown that while organisations and conservation policies in general are based on largely anthropocentric and instrumental values towards the environment (Rosa & Da Silva, 2005), conservation workers appear to recognise the importance of intrinsic values and have a more ecocentric ontology (Butler & Acott, 2007). A mismatch in values has the potential to cause frustration in staff and affect how nature's value is communicated and perceived more generally by wider society, leading to priorities being viewed with scepticism amongst some conservationists, landowners and members of the public who find organisational valuations of nature do not equate with their notion of reality (Johnston & Soulsby, 2006, p. 161).

Section Two- Ethics and values and the social paradigm

Before reviewing some previous studies I will briefly consider some value issues, environmental ethics, and ontological positions discussed in this paper.

1.4 Introduction

Society and cultures have many ways of valuing the world including economic valuations, scientific assessments, aesthetic beauty, human relationships and many more (Rolston, 1994, p. 58). Whilst every individual also has things that they value, what is valued and the way in which an individual perceives that value is different for each person. Core values are the central beliefs that inform individuals' identities, and in an organisation form the philosophical framework as to *why* the work is done (Alexander, 2008, p. 84). Ideological differences exist in how people perceive the world. Viewed from extremes, nature could be seen either as a repository of resources to be used to fuel economic growth and material wealth; or in contrast seeing everything as an interconnected interdependent whole linked by cycles not fully understood (Myers & Simon, 1994).

I will briefly consider some general philosophies, ontological and epistemological approaches to valuing nature, and how the dominant social paradigm influences the ways we discuss the value of nature. This summary is in itself a constructed dualism where 'anthropocentric' and 'ecocentric' are discussed as almost two opposing sides. However, there are shades of opinion in 'valuing' and people can hold multiple valuations, just as organisations can.

1.5 Anthropocentrism

The dominant social philosophy over the past 300 years since Descartes and the Enlightenment can be seen as 'anthropocentric', dividing the internal from the external, putting the conscious individual at the centre of moral authority and respect (Brennan, 1995, p. 799; Pepper, 1996, p. 139). Within this epistemological framework the human mind is separated from the external environment which can then be studied in reductionist terms in small units, like cogs in a machine, to understand the composite parts. This separation provides the current scientific method for understanding nature (Mayer, 2006, p. 107) and has largely become embedded into our educational and knowledge systems (Boyles, 2006, pp. 65-67).

Within the anthropocentric world view, anthropogenic environmental destruction can be seen as wrong because as our well-being is dependent on a healthy environment, humans now or in the future may suffer from this damage (Brennan & Lo, 2009). Prudential anthropocentrism holds that the responsibility we have towards the environment is derived from our responsibilities to human society now and into the future. It can, perhaps, be seen as more pragmatic to rely on anthropocentric instrumental values for policy and law-making as they are not bound to provide proof that the non-human environment has intrinsic value (Brennan & Lo, 2009).

Despite concern that looking in reductionist terms restricts our knowledge of nature to scientific rational terms, this has been generally accepted as an objective way of producing policy and actions based on factual evidence (Alexander, 2008, pp. 89-90). At governmental and organisational level it appears

that scientific and economic valuations, based on anthropocentric perspectives, predominate over aesthetic, cultural and intrinsic values in decision-making processes (Brady, 2006, p. 278) as the other major advantage of anthropocentric values is that they can be seen as simple values everyone can understand on similar terms (Alexander, 2008, p. 91). This form of knowledge, however, also tends to ignore the emotion and wonder that inspires (Brennan & Lo, 2009), and can justify the elevation of human interests above everything else, as the conscious individual is seen as having more intrinsic worth than the objectified 'other' of nature (Brennan & Lo, 2009; Rolston, 1994, p. 30). The anthropocentric perspective may also strengthen the dualistic perception of human dominance over the natural world and lead to an expectation that nature needs to be managed and is too fragile or chaotic, to maintain its systems without intensive support and management targets (Giddens, 2009, p. 157; Wood, 2000, p. 102).

1.6 Ecocentrism

Environmental ethics challenges the anthropocentric assumption of commonality of moral authority and respect being restricted to individuals with conscious thought (Brennan A. , 1995, p. 800). Environmental ethics considers seriously the moral obligations we have towards not just animals, but towards plants, landscapes and entire ecosystems, and the value that we place upon the environment in general (Brennan & Lo, 2009). Aldo Leopold (1968) described this moral obligation as a 'land ethic' which "changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it" where we respect all aspects of the community from soil and water to its trees and animals (Leopold, 1968, p. 204).

This view can be regarded as a more 'ecocentric' ontology, where the ecological process and the Earth's constituent parts, human and non-human, are equally at the centre of moral concern (Hayes-Conroy & Vanderbeck, 2005, p. 311). As such every aspect of life, and its supporting landscape, has the right to exist and continue its natural processes. The deep ecology movement, for instance, emphasises the intrinsic value in all living things and that these values are not dependent upon human use (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1989).

So environmental ethics considers whether it is wrong for humans to manage, alter and destroy natural processes, and if so, whether it is wrong from a human sustainability perspective or because the natural environment and its component parts have intrinsic values and ought to be protected for their own sake (Brennan & Lo, 2009). Some authors also suggest that the only way to alter the speed and scale of environmental change is to challenge the primacy of many of societies' cultural, predominantly anthropocentric values, and for organisations such as those involved in nature conservation to strengthen and articulate widely held, but low priority values towards the intrinsic, aesthetic and emotional understandings of nature (Angermeier, 2000, p. 377; Crompton, 2010, p. 5).

1.7 Instrumental and intrinsic values

The distinction between intrinsic and instrumental values has been widely debated in the environmental ethics literature (Angermeier, 2000; Brennan & Lo, 2009; Callicott, 1990; Fox, 1993; Myers & Simon, 1994; Nash, 1990; Rolston, 1994). An instrumental value is taken to be where something is valued because it is useful for fulfilling another purpose. Intrinsic values mean that something has worth in its

own right. Something can have both intrinsic and instrumental values and be valued for both (Rolston, 1994, p. 175). Consider a tree which may have instrumental values for birds as it provides berries for food, and for insects that live under its bark, for humans who use the timber in the manufacture of some product or appreciate the view and shade of the tree and as it produces oxygen for the atmosphere. These are all instrumental values, leading to another purpose. But does the tree have value in itself? Intrinsic values may be seen as un-provable in some quarters and are therefore viewed as a pointless discussion on theory. Environmental pragmatism, based on largely anthropocentric values, therefore appears to be increasingly popular in some discussions of environmental philosophy as it avoids theoretical wrangling and focuses more on practical issues (Samuelsson, 2010, p. 406). One increasingly common way to ascribe value to the environment is through promotion of 'ecosystem services'. These are "defined as services provided by the natural environment that benefit people" (DEFRA, 2007, p.10). These 'services' include flood protection, nutrient cycling, food production and cultural services (Ibid). Reports suggest this is a practical way of ascribing economic value to natural processes that can then be fed into policy appraisals ensuring full assessment of environmental costs (DEFRA, 2007, p.3; TEEB, 2010). While anthropocentrism can be linked to instrumental valuations of nature and it's worth to human culture, it could be argued that all valuations of nature are ultimately anthropogenic in origin, as humans are the only conscious arbiters able to make clear choices about our actions and choose what we feel has value in our world (Rolston, 1994, p. 161). So can humans really detach themselves from the centre of moral concern and place the environment at the core of their values?

1.8 Summary of project

People's values and relationships guide ethical frameworks which influence human behaviour. There are suggestions that a truly sustainable conservation ethic would differ from the predominating anthropocentric ethic and instead be more akin to an ecocentric ethic where society values nature highly and in return conserves what is highly valued (Angermeier, 2000, p. 377). Bonnett (2007) suggests that not enough attention is paid in environmental education or environmental policy frameworks to understanding our relationship with nature (p. 707) and while it is sometimes said that "a love of the natural environment is almost an unacknowledged qualification" (VINE, 2006) for working in conservation, there seems to be a perception amongst conservationists that personal relationships and understandings are not valued or nurtured by the organisations people work for. Individuals' values and the practices of their organisations could be seen as co-constructive, shaping and being shaped by each other (Hards, 2011, pp. 26-27). So can we see that nature conservationists' views about the value of nature are reflected in the policies of conservation organisations?

I had several discussions with the VINE steering group regarding the perceived practice of nature conservation and the possible tensions between individual motivations and organisational policy. This led me to developing this research considering how nature conservationists relate to nature and whether these understandings fit with nature conservation organisations expressions of nature's value. Do conservationists conceptualise nature from similar ontological perspectives as the organisations they work for, and feel able to articulate personal environmental ethics through their work?

As some values are difficult to formulate into precise statements (Satterfield, 2001, p. 336) I decided it would be best to approach this research as a narrative inquiry. I will explore in detail the practicalities and methodology of this study in Chapter Three. In Chapter Two I will consider how nature conservation organisations appear to express the value of the natural world and how the nature conservation process has developed in Britain.

Chapter Two

Section One- Why conserve? Framing nature conservation

2.1 Introduction

Before beginning to assess the attitudes and articulated values of nature conservationists I considered what nature conservation organisations seem to be telling society about the process and philosophy of conserving nature. In this section I will briefly explore the history and values that led to the creation of a nature conservation movement in the UK. I will then move onto what nature conservation organisations say about the value of nature in their corporate plans, job application packs, websites and reports. This will give an overall impression of how the story of nature and its value appears to be communicated formally within the organisations and to wider society.

2.2 Thinking conservation

Humans are the only species on Earth that assume to know how to manage our environment or decide the fate of other species (Alexander, 2008, pp. 79-80). Humans, as with all living things, alter their environment. The scale of the changes our species has brought to the world considering the short timescale that humans have been around, pose threats to many natural processes (Middleton, 2008, p. 20). If we are to accept our evolutionary history and our dependence on nature, then conservation can be seen as the act of recognising our impact within that relationship with nature (O'Riordan, 1990, p. 2). Conservation is not preserving, as if in permafrost, a landscape at a particular point in time. It is an ongoing process

of interaction between all species and the environmental factors that play out over time. Leopold saw conservation as “a state of harmony between men [humans] and land” (1968, p. 207). The ‘nature’ of Britain’s countryside is a legacy of interaction between humans and the natural world which have intertwined since the start of this interglacial (Smout, 2000). Nature conservation could be seen as part of society’s way to attempt to sustain the ongoing natural processes that we all depend upon (Alexander, 2008, p. 79) and, potentially, allow space for other species to flourish, in the wake of cultures’ increasing demands for growth (Rolston, 1994, p. 14).

2.3 Development of a conservation movement

Nature conservation in its current form has its origins in campaigns to preserve certain species (RSPB, 2009) or landscapes (Sheail, 2002, pp. 104, 123) and through a growing awareness of the impact that human society has on the rest of the world (Carson, 1962). It can be argued that nature conservation began through the romantic tradition in the early 19th century (Schatz-Jakobsen, 2008, p. 205). The Enlightenment, scientific progress and the industrial revolution had brought about a step change in people’s relationships with the land and ‘progress’ was all important in every aspect of life. Until the start of the 19th century ‘unimproved land’ was often seen as ‘dismal’ or ‘villainous’ by the gentry (Stamp, 1969, p. 9). Wordsworth, Coleridge and others challenged this view entreating people to explore their relationship with nature and develop an intuitive understanding of the world. Social attitudes to nature changed during this period as there was a reappraisal of the human place in the world coupled with an increasing isolation from nature (Evans, 1997, p. 18).

In America the wilderness movement, inspired by the Romantic-transcendental writings and philosophies of Thoreau and Emerson and pioneered by John Muir, highlighted the aesthetic and spiritual significance to people of wild places and championed their preservation over the threats from resource extraction under the banner of 'conservation' of natural resources (Callicott, 1990, p. 16; Callicott & Mumford, 1997, p. 34). The American National Parks movement triggered a general debate around the globe about the value of nature to humans. In Britain the shortage of land and long history of habitation and land use, even in remote mountainous areas, made wilderness-based preservation as in the American context unworkable (Stamp, 1969, pp. 4, 17).

The European model of nature conservation is instead generally based on small, intensively managed nature reserves aiming to preserve particularly important species or habitats. National Nature Reserves were developed in Britain as part of a 'Key site strategy' representing and preserving the best remaining examples of native and semi natural habitats (Clifford & Forster, 1997, p. 190). As natural habitats and the wildlife they support had been diminished to such a degree in Britain it was seen by some as imperative that where they remain we should cherish and seek to expand them. In Britain a rash of organisations started to spring up at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, with the RSPB, National Trust and the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves key among them. As urbanisation took hold, nature in the form of clean air and open green spaces, was seen as essential to the wellbeing of people from all walks of life. Octavia Hill, one of the founders of the National Trust, summed this belief up as "The need of quiet, the need of air, the need of exercise, and ... the sight of sky and of things growing seem human needs, common to all" (National Trust, 2010).

While scenic landscapes and wildlife were expressly included in the motivations for the setting up of these organisations their motivations still appeared firmly rooted in anthropocentric instrumental valuations of nature, where they were of direct benefit to human society (Sheail, 2002, p. 105).

By the start of the 20th century there was a growing public demand for access to the countryside as the urban population felt a need for the freedom that natural places bring. Following repeated failures to designate National Parks, frustration led to the mass trespass on Kinder Scout in 1932 (Lawton, et al., 2010, p. 12). In 1949 Parliament finally passed the 'National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act' to allow formation of National Parks and during the 1950s ten parks were designated in England and Wales. While National Parks, and Regional Parks which also came into existence at the time, were primarily there for recreation and to allow everyone access to the countryside, they also shape many people's views of what conservation is. They have an explicit duty of conservation as set out in the Sandford principle - "where irreconcilable conflicts exist between conservation and public enjoyment, then conservation interest should take priority" (National Parks Authority, 2010). In Scotland there were no National Parks until the 21st century when the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 allowed for their creation. When they were established it was an expressly recognised aim that they would benefit the social and economic development of the area. A version of the Sandford principle still holds though, with the provision that conservation should be given greater weight when resolving issues that may cause conflict of interests (e.g. Cairngorms National Park, 2010).

2.4 The current situation

Today, Natural England (NE), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) are the lead government agencies on the natural environment in the home nations of Great Britain (in Northern Ireland the environment agency, under direct Government control, fulfils a similar role). Government agencies advise government and landowners on legislation and promoting understanding of nature. These agencies grew out of the Nature Conservancy which was established in 1949 with a clear focus on scientific understandings of nature, free from social and political influence (Johnston & Soulsby, 2006, p. 164). The growing status of scientific knowledge, after the Second World War, meant that conservation became heavily reliant on science for guiding and justifying policy. Nature reserves became seen as outdoor laboratories for systematically studying species (Johnston & Soulsby, 2006, p. 164; Stamp, 1969, p. 61). These changes in perception have meant that scientific justifications are now the main, and sometimes only, legal basis for justifying nature conservation (Alexander, 2008, p. 82), and priorities are framed by legislation which is based on scientific criteria (Burney, 2000, p. 512; Johnston & Soulsby, 2006, p. 161). The reasons for this are clear. Scientific research provides data about the state of the environment that could not be gathered from other sources and gives information about the impacts that practices have on the environment, suggesting better ways of managing habitats (Natural England, 2009, p. 17). Scientific observations and quantitative measurements are seen to be objective, as well as being easily measured, and can be translated into simple terms for general understanding (Brady, 2006, p. 279).

Over the past decade conservation also appears to be discussed and evaluated in economic terms, with ‘ecosystem services’¹ and resource extraction mentioned alongside tourism benefits. Indeed recent reports on nature’s value have focused predominantly on attributing economic worth (DEFRA, 2004; Natural England, 2009; TEEB, 2010).

2.5 Summary

Nature conservation is society’s way of making space for natural processes to take place, and gives people places to connect with nature and develop their knowledge. The philosophy of the Romantic Movement has given way to a science-based approach to conserving key sites and countryside management advice more-generally. Within the backdrop of our consumer culture there have also been steady moves to valuing and pricing nature’s services in economic terms to sell the message of conservation to a public disengaged with the land and understanding of what it provides. Government nature conservation agencies (e.g. Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage) in particular appear to try and demonstrate the usefulness of nature to human wants (Campagna & Fernandez, 2007, p. 383).

¹ Ecosystem services refer to the natural processes which are essential to human survival e.g. nutrient cycling, food production, climatic stability (Defra, 2007. p.10).

Section Two- Review of Literature

2.6 Introduction

The way nature is valued by conservation staff, and the organisations they work for, may have implications for how the value of nature is perceived and communicated more generally throughout society, as nature conservation staff working on reserves or providing specialist conservation advice have an important role to play in environmental education, demonstrating environmental practice, offering specialist advice on land-use, and contributing to lifelong learning activities (Smyth, 2006, p. 250). In this section I review the literature surrounding the attitudes and values of conservationists and nature conservation organisations. I selected this literature as a result of extensive reading of books, articles and journals available through the University of Edinburgh's library services and online journals searches. The papers used in this review were widely quoted and appeared to be highly regarded across many works. I also reviewed the corporate plans, websites, and information sent to job applicants from the Countryside Commission for Wales, Natural England, National Trust, National Trust for Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, RSPB and the Wildlife Trusts. I discuss in Section 2.9 how this led to me developing an overall impression of the overt values expressed by conservation organisations.

2.7 Talking about value

Core values are the central beliefs that inform individuals' identities, and in an organisation form the philosophical framework as to *why* the work is done. Glasser, Craig & Kempton in their study, 'Ethics and values in environmental policy: the said and the UNCED' (1994) examined how the value of nature was discussed at international policy level compared with personal values towards nature. They found that senior Government environmental policy advisors from four European countries identified a mismatch between how they personally valued nature and how they felt able to discuss nature's value in policy terms (p.103). Using semi-structured interviews Glasser et al. found that, during the interviews, many of these policy advisors articulated deeply held personal values towards the environment that they said were kept separate from their policy work. Indeed their interviewees suggested that it was essential for them to keep environmental values out of environmental policy work, focussing on economic arguments rather than allowing any other bias for nature (p.87). Instruments such as economic and scientific justifications are widely favoured in policy circles as they are felt to be value free and not led by subjective ideas (Brennan & Lo, 2009; Glasser, Craig, & Kempton, 1994, p. 103).

The assumption underlying science's pre-eminence as the objective way of decision-making is that science is our window onto actual reality, without mediation of cultural values. However all knowledge of the world is shaped by ontological assumptions and social paradigms that inform the importance given to different aspects of science (Szerszynski, 1996, p. 113) and no decision, scientifically- or economically-based is value-free and where policies fail to

acknowledge this they are implicitly making a value decision (Spash, 2010; Trudgill, 2001, p. 679).

Glasser, Craig, & Kempton (1994) suggest that environmental policy would be strengthened if widely held personal values towards nature were discussed and validated for use in developing policy frameworks (p.84). Their study found sharp contrasts between the interviewees' stated fundamental values towards nature and the terms by which concepts of value were covered in documentation, where intrinsic and "incommensurable senses of value are rarely mentioned" (p.90). Another aspect highlighted by this study, and others e.g. (Burney, 2000, p. 516), is that people often had had little opportunity to openly discuss or reflect on their own values within their work context (Glasser, Craig, & Kempton, 1994, p. 86).

2.8 Conservationists and intrinsic values

More recently, Butler and Acott's study (2007) into acceptance of intrinsic value theories appears to show that nature conservation workers do not feel their sense of wonder and appreciation for nature is often reflected in the policies of the organisations they work for (p. 149). This may cause several tensions; for the organisation trying to put over a consistent message about the environment through staff who are not motivated by the same values; and for the staff who get involved in environmental issues only to have 'heart-felt' ideals disregarded and over-ruled by priorities which are often shaped by European and national laws based in turn on scientific criteria or Government mandates (Burney, 2000, p. 512). Aesthetic, cultural, emotional and intrinsic values are seen by many authors

to be given less weight than scientific and economic valuations in decision making practices (Alexander, 2008; Brady, 2006, p. 278; Butler & Acott, 2007; Glasser, Craig, & Kempton, 1994; Hailes, 2007, p. 377; Johnston & Soulsby, 2006). For pragmatic reasons an anthropocentric stance may better serve short-term aims and there is also a perception that since the 1940s, with the growth in the status of scientific knowledge, that scientific justifications have become the main, and sometimes only, legal basis for justifying nature conservation (Alexander, 2008, p. 82). However where consistency is required in the public sphere over the long-term, attitudes and policies which can become entrenched are difficult to alter and there is a need to reflect on underlying values (Rosa & Da Silva, 2005, p. 123).

Butler & Acott's study included people responsible for managing significant areas of land across England, from both conservation organisations and large land-owning interests. Staff from both these sectors appeared to talk about nature's values in consistently passionate terms that collectively suggest more than a purely utilitarian view of nature and its worth (2007, pp. 156-158). Respondents also indicated that they thought these were widely held feelings amongst those working in the natural environment (p. 158) which has been suggested elsewhere (VINE, 2006). Subsequent mismatch's of basic values between conservation organisations, environmental policy, conservation workers and the wider public may contribute to scientific assessments of the landscape and its value being viewed with some scepticism by different interest groups (Johnston & Soulsby, 2006, p. 166).

The implication from these studies is that a key motivation for people becoming involved in environmental work is that they feel a personal connection and sense of wonder in nature, but it is problematic trying to quantify this because it is felt

as a gut reaction and is difficult to articulate in any scientific analysis. Nature is not a single thing we can ‘love’, as different aspects engender different emotions (Bonnett, 2007, p. 711). From the literature I have identified as most relevant to this study it appears that conservationists themselves do not feel that personal relationships and understandings of nature are widely reflected in nature conservation policy frameworks. Indeed there have been reports of low staff morale and lack of confidence in the priorities of government agencies responsible for nature conservation (Edwards, 2010).

2.9 What the organisations say

As well as considering previous works, I decided to investigate the general messages that organisations seemed to be putting into the public and staff sphere about nature’s value. The Countryside Commission for Wales, Natural England, National Trust, National Trust for Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, RSPB and the Wildlife Trusts are particularly influential due to their size, public profile and involvement in advising or lobbying Government (see Appendix 1 for membership details of NGOs). The language of engagement used by these organisations can influence societal and staff attitudes and inform what is thought of as exemplary practice (Hards, 2011, p. 37). While the volume of literature available meant that I was only able to gain a general impression of the promoted organisational values, it was precisely this surface level understanding I felt was important to explore.

I concentrated on evaluating easily obtainable public documents such as, corporate and strategic plans, the home pages and about us sections of corporate websites, and information sent to job applicants. Where available vision or mission

statements were also reviewed as they are an attempt by organisations to express their priorities and core values, and the language used can give us clues to the perspectives of an organisation (Campagna & Fernandez, 2007, p. 370). From these sources I looked for the frequency and style of language used to refer to the intrinsic and instrumental values of nature, and noted how the importance of nature conservation work appeared to be conveyed. I have attempted here to present a balanced assessment of the views communicated in the literature, although I acknowledge that other sources may have yielded a slightly different perspective.

The main membership organisations involved in conserving nature on their own reserves - National Trust, National Trust for Scotland, RSPB, and The Wildlife Trusts (DEFRA, 2004, p. 67), showed general acknowledgement of a range of values including the intangible and immeasurable within nature as well as emphasising the scientific basis for justifying nature conservation, ecosystem services, and the economic and health benefits of the environment. For instance the RSPB have an overt plan to increase knowledge around ecosystem services and develop policies based on them- “the role of natural ecosystems in providing services of value to people is being recognised” (RSPB, 2007, p. 26). However, value is not only explained in economic terms but more in general terms of what benefits we gain from certain areas (Ibid).

The membership organisations all expressed values overtly in statements such as “we care passionately about all wildlife; we believe that the rich world of nature is an essential part of what makes life worth living” (Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, 2010). The latest strategic plan developed early in 2010 by the National Trust, for

instance, talks of “the appreciation of beauty, fresh air, and a sense of kinship, with each other, with the past and with the natural world” (National Trust, 2010, p. 2). And the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) has recently undergone a strategic review which has recommended that the NTS re-focuses on its core values and re-drafts a mission statement reflecting the core principles of “conservation, access, enjoyment and education” (Reid, 2010, p. 17). Reid also implies that corporate systems have previously taken precedence over individual experience and love of the job (pp. 9,16,34).

Within specific projects these organisations appear to be fairly comfortable talking about nature not only in terms of instrumental use, but refer to terms such as passion and spiritual connections. For instance the Wildlife Trusts living landscapes project “aims to reconnect people with the natural world and promote the benefits it provides - from the technical and functional (food production, clean water), to the spiritual (nature makes people happy!)” (Wildlife Trusts, 2010).

As with the Wildlife Trusts and the National Trusts, the RSPB stresses the need to shift people’s perceptions and emotions towards conserving nature as it feels that if society does “not value the natural world, then there will be no political drive or practical means to conserve it” (RSPB, 2007, p. 29). There does appear to be a desire expressed by these organisations to re-establish personal connections to nature and approach nature conservation on a more holistic footing.

Government agencies (CCW, NE, SNH; The environment agency in Northern Ireland is not included in this analysis as it is a government department rather than arms length agency) seem slightly more conservative in the terminology used and largely appear to frame nature’s importance in terms of ‘services’ - providing food,

energy and raw materials; habitats for wildlife and as a means of accommodating and adjusting to climate change (Countryside Council for Wales, 2008; Natural England, 2009; Scottish Natural Heritage, 2009). There was an emphasis on sustainable development and the value of instrumental anthropocentric use of nature throughout the government agency documents. Natural England's defined purpose is "to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development" (Natural England, 2008, p. 5) and in his foreword to the current corporate strategy the chairman of SNH highlights that the current strategic plan is "focussed not on the natural heritage *per se* but on the benefits that we seek to secure for the Scottish people from it" (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2008, p. 5).

The rhetoric used, "natural capital and the use of an ecosystem services approach" (Natural England, 2009, p. 1), appears to encourage measuring benefits and development impacts rather than being about the wild places and value of nature in and for itself (Campagna & Fernandez, 2007, p. 384). This can be seen as a pragmatic move as it attempts to explain nature's value in easily calculable and economically understandable ways (Brennan & Lo, 2009). However, there are suggestions from some quarters that even thinking in monetary terms about environmental resources and 'nature' may discourage collective thinking and promote individualist behaviour (Burgoyne & Lea, 2006; Crompton, 2010, p. 10).

Previous analyses have concluded that anthropocentric, consumptive and instrumental valuations of nature are the ones explicitly expressed by conservation organisations (Alexander, 2008, pp. 89-90; Campagna & Fernandez, 2007). Conversely, studies into value perceptions have shown that

anthropocentric/instrumental values do not appear to dominate individuals' understanding and valuations of nature (Butler & Acott, 2007; Glasser, Craig, & Kempton, 1994; Satterfield, 2001, p. 345). While legislation provides a framework, the ethics and values of conservation organisations and their staff shape the approaches used in conservation practice and in engaging local communities in the process. With reports of low staff morale and lack of confidence in the priorities of the government agencies in recent years (Edwards, 2010; Robertson, 2008), this research considers whether the values organisations promote and any friction with what individuals feel or believe has the potential to cause frustration in staff and affect how nature's value is communicated and perceived more generally by wider society.

2.10 Scope for changing policy and reassessing values

The recent 'Space for nature' Lawton review carried out at the behest of Government emphasises that "there are strong moral arguments for recognising the intrinsic values of other species and for passing on the natural riches we have inherited to future generations" (Lawton, et al., 2010, p. v). There is also an acknowledgement that nature and the diversity of life it holds is fundamental to human survival and our quality of life. In terms of ecosystem services the report raises some concern about efforts to increasingly measure nature in monetary terms. While some services have marketable features, such as timber, many of them can never be traded in such a way. Intangible valuations may be irreplaceable, so how can realistic long term costs be measured? Aesthetic

qualities can also prove problematic with differences in individual and cultural perspectives which do change over time (Lawton, et al., 2010, p. 5).

Crucially the report points to the need for a step change in attitudes towards conservation, saying that efforts to conserve and expand natural habitats cannot succeed “without society accepting it to be necessary, desirable, and achievable. This will require strong leadership from government and significant improvements in collaboration between local authorities, local communities, statutory agencies, the voluntary and private sectors, farmers, landowners and other land-managers and individual citizens” (Lawton, et al., 2010, p. ix)

2.11 Summary

The current dominant social paradigm appears to advance scientific and economic valuations, in politics and organisational policies, over moral and intrinsic arguments for conserving nature (Alexander, 2008, p. 81). Organisations (particularly government agencies) appear constrained to refer to nature in these terms even to their own staff who also seem wary of admitting emotional attachments that inspired the initial interest. Whilst emotional and aesthetic values in nature feature in some marketing literature, most of the policies and reasons for communicating their importance are framed in science-based anthropocentric valuations and assumptions about the world (Rosa & Da Silva, 2005, p. 126). It can be argued that the rate of habitat and biodiversity loss is so serious that pragmatic scientific and economic based approaches are more likely to produce solutions than theoretical based intrinsic value or aesthetic approaches.

However the way ideas and values are expressed impacts directly on practices and policy development (Campagna & Fernandez, 2007, p. 383), reinforcing social paradigms and discouraging alternative viewpoints. There may be a danger in only expressing purportedly objective valuations of nature which may not match with personal understandings in the minds of conservationists and society at large. If the environment continues to be seen as detached from society this may further disengage people from taking an active interest in environmental issues (Campagna & Fernandez, 2007, pp. 385-386).

Chapter Three

Research design, methodology and theoretical issues

3.1 Introduction

This research considers how nature conservationists relate to nature and whether these understandings fit with nature conservation organisation's expressions of nature's value. Do conservationists conceptualise nature from similar ontological perspectives as the organisations they work for, and feel able to articulate personal environmental ethics through their work? Could any mismatch between the values organisations promote and how conservationists perceive nature have the potential to affect staff motivation and affect how nature's value is communicated to, and perceived more generally by wider society. Here I will discuss the research methodology used in approaching this complex area and show how issues of reliability, confidentiality and ethics were handled.

3.2 Methodology

The empirical aspect of this study investigates how nature conservationists conceptualise their relationship with nature and their values in relation to conservation and to what extent these are shared and nurtured through the policies, ethos and philosophy of conservation organisations. The study examines the assumption that "a love of the natural environment is almost an unacknowledged qualification" (VINE, 2006) for nature conservation staff by exploring nature conservationists personal connections to nature, relating to work and identity, before moving on to question whether staff think nature is valued

and discussed from a similar perspective within nature conservation organisations. In investigating complex questions of perception and value it is necessary to use qualitative methods to study attitude and implication and cannot be easily discriminated in a quantitative study (Silverman, 2000; 2010). The observations from the empirical study are considered against the context of wider social influences and conservation working practices (Hards, 2011, p. 26).

3.3 Narrative inquiry

As my study considers individuals' values and perceptions I had to use an approach that would allow as genuine an account of their values and attitudes to be expressed as possible. This would not have been possible using a survey format, or with closed questioning. Narrative inquiry is a research method which allows opportunities to explore personal attitudes to experiences and ideas, told in biographic form by the individual who is living the experience (Chase, 2005). Using narrative is a way to make sense of what we experience and frame our continually shifting relationships in the wider world. People construct their identities in response to their social and natural environments through a personal biography that chimes with their daily reality (Clayton S. , 2003, p. 46; Kahn, 2001, p. 214). The extent to which personal conceptions of the world chime with our lived experience can affect our self-identities and our feelings of ontological security (Giddens, 1991, p. 58). Humans are a narrative species; creating and listening to stories is a natural way for us to explore concepts and make retrospective sense of events through their telling (Crang, 2005, p. 230). If we see the world through

stories, then it makes sense to study our world through the narratives we tell ourselves (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 17).

As narrative involves an individual making sense of their experiences and emotions, and prioritising what is felt to be important, the questions asked have to be open and neutral allowing interviewees to follow their own routes. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken, allowing interviewees to develop their own story (Silverman, 2010, p. 198). However I consciously encouraged interviewees to develop aspects of a story they may not otherwise get around to, as interviewees “tend to talk in generalities” as that is what they assume is expected (Chase, 2005, p. 661).

People’s assumptions about my role and the purpose of the study and their perceptions of what an interview is will also have had an impact on what interviewees were then willing to relate in the telling of this aspect of their story (Denscombe, 2003, pp. 169-170). As researchers we choose how to deliver the questions, when to smile, what notes we are taking, which points to focus on and due to time constraints, aspects are covered or left uncovered dependent upon which points we pursue. So even in a semi-structured interview the researcher adds their personality or influence (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 94), and acknowledging this is crucial to allowing space for the voices of participants and developing the narrative of the study (Chase, 2005).

It was therefore necessary to allow the interviewee to guide the pace and flow of the questions. During this process I attempted to alter my role from that of an interviewer to one of becoming a listener, interacting as the narrator tells their story (Chase, 2005, p. 660). Through the construction of their responses to the

interview questions, people will have reacted to my body language and any pauses when waiting to see if there was more they wished to say. My recognition of this influenced how I constructed my questions and prompts to ensure that they were open and not leading the interviewee toward any perceived 'correct' answer. I responded to comments in such a way as to ensure that the interviewees were unaware of any opinion or expectations on my part as to what had been said.

3.4 Sampling and selecting interviewees

There are many organisations involved in nature conservation, from Government agencies charged with implementing legislation and managing National Nature Reserves (NNRs) to small charities trying to raise awareness and preserve certain species. Rayment & Dickie (2001, p. 10) estimated that there were around 18,000 full time equivalent jobs involved in nature conservation in the UK. For the purpose of this study it was important to cover the range of organisations that nature conservationists worked for, but time restraints limited the number of interviews that could be carried out and twenty is a suggested maximum number of participants for this level of research (Brett Davis, 2007, p. 29). Therefore decisions had to be made about the organisations and people selected for the study.

Care was taken to specifically select staff working on nature reserves or providing specialist conservation advice which directly impacted on the delivery of nature conservation projects. Due to the range of job titles and actual work that people carry out in conservation, the most effective way of ensuring the appropriate people were contacted was to use snowball sampling techniques (Drever, 2003, pp.36-37), where nature conservationists were purposively contacted and asked to

suggest potential participants who were then contacted and asked to suggest further potential participants (Silverman, 2010, p.194). When compiling the actual participant list, alongside making decisions over the organisations participants were drawn from, I ensured a spread of ages, experience, and a broadly representative gender balance (Rayment & Dickie, 2001, p. 11) was achieved.

The organisation type with the highest public profile in the sector is that of charitable membership organisations (i.e. NTS, RSPB) (Ashbrook Research & Consultancy Ltd, 2010). Not all of these could be represented in this study so the focus was on the largest organisations, in terms of membership, conserving their own reserves (see Appendix 1). As these organisations cover such a breadth of land and reserve ownership, are involved in shaping policy by lobbying activities, have high profile public awareness campaigns, and have a high proportion of staff who work directly on conservation projects, I decided to select half my interviewees from this category to ensure depth of coverage.

Government agencies have substantial role in promoting public perception of nature and give advice to governments on the impacts of policies on the natural environment, therefore gaining an insight from staff in this sector was crucial. Discussions with employees confirmed that a smaller proportion of staff from these organisations are involved in on the ground conservation, often focusing instead on research and planning advice. Therefore I decided to select six participants from this sector.

The most numerous type of organisation working in the sector are micro-businesses (employing less than 10 staff) (LANTRA, 2006, p. 5), often engaged by larger organisations to do practical conservation work or research and give advice on

particular projects or development sites. While these enterprises are not as high profile as the membership organisations or Government Agencies, they have the potential to impact locally on the perception of conservation practice and they may have a role in influencing the larger organisations they carry out work for. Four interviewees were selected from this category, as it was felt that overlooking this sector would miss part of the complexity of the industry.

3.5 Developing the questions

In researching organisational and personal ontologies I realised that articulation of personal philosophies of nature is not something that seems to come naturally. Our language is somewhat lacking when it comes to emotions and discussing self and relationship to the environment, and people seem to find it a slightly embarrassing subject to talk about. Therefore my questions had to be fairly open, particularly in the early stages, and allow for people taking their own routes to covering the points (Drever, 2003, pp. 27-28).

I attempted to conduct the interviews as a journey of exploration into the individuals' perceptions. What I hoped to take from all these journeys with interviewees is that while everyone starts from a different point, because we are all individuals, there are likely to be common themes and markers we see along the way that can point to where the strengths and weaknesses in our work experiences lie (Chawla, 1998, p. 384). I began by trialling my questions in two pilot interviews with people working part-time for one of the organisations in my

sample. I had met these individuals through occasional work on joint projects and felt they would be able to give me honest feedback on my questions and interview style. One of them had years of experience managing and apprising staff and the other was in the process of undertaking their own research as part of a degree in conservation management. Feedback from these pilot interviews helped me realise that the language I used within the questions was of critical importance. I also soon realised that I was asking too many questions. In the light of these pilot interviews I reassessed what of significance I expected to gain from each one and whether they were actually important enough to be included. With help from my supervisor and suggestions from another researcher I re-drafted my questions and held another pilot interview which gave a better flow to the narrative. The initial interview schedule can be found in Appendix 2 and the revised schedule is shown below.

3.6 Interview guide

Question	Prompt if needed
<i>Can you begin by telling me about your personal relationship with nature?</i>	What interests do you have that relate to nature? Is nature an important part of who you are?
<i>How did you come to be working in this field?</i>	
<i>In your view what is the point of nature conservation?</i>	What purpose is served by conserving nature?
<i>How do you think the public perceives nature conservation?</i>	
<i>Do you make a difference to the conservation of nature through your work?</i>	
<i>Does the organisation match up to its own aspirations for nature conservation?</i>	Does the organisation have its priorities right?
<i>Do you think the value of nature is talked about in the right way?</i>	
<i>What could be done to improve the effectiveness of the organisation when it comes to conserving nature?</i>	

It was important to allow the interviewee to control the flow of the interview and often I found that the overlapping nature of some of the questions meant they were sometimes covered without needing asked or covered in a slightly different order. I was comfortable with this process and if a particular area was highlighted as being of importance I would use appropriate probes to explore the topic (Drever, 2003, pp. 24, 25). I estimated that each interview would last approximately 40 minutes. I could not be precise as it depended on which aspects people wanted to elaborate on. However, most of the interviews were about this length, although the shortest lasted 33 minutes and the longest was 1hr 03mins.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Research is not value-free; my story of what is happening is explored tested and revised in light of what participants tell me. With regard to ethics my role as a researcher has to be negotiated with participants and those involved. When asking people personal details about their lives and relationships at work, ethical considerations are vital (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 71). Having read the University of Edinburgh's College of Humanities and Social Science research ethics framework (2008), informed consent was gained at the start of the process, where I explained my interest in the research (Drever, 2003, p. 40). Permission was sought prior to interview and all interviewees were given a written summary explaining the project and purpose of the interviews (see Appendix 2). The interviews were held on a one-to-one basis in locations where we were not likely to be overheard. The interviews were recorded for the purpose of transcriptions, and permission for this was obtained before recording began. Where comments

were asked not to be reported they were not, and copies of the research results were offered to all participants.

3.8 Data Analysis

I began my analysis immediately after conducting the first few interviews. Initially I transcribed verbatim two interviews in full. This helped in enhancing my listening skills, highlighted phrases or subjects that were repeated or returned to, and began the process of pulling out themes from which I could compare emerging themes in other interviews. From subsequent interviews I repeatedly listened to each recording and transcribed the rich material for analysis. With the quantity of data generated from the interviews it was important to collate the information into an easily manageable format, so that I could discern any patterns that were emerging as part of an overall picture. During close reading of the transcripts I made notes next to key points, in a column to the right, which I used to sort comments into themes.

An example of the process is set out below.

<p><i>In your view what is the point of nature conservation?</i></p> <p>Why do we do it? We. I think we do it out of love, out of need and out of passion and out of wonder,</p> <p>and essentially because we are a part of the world of nature. It's just we increasingly distance ourselves from it, so I think we are doing it out of love and a sense of belonging more than anything else.</p> <p>But we are also doing it because there are places and things that matter to us which we value hugely so the features of significance, the concept of features of significance is really fundamental, special places, special living things, but it's not just because they are beautiful, or offer us wonder or offer us escapism, its deeper than that.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Love (of nature) - Seen as 'part' of the natural world - Value of place and connection
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The headings used for each table were

- Relationship to nature (RN)
- Attitudes to nature conservation (AC)
- Motivational factors (MF)
- View of public perception (PP)
- View of organisation (VO)
- Discussing value (DV)
- Aspirations (AS)

Taken together the tables highlighted the main issues raised across the interviews. I then returned to the individual transcripts and reassessed the text to ensure I had not mis-assigned the comments. Through the reading and re-reading notes and transcripts, and listening over to recordings, pulling out threads and making extensive notes the narrative began to be woven through all that was said, unsaid and demonstrated (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 131). In light of this process I realised the extent of the overlap and inter-relations between the individual comments and the wider topic areas. Many comments could be said to relate to multiple areas. Therefore I reviewed the overlaps and regrouped the theme headings into higher level categories (Cote, Salmela, Baria & Russell, 1993, p.132).

These categories are:

- Conservationists' relationships to nature
- Attitudes to nature conservation
- View of organisation
- Implications for public engagement and education

These categories are explored in the following chapter on the interview findings with extensive use of quotes relating to each category. See Appendix 4 for details of how the initial tables fitted within these categories.

Through this process I built up a theory of how people working in nature conservation conceptualise their relationship with nature and how they perceive the organisations they work for support this relationship and engage wider public understanding of nature. While care was also taken in aggregating the results not to unduly reflect a few individuals (Chawla, 1998, p. 392) I do show, in the next chapter, comments from individuals that appeared to hold a contradictory or exceptional viewpoint. I was conscious not to disregard data that did not fit within the general patterns or with my assumptions as these tensions can be where some of the most interesting issues are highlighted. Contradictions and inconsistencies across the interviews are therefore acknowledged and explored (Denscombe, 2003, pp. 280-282) in discussion of the interview findings.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Validity is a key issue when considering narratives. Some sociologists are uneasy about biographical methods as they feel there are too many variables to be reliable (Giddens, 2009, p. 58), but a narrative can be seen as an individual's experience grounded in their own reality and as such can be 'powerful indicators' of how people identify themselves (Payne, 2000, p. 68) and give us an insight into "why people do what they do" (Shanahan, Pelstring, & McComas, 1999, p. 407). It is the diversity of the stories that challenge our interpretations or assumptions and highlight areas where connections are made (Chase, 2005, p. 664).

To aid validity, data needs to be examined in the light of a broader context (Silverman, 2010, p. 275) and I was able to use my previous knowledge, work experience and readings to check some details. Keeping a research diary and referring back to this regarding my attitudes and opinions about texts I had read helped with checking my biases toward certain themes (Reid & Gough, 2000, p. 70). When analysing the data the matter of whose 'voice' needed careful consideration. I am also a narrator as I construct my own story of the research, my voice comes through in all that I say and how I prioritise themes for exploration (Chase, 2005, p. 657), and as such I have reflected upon my own assumptions in this process.

With regard to reliability, the quantity of data to be coded and time constraints limited the amount of inter-coder work that could be achieved by another researcher (see below). I therefore revisited the original transcripts after a couple of months and re-coded them and compared these results with my initial thoughts to ensure consistency (Silverman, 2010, p. 290). To further aid the reliability of my findings another researcher read the coded transcripts and commented on the appropriateness of coding. Where mismatch over perspectives and wording occurred we discussed these. Issues only arose over comments that could be interpreted as having multiple meanings. In all instances the issues were resolved by breaking the comment down further into single meaning sections (Cote, Salmela, Baria & Russell, 1993, p.131).

I was also fortunate to have discussions with another researcher who was undertaking a similar project, although with a different focus, who had found similar themes (Denscombe, 2003, p. 273). This gave me confidence that my

approach was producing reliable results. I have also included many quotes in “*italics*” from the interviews to allow the reader an opportunity to hear the voices of my interviewees. The quotes I used are generally those of a shared or typical view or where an alternative viewpoint is given this is highlighted and discussed within a broader context.

3.10 Summary

The research methodology was selected after careful reading of texts and through personal reflection on the subject as well as drawing on my personal interests and strengths. Trying to define and squeeze all organisations who deal with nature conservation into distinct categories has been challenging. There is overlap between many organisations, and difficulty with the definitions of what ‘nature’ is and what does ‘conservation’ mean. Various organisations can be seen to be involved to some degree in conserving nature. I am grateful for the advice I have received in developing this research and am satisfied that the narrative approach used during semi-structured interviews has allowed for deeper reflection on identity and the value perceptions investigated in this study.

Chapter Four

Discussion of interview findings

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Two nature conservation organisations, due largely to their history and legislative requirements, appear to predominantly communicate the value of nature through scientific and economic terms predicated on instrumental use and anthropocentric perceptions of the world. The interviews gave an insight into how individual nature conservationists perceived the value of nature, and if these values were supported and reinforced in their organisations. I am grateful to all those who made time available to share some of their inner thoughts about nature with me. I was conscious that many reported never having openly discussed what nature meant to them with anyone before. I appreciate that opening their thoughts up to me was for some an awkward experience. Interviewees are referred to as NC (Nature Conservationist) followed by a number. I have used interviewees' comments within their appropriate categories to give an overall structure to the narrative. The quotes used in each section express commonly held perspectives except where highlighted and are shown in italics throughout.

4.2 Conservationists' relationships to nature

I began the interviews conscious of wanting to hear the story that the conservationists wanted to tell, as such I encouraged people to take their own routes in narrating their experiences. This was especially true with the first question, asking about their own relationship with nature. I wanted the interviewee to interpret the question their own way, to emphasise that they were

in control of the direction of the interview, and that there were no ‘right’ answers. Some started by telling me what nature meant in their lives and most related experiences as a child awakening to the wonder of nature. Only one person summarised nature in anthropomorphic terms as ‘*a friend*’, and most indicated that nature was an integral part of who they were as a person and could not imagine life without being in close contact with the natural environment on an almost daily basis.

NC12 *“It is fundamental to my life to the extent that it is what my life is primarily about, if not wholly about. Does that make sense? It is absolutely at the very point and essence of me, and always has been”*.

NC13 *“it’s a basic connection. I find it difficult to see how people can just see the environment as a backdrop, because for me it is anything but”*.

These comments broadly chimed with my expectations regarding conservationists’ attitudes following my literature review. However I was surprised at how clearly and passionately connections were articulated. While there was a little hesitancy in some respondents, most expressed a level of intensity and emotional attachment to nature that went beyond what I thought people would be comfortable talking about. All but one interviewee expressed an emotional type of connection to nature that they intimated was key to who they were. The only explicit comment about nature not directly relating to identity was given by a government agency employee in response to a prompt after some hesitancy about their relationship to nature.

CR- Is nature an important part of who you are?

NC6- *“No, I don’t think it’s that big a part actually”.*

This conservationist had pursued an educational and career path that has been linked closely to natural science and then nature conservation. She also mentioned a long-term interest in being outdoors and finding out about and feeling connected to the natural forces in the world, NC6 *“I’ve always spent quite a lot of time outside, even as a kid”*. The impression I got from these responses and other comments during our session was that although there was a keen interest in the technical and physical side of the natural world and enjoyment of the outdoors in general, to articulate this as part of her identity was as a step too far, as she had other more pressing interests outside work relating to social interactions that would be characterised by others as more key to who she was as a person. While this could be interpreted that conservation was just another career path without emotional resonance she went on to comment NC6 *“It’s good, it does feel like quite a privilege sometimes to do this for your job. Definitely makes you feel at one with the world, quite happy”*.

Most interviewees talked about experiences in nature from a very young age-

NC2 *“I was one of these kids who was never in the house, always up to mischief climbing trees getting covered in glaur [mud]”*.

NC4 *“I’ve always been interested from a young age. I spent five years in Orkney growing up and that’s where I fell in love with being outside. During the summer it never got dark, so I was always out playing, seeing wildlife everywhere you went”*.

NC20 *“I suppose it’s always been there, from a kid. I used to go and collect things, including bird’s eggs would you believe it, but I wasn’t very good at that, but newts and frogs and toads and lizards, just about anything I could catch”*.

Outdoor learning in nature is seen by many authors as an essential component for developing a caring, understanding relationship for the environment (e.g. Higgins, 1996; Lugg, 2007; Mannion, Sankey, Doyle, & Mattu, 2006; Stewart, 2008).

Family outdoor learning opportunities appear to provide a rich meaningful context for learning in, about and for the environment (Mannion, Sankey, Doyle, & Mattu, 2006, p. 3). A family connection or a positive social influence was mentioned by several interviewees.

NC18 *“When I was five years old, I’ve just plucked a number out of the air quite honestly because it is as long as I can remember. And it is due to my father, because I still have my father’s first editions of the new naturalist series. Flower books, mammal books and so on. As soon as I could walk really my father got me interested in nature”*.

Formative influences can be seen as precisely that, they help to shape who we are as individuals (Chwala, 1998b; Palmer J. A., 1993; Palmer, et al., 1998). Our daily experience of the environment and people around us influences our personal identity and what we grow to value (Clayton & Opotow, 2003, p. 5). All the conservationists interviewed said they loved being outside, often wanting to share their enthusiasm with others. Nature appeared a continual source of wonder and awe, which fed a curiosity and drive for knowledge in creative, emotional and scientific ways. It could be argued that these people were saying what they were

expected to say as people who are involved in conserving nature (Gough, 1999, p. 411), however across the interviews I got the sense that people were talking honestly and returned regularly to themes that chimed with their inner reality.

4.3 Attitudes to nature conservation

NC1 *“Some people might call it a calling. I think it is part of me”.*

‘Conserving nature is a calling, we were fated to it’ could almost have been the summary for why people said they became involved in their roles (Orr, 1999). There was also a real sense of duty expressed, where many people felt a moral obligation to get involved in conservation

NC7 *“I needed to help... redress the balance a bit of what humans are doing to the natural world”.*

NC11 *“It seemed to be intrinsically right, to work in this field, morally good; this was a good job and a good profession to be involved in”.*

NC8 *“I feel a strong sense of duty and moral obligation to be involved with helping to be part of that green movement towards maintaining biodiversity”.*

This sense of duty appeared to come from two strands related to ‘Self preservation’ and the continuing viability and richness of the Earth and all its systems. The first was as part of an Earth community involving our duties as members of that community.

NC12 *“I think we do it out of love, out of need and out of passion and out of wonder, and essentially because we are a part of the world of nature. It’s just we increasingly distance ourselves from it, so I think we are doing it out of love and a sense of belonging more than anything else”.*

NC18 *“I firmly believe that you might be a spider, or I hesitate to say a midge, If you are a living creature in this world, we all have the right to be here. Humans think they are above all other forms of animal life but, I firmly believe that we all have an equal right to be here”.*

The second source of ‘selfishness’ from many of the interviews was that nature would be fine without human interference and that nature conservation was society’s way of trying to maintain the natural environment in a form suitable for human habitation.

NC20 *“To maintain this planet for the human species, ‘cause the planet would manage perfectly well without us. Self preservation, that’s what I think”.*

NC16 *“Well to be honest we take conservation away, we wreck the planet, nature will be fine, but it may well be fine in a way that has no space for people any more. The point in nature conservation is to make sure that people have an environment to live in that feeds them, provides them with water and provides them with outdoors which is good for the soul”.*

NC17 *“At the end of the day it is our world and if we wreck the thing, if it goes too far...if it’s knocked, we’re all down the swanny”.*

While the first of these could be seen as putting the whole environment at the centre of concern and the second as putting humans at the centre, there was general agreement that nature had intrinsic value and a right to continue, despite whether it had any human use, suggesting widespread acceptance of an ecocentric ethical stance (Kortenkamp & Moore, 2001).

Environmental issues, including biodiversity and habitat loss, can be seen as a result of human interactions with the natural world (Middleton, 2008, p. 21) and the interviewees mostly defined nature conservation as ‘defending nature’.

NC5 *“In my view is to help secure and ensure the future health of the planet and the functioning of the natural systems within the planet and the future of the species that depend upon those of which we are one, so ultimately it is about maintaining a healthy planet, a healthy environment for humans and for other forms of life on this planet, which is not an easy task”.*

NC1 *“to ensure the continuation of habitats, ecosystems, species. And reduce the damage done by man”.*

Conservation of nature was broadly seen as a compromise with economic development and the way our society functions, with the main roles seen as feeding into scientific understandings of the world and changing perceptions about the importance of nature. Nature conservation staff felt positive about their work in general and their own contribution to nature conservation. There was a real sense that people felt they were doing a morally worthwhile job.

4.4 View of organisation

Overwhelmingly staff said they wanted to be valued at work and make a difference to nature through conservation. Some mentioned their 'save the world' agenda and felt privileged to be able to work for organisations with similar goals and make their love of nature into a career.

Nature conservation staff seemed to have very few problems with the mission and aims of their organisation. Despite frustrations over policies and systems, conservation staff said the organisations *implicit* core values generally matched their own. Many felt their own identities were reflected in their current work, and organisational aims. Although people were much more willing to openly criticise previous employers.

NC11 *"where you work is integral [to identity], and where I work the trust is very much there to conserve the wildlife and scenery around and to enhance it"*.

However the *explicit* way that nature's values were communicated appeared to cause frustration. So while staff often felt the mission of their organisation chimed with their own aspirations and feelings for nature, the justifications openly used to communicate that value often bore little relationship to their own value system.

NC5 *"it's talked about in far too limited a horizon I think. Wildlife and the natural environment have many, many other values, to society, and to individual people, other than pure scientific value, which is really the way in which it is argued"*.

Staff, from all sectors, agreed that scientific credibility was essential to discussions of why nature mattered. However, across the board conservationists felt that instrumental, scientific and economic values of nature were discussed and promoted as the central or only value of nature while the intrinsic and less quantifiable aspects were largely ignored. Economic valuations can be seen as useful when demonstrating the contribution nature makes to local and global economies (Alexander, 2008, p. 81). However these valuations have limited scope to actually impact on conservation management practices, and many functions of ecosystems have no market (Lawton, et al., 2010, p. 5) and some studies suggest that people actually behave in more environmentally damaging way if they are reminded of financial implications (Burgoyne & Lea, 2006; Crompton, 2010, p. 10).

Most interviewees appeared to want to talk in more passionate and philosophical terms about nature and its value through their work, but were concerned that would be seen as lacking credibility or being a bit ‘whacky’ and was seen as ‘not the done thing’.

NC11 “It would be nice to talk about it in a more spiritual way possibly, but unfortunately spiritual on an accounts book doesn’t come across so well. I think folk would be a bit embarrassed to talk about it”.

NC13 “I mean this edging towards putting an economic value on it is just an attempt to integrate it into a language that society will understand, but while that’s all very valid, the wider emotional and spiritual values are hardly recognised at all. If they come up in presentations or meetings

people raise an eyebrow and make appreciative noises but that's as far it goes. Its fine if its kids, but if its adults no".

NC5 "I've described the situation to other people who are not working in conservation and they're amazed absolutely amazed when you say people can't really share their real feelings about what they're doing, and they say well why not! It is it just seems so fundamental I don't know why we've got into this situation".

Staff, whatever their organisation, seemed to feel that what they described as emotional or spiritual connections were not explicitly acknowledged in their organisation, but there was at least superficial recognition from the organisation that people need experiences in nature for their health and wellbeing. There was also general agreement amongst staff that a love or passion for nature was a crucial element of being able to do the job well.

NC14 "I think it helps me do my job, cause its sort of you know, you're passionate about sharing it with people and enjoying it and making sure it's there for the next generation as well. I think it connects you with what it's all about, that's something you really need to remember".

NC18 "I think most of the people you have spoken to and will speak to you will say the same thing. I think that it is your whole life, without question. You just can't get away from your love of wild places and natural things".

But that perhaps it was not always an aspect that was then openly valued

NC19 *“the love of nature is essential ...but I don’t know that it is nurtured [by the organisation]”*.

An issue which was brought up several times was that it was fine for the public, and especially children to find nature inspirational, but that staff were expected to talk in ‘business speak’ or scientific terms when it came to the value of reserves or nature in general.

NC7 *“I think a lot of the bigger organisations now are appreciating that people’s interpretation of nature, appreciation of nature, interaction with nature, are vital to make nature conservation work. I think it’s a lot easier to talk about such things. I think what is happening is nature conservation staff still don’t feel that they can talk about their personal feelings in relation to nature. You know it’s OK to talk about it in terms of the general public and public engagement, it’s not really talked about, I think, in terms of people’s motivations for the job and what keeps them doing it”*.

There was a sense that staff wanted more opportunity to express a wider variety of understandings of nature with colleagues and the public. Nature conservation organisations form communities developing, shaping and demonstrating the value of the natural world. Concepts of identity and assumptions about the nature of reality can be shared, intensifying commitment, or become disjointed and lead to disengagement and frustration at lack of shared values (Hards, 2011, p. 37; Zavestoski, 2003, pp. 305-6). This could be an important issue. It has been suggested that the only way to alter the speed and scale of environmental change is to challenge the primacy of many of society’s cultural values, and for organisations such as those involved in nature conservation to strengthen and

articulate widely held, but low priority, values towards the intrinsic, aesthetic and emotional understandings of nature (Crompton, 2010, p. 5). If staff working in nature conservation feel restricted to discuss nature only in scientific or anthropocentric terms through their work, ecocentric values and personal relationships towards nature appear unlikely to be incorporated into conservation management practices, and encouragement of these values in wider society becomes increasingly problematic (Angermeier, 2000, p. 374).

4.5 Implications for public engagement and education

Human culture is now a dominant force in the environment and what people do with their environment is likely to determine whether systems can sustain themselves (Smyth, 2006, p. 255) and what people 'do' is for the benefit of their families in the short- and long-term as they see it. The role of environmental education was brought up by most interviewees who felt that it was a pivotal role for nature conservation. Education must play a key role in showing why the environment matters and lead people to question and express their values and motivations (Smyth, 2006, p. 256).

NC18 "I think that's one of the reasons I suppose that we go into this line, it's education, it's trying to educate people make them aware of what is around us and how important it is".

There was worry expressed about whether the way environmental education is currently approached by organisations was really effective. People now receive a great deal of education about the environment making them aware of issues, but it

is often fragmented knowledge about individual species and linear systems cut off from the wider environment (Hart, 1997, p. 18; Ross, 2007, p. 660).

NC19 *“Education about wildlife, as it has been, has been too much of a list of learning names and process for the sake of it. Part of the tick it off mentality of people in general. Spot that bird tick it off, cover that topic tick it off. That is a shame. Education needs to be more all encompassing. If we find nature exciting and are full of enthusiasm, you hope that if you are pleased and excited [other] people will be too. People need to be able to say wow! Cool is important”.*

John Dewey (writing in 1916) lamented the fragmentary approach to nature taken by formal education, where nature had been separated from the world of reality and only studied in details separated from the daily living environment. Instead he contended that it is the interrelationships that fire the imagination and make for true understanding of the natural world, “when nature is treated as a whole, like the Earth in its relations, its phenomena fall into their natural relations of sympathy and association with human life” (Dewey, 1916/ 2007, p. 160).

NC7 *“And also in terms of public engagement... if people are out there looking at wildlife or an amazing view and experiencing nature they probably aren't looking at it through a scientific view that's not how they are experiencing it. If... the interpretation they are given is on that sort of level it just doesn't work, that's not how they are seeing it. It's trying to impose a viewpoint, not a view but it's trying to impose a way of viewing*

things on people who aren't naturally viewing it like that because that's not how they are experiencing it, does that make any more sense".

NC6 *"we don't spend much time explaining why we look after these things... I think nature conservation is full of complex issues".*

It is problematic trying to educate about complex ecosystems and habitats in purely reductionist terms. People may grasp cause and effect concepts fairly easily, and assume they know the facts, but this epistemologically restricted approach does not give people a sound understanding or connection to their own environmental reality (Smyth, 2006, pp. 249, 254). While personal understandings can seem insignificant compared to scientific facts, different ways of viewing the complexity of nature that embraces our experiences and looks to build positively on our connections with the environment ought to be considered (Nicol, 2003). Even when anthropocentric values can be seen as the simple values that everyone can understand on similar terms (Alexander, 2008, p. 91) they do not appear to be the values that inspire active participation and understanding of the environment. Perhaps nature conservation organisations should concern themselves more with expressing a range of values and supporting people's understandings and relationship to the natural world, particularly in a time where children, and probably adults, appear to have less unmediated contact with nature (Mannion, Sankey, Doyle, & Mattu, 2006, p. 15).

NC5 *"I realised no matter how good an ecologist you are if you don't manage to bring people with you then the whole lot is pointless. Because ultimately nature conservation is a human problem, and the solutions are human and political solutions and they are based on people's understanding*

and therefore raising people's understanding of the natural world and raising people's connection with the natural world and belief in the natural world is the most important thing from my point of view".

Ethics and value within an environmental education context are not about encouraging dogma or producing answers. They are about questioning and exploring alternative ideas and ways of understanding the world (Jickling, 2009, p. 215), confronting traditional paradigms and testing how they work within personal knowledge on a lifelong basis (Rickson, 2006, p. 449). Environmental ethics, and the values that are explored through the process, link fundamentally to questions about why nature is regarded and conserved as it is (Alexander, 2008, p. 85). The nature conservationists interviewed appeared to want more questioning and reflection about why nature and its conservation mattered.

NC9 *"I think fundamentally there needs to be more questioning in the nature conservation profession about why we're doing what we're doing".*

NC20 *"I think organisations need [staff] asking why are we doing it this way? Because it makes you think and it makes you revise how you work sometimes".*

Alexander (2008) suggests that conservationists should be encouraged to examine conservation practice and develop their own ethical viewpoint in relation to nature (p. 77), and nature conservation organisations need to reflect not only on the 'what' they are trying to conserve but to the 'how' of the process by which value is discussed and connections promoted in nature conservation and environmental education (Rickson, 2006, p. 448), and the 'why' nature is important (Sund & Wickman, 2008, p. 147).

4.6 Summary

The themes raised throughout the interviews suggest that nature conservationists predominantly identify nature as an integral, and positive, part of their lives. All but one interviewee intimated that nature was key to their identity. They all expressed a sense of privilege to be working in the sector and talked about loving being outdoors in a natural environment. Nature conservation staff felt positive about their work and their own contribution to nature conservation. There was also agreement amongst staff that a love or passion for nature was a crucial element of being able to do their job well. There was a real sense of duty expressed, along with discussion of multiple and intrinsic values in nature.

The interviewees said that the nature conservation organisations had good aspirations and worked hard to live up to them. However, they suggested that the way that nature's value could be discussed within the organisation, and in communication to wider society, was often restricted to non-personal, scientific, economic and anthropocentric understandings. The justifications openly used to communicate the values of nature appeared to cause frustration amongst staff. There seemed to be a desire to incorporate more personal and intrinsic ways of knowing the natural world and challenging people's perceptions about what nature is and how we should view its importance in our lives.

One aspiration of the conservationists interviewed revolved around challenging the perception of nature as something other than society. Conservationists had some concerns that the reductionist approach often taken by organisations to environmental education and public engagement reinforced the idea superficial

understanding but further de-personalised knowledge. Instead they seemed to want more questioning and reflection about why nature and its conservation mattered, and more opportunity to express a wider variety of understandings of nature with colleagues and the public. If conservationists feel unable to discuss these values towards nature amongst themselves, perpetuating these feelings in the face of apathy from the wider public may be difficult. This may have long term implications for conservation as “society will only treasure and conserve what it values” (Alexander, 2008, p. 92).

Chapter Five

Conclusions: Values and the conservation paradigm

5.1 Introduction

This research has considered how nature conservationists relate to nature and whether these understandings fit with nature conservation organisations expressions of nature's value. The narratives that nature conservationists shared with me have been reflected against the backdrop of what the organisations appear to be telling society and their own staff. Conservationists told me that their organisations have good aims and aspirations for conserving nature, but that the language of engagement and policy frameworks appears to be restricted to expressing values in scientific and economic terms to satisfy perceived political objectives. Other forms of knowing and relating to the world, particularly on an emotional or intrinsic level, appear to be treated as having less credibility. I suggest that more open discussion and acknowledgement of a range of values in relation to nature may be beneficial to organisations engaged in conserving the natural environment.

5.2 Values and the conservation paradigm - Theory and practice

“Our structured reality is preselected on the basis of value, and really to understand structured reality requires an understanding of the value from which it's derived” (Prisig, 1974, p. 287)

As I have explored in Chapter One, the current dominant social paradigm is firmly rooted in anthropocentric values. Francis Bacon's creed that objective science leads to technological control over nature is so widely accepted that it appears to be the default mode of thought in our culture (White, 1967, p. 1203). Conservation organisations have built a broad base of popular support for wildlife conservation, but increasingly have become part of the policy community working within dominant economic and scientific paradigms (Grove-White, 2005, p. 22). Management of habitats and natural resources are largely through instrumental, technological and positivist science based approaches that do not tend to acknowledge intrinsic value in nature, see humans as an integral part of nature, or examine the intricacy of the human-nature relationship and social feedbacks which are affected by this relationship (Pepper, 1996, p. 13). Aldo Leopold (1968) said there was a need to reappraise these values and relationships, as the history of land use suggests the current paradigm does not promote responsibility or obligations in a sustainable relationship with nature (pp. 207-209).

In order to challenge unsustainable societal and political attitudes towards nature, Campagna & Fernandez (2007) suggest that conservationists and their organisations should be able to offer alternative values and demonstrate relationships with the natural world beyond mere utilitarian human wellbeing (p.387). From my research I conclude that while moves are being made to explain non-use values of nature in some policies, the prevailing conservation paradigm is still very much rooted within anthropocentric terms which tends to undermine "the value of a more intimate, intuitive, non-logical style of encounter with the world" (Bonnett, 2007, p. 717) which inspired staff to become involved in active conservation work initially.

The conservationists interviewed said they felt nature was an integral part of their identity and expressed views which suggested an ecocentric ethical stance toward nature was held by most participants. They reported making a positive contribution to nature conservation and thought that the organisations they worked for had generally good aspirations for nature conservation. However interviewees felt that recognition of nature's value within the organisations seemed to be communicated through non-personal, scientific and economic terms, based on an anthropocentric philosophy, with alternative forms of knowledge perceived as having less standing.

As Eisner (1985) suggests the context that events or priorities are framed in tells us just as much about how they are valued by institutions. This value code is not always explicitly expressed but pervades the culture all the same (p. 92). Implicit rules, assumptions, and expectations characterise daily practice, and concepts or ideas which are never discussed or even acknowledged are seen as irrelevant (Eisner, 1985, p.107). Peoples' experience of organisational value systems can also affect their personal ecological identity and motivation in the longer term (Zavestoski, 2003, pp. 305-6). Concern was raised by many of the interviewees about having to discuss nature's value at work in ways that constrained them. Some had even left jobs previously because they had difficulty reconciling their view of nature with the one promoted by the organisation. The lack of open discussion skews what is seen as valid and these conceptions are reinforced through working practices (Eisner, 1985, p. 99).

5.3 Contribution and limitations

This study could not hope to encompass the views, attitudes and aspirations of every nature conservationist, and I make no pretence to do so. However I feel it does provide a useful window into how conservationists appear to conceptualise the value of nature, its role in identity and the extent to which organisations support articulation of these values and relationships. While the twenty interviewees could only ever articulate their own views, the comments made contained many common and repeated themes suggesting shared views and perspectives in many areas. The wide variety of people and roles involved in nature conservation means that any study of this type will be limited in its scope. However as this research builds on previous work looking at individual understandings of nature as well as studies into conservation organisations, I have confidence that the methodology used and the results discussed here are a valuable reflection of the attitudes and aspirations of conservationists.

The number and complexity of organisations involved in conservation means it has not been possible to gain more than a general impression of how organisations communicated nature's value both internally to their own employees and to wider society. It is however this general impression that I feel counts when reinforcing, or challenging, perceptions of what is 'normal' and accepted practice amongst staff, as well as in influencing political and social attitudes and understandings towards nature.

5.4 Concluding remarks

The explanations offered by nature conservation organisations about nature's value do not appear to fully chime with conservationists' experiences and understanding of the world in relation to their own life stories. Emotions and intrinsic values cannot be measured easily in economic and physical sciences terms so seem to be largely missing from policies on nature conservation. Without acknowledging the full range of values in nature, they cannot be incorporated into conservation management practices or be encouraged in wider society (Angermeier, 2000, p. 374). Cherishing, love, and discussion about intrinsic value in nature have been long and widely debated in academic circles (e.g. Briggs, 2009; Callicott, Crowder, & Mumford, 1999; Fox, 1993; Howarth, 1996; Rolston, 1994; Samuelsson, 2010) and are now being discussed more openly in professional and public interface circles (BANC, 2011; Monbiot, 2011; VINE, 2006). The conservationists in this research expressed a love of the natural world and a relationship to nature which was largely integral to their expressions of identity, but they felt restricted in the terms that they could express this love and connection through their work. If staff who conserve nature cannot talk openly about their personal understanding and love of nature who can? I would suggest that if nature conservation organisations are to take a lead in shaping awareness of the environment, their values and policies should be interested in the attitudes and values of individuals, such as conservationists, who have an influence on education for life (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxii) and have already shown a level of environmental consciousness by getting involved in conservation.

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Appendix 1 - Membership details of conservation organisations

Largest by membership of organisations involved in nature conservation

Membership organisation	Approximate membership in 2004
National Trust	3,000,000
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	1,022, 000
Wildlife Trusts	413,000
The National Trust for Scotland	260,000

Source (DEFRA, 2004, p. 67)

Appendix 2 - Initial interview schedule

Draft Interview guide -

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. To start with I'll recap why I am doing this research and why I'm interviewing you.

I am interviewing a range of people with different roles and job titles as well as personal histories, who work in the field of Nature Conservation to find out what has inspired them to choose this line of work and what maintains the interest to keep being involved in conservation. I've asked you to be interviewed as I'd like to know what motivates you to work in a nature conservation role and what basic values you feel are necessary to do your job well. To get a full understanding I want to know about some of your personal memories in nature, educational experiences, and interests that you feel have inspired you to work in this field. I'll also be asking how you think the organisation/s you work for, or those you have worked for, value nature; and how this affects your personal motivation at work and attitude to policies and priorities in conservation.

I will be recording this interview for the purpose of transcribing accurately the points you make. Any comments and information given will be displayed anonymously in any future publications of this research. Are you happy to begin?

Notes

Topic- General Background	Prompts and probes (if needed or appropriate)
<p>T.1) Could you please describe your role in nature conservation?</p> <p>What does it involve? What other roles have you had?</p> <p>This is an introductory question designed to put the interviewee at ease, talking about something familiar and to gain an insight into their background and the type of interview it is likely to be.</p>	<p>What is your job title? What you do?</p>
	<p>What did you do before this post? And before that?</p>
	<p>Do you do any other activities relating to nature?</p>

Topic - Influences	Prompts and probes
<p>T.2) What influenced your decision to pursue a role in nature conservation?</p> <p>This question hopes to find out what influenced their initial interest in nature and how that realised itself into actually pursuing their career/way of life.</p>	<p>What sorts of things made you think Nature conservation mattered?</p>
	<p><i>How old were you when...</i></p>
	<p>Did any of your experiences at school affect your choice?</p>
	<p><i>Do you still feel...?</i></p>

Topic- Values 1	Prompts and probes
<p>T.3) In your view what is the purpose of nature conservation?</p> <p>This attempts to understand why individuals feel nature conservation matters. I hope to discover the 'values' that people place on nature, whether intrinsic or instrumental.</p>	<p>Why should you and nature conservation organisations do this work? What is the point?</p>
	<p><i>Why do you think nature is important...?</i></p>
	<p>Is it for people, wildlife or what, that you conserve nature?</p>
	<p><i>Are there any other reasons you think ...</i></p>

Topic - Attitude and motivation	Prompts and probes
<p>T.4) Do you believe you make a difference to the</p>	<p>In what ways? How does that make you feel?</p>

<p>conservation of nature?</p> <p>This question attempts to discover if they can marry up their motivations and values previously discussed with the reality of their job. The aim is to discover how this impacts on motivation and desire to remain in this role.</p>	What stops you making a difference?
	What would help you make that difference?
	How can that be achieved?

Topic - Impression of employer	Prompts and probes
<p>T.5) Does the organisation you work for make a difference to nature conservation?</p> <p>I want this question to establish a personal perspective on whether they feel the organisation achieves its goals or perceived goals the individual may wish for it.</p>	Do you know what their mission is?
	What are the main roles?
	Do you think they achieve it?
	What do you think about key priorities and how they are arrived at?
	<i>Tell me why you think ...</i>

Topic - Organisational 'vibe'	Prompts and probes
<p>T.6) Does 'your organisation' Value nature the same way you do?</p> <p>Developing an understanding of the culture and feel within the organisation and how that</p>	By value I mean is there a collective view amongst the staff, an ethos that you feel fits with your personal views of nature. Does the organisation have the same priorities and view of nature as you?
	<i>Which priorities would you change..?</i>
	<i>Would it make a difference if...</i>
	Can an organisation have Values?

impacts on staff motivation and inspiration at work. What is the interviewees perception of their employers attitudes towards nature	
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Topic - Motivational influences	Prompts and probes
T.7) Does the way your organisation values nature affect your motivation?	<i>How do you get over issues such as...</i>
How does the works attitude towards nature affect motivation?	What things do you find to keep your motivation going?

Topic - VINE	Prompts and probes
T.8) What do you think of the statement. "A love of the natural environment is almost an unacknowledged qualification" for those working in conservation roles?	How would you put into words how you feel about nature?
	<i>You say that... would you be able to articulate that at work?</i>
	Is your 'love' of nature noticed, valued or nurtured by your employers?

Topic - Personal connections	Prompts and probes
T.9) Would it have any effect on the effectiveness of conservation if personal connections with nature were more openly recognised?	
	<i>Why do you think that...?</i>

Is there anything else relevant to my study you would like to tell me about?

Is there anything you would like to ask me before we finish?

Appendix 3 - Letter to participants



Dear [Interviewee]

'The Nature of Conservationists'

MSc project, The University of Edinburgh

I am writing to you regarding my research into the Nature of Conservationists. Through this study I am investigating how the inspiration to work with nature is sustained and re-created. This study, supported by VINE (Values in Nature and the Environment)¹, and developed in discussion with their steering group will be exploring the aspirations of nature conservation organisations and their staff. I am carrying out this research as part of my MSc studies in Outdoor Environmental and Sustainability Education at the University of Edinburgh.

In conducting this research I will be interviewing a broad spectrum of people who work at different levels in many organisations in the field of Nature Conservation. I am asking for permission to interview you as part of this process.

The interviews will be semi-structured with a list of topics to be covered rather than as a series of set questions. All interviews will last around 40 minutes. Privacy and non traceability of individuals' comments will be maintained in the subsequent reports and papers. Participants will be given the opportunity to check transcribed material to be used in the study. A summary of the findings will be given to yourself along with publication details.

I hope you are able to help with this research. To confirm your participation or for further details I can be contacted at the address or contact number above or by at email at s0792314@ed.ac.uk

Yours Faithfully

Cara Roberts

I confirm that Cara Roberts research has been developed in discussion with the VINE Steering Group. Fuller details of VINE's original research brief can be viewed at www.vineproject.org.uk/

Signed.

John Bacon ,VINE Chair.

¹ VINE is a forum for nature conservation professionals, land managers and all people who care about nature. VINE believes that the process of thinking deeply about what we do and why we do it will help conservationists to be more creative and effective in their working lives.

Appendix 4 - Categories for thematic headings

Category	Conservationists' relationship to nature	Attitudes to nature conservation	View of organisation	Implications for public engagement & education
Thematic origin	RN Part of self	AC Sense of duty	VO Positive perceptions	PP Public concern
	RN Moral responsibility	AC Perception of nature and its value	VO Negative perceptions	PP Public apathy
	RN Outdoor activities & interests	AC Promoting connection	VO Working practices	PP Political will
	RN Social influences	MF Moral responsibility	VO Paradigm used	PP Role of Outdoor education
	MF Way of life	MF Skills development	AS Staff motivations	DV Perception of credibility
		MF external influences		DV Policy & political drivers
		MF Views of priorities		DV Sharing passion
				AS Rethinking connections