

Practical Conservation Experience Week

with



6 days of hands on practical conservation experience on
the secluded Isle of Carna private nature reserve



Conservation Experience Week for students, graduates and volunteers

This week is an inclusive, active and practical opportunity to gain important understanding, experience and skills in conservation with one of the UK's newest and most interesting conservation projects in a unique natural environment.

Carna Conservation Initiative was formed in 2014 to coordinate the ecological restoration of the remote island of Carna in Loch Sunart on the West Coast of Scotland. Carna is a 600 acre mixed habitat island mostly designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) that sits within the coastal waters of Loch Sunart Marine Protected Area (MPA). Habitats on and around the island include species rich grassland, ancient Atlantic Oakwoods, heathland, wetlands, moorland and extremely rare coral beds. These contain a wide variety of species which reside here including:

Otters	Sea & Golden Eagles, Buzzards	Scottish wildcats
Basking Sharks	Herons	Red & Roe deer
Dolphins & Porpoises	Oystercatchers	Foxes
Common Seals	Cuckoos	Pine martens
Arctic terns	Woodpeckers	Rare Butterflies, Moths, Bees and Beetles



We have many projects ongoing across the eco-system including conserving rare native dark honeybees, the restoration of an ancient wildflower meadow with conservation grazing, reforesting to create wildlife corridors and monitoring the Loch Sunart MPA. Full details can be found on our website.

As a Community Interest Company (CIC) part of our remit is to offer educational and volunteer opportunities for schools, students and others interested in conservation and a potential career in it as a way of funding the initiative.

One of these is our practical Conservation Experience Week we offer aimed at gap year takers, undergraduates, graduates and anyone interested in getting valuable understanding, hands on experience and skills in conservation, meeting like minded people and escaping to a secluded private wildlife island on the beautiful Scottish West Coast.



What experience will I gain?

Knowledge, experience and skills gained may include:

- Setting camera traps for a variety of species
- Planting trees, shrubs and hedges to create wildlife corridors
- Clearing invasive and non-native species such as Rhododendron and Bracken
- Removing shore pollution, learning about and monitoring the precious marine habitats within the MPA
- Maintaining bog and wetland habitats
- Understanding natural forest regeneration and deer management issues.
- Understanding conservation grazing with rare breeds and wildflower meadow management in practice
- Creating and managing forage for native honeybees
- Small boat operating skills in coastal waters
- Map reading and navigation skills
- Basic ecological survey techniques
- Species Identification skills on a range of flora and fauna

How much does it cost and what does it include?

Weeks are limited to 12 places (6 of each gender) at £700 per person arriving on a Sunday afternoon and leaving on a Saturday morning from the collection point of Fort William train station. Included in this price is:

- Transport to and from the island from Fort William
- Shared accommodation on the island (separate genders)
- Breakfast, packed lunch, dinner, soft drinks and snacks (cooking in pairs on rota)
- Guided practical conservation experience for 6 hours a day covering a minimum of two activities with the remainder as free time to relax, explore or wildlife watch.
 - A day off with a guided boat trip around Loch Sunart and/or Sound of Mull which can include seeing basking sharks, sea and golden eagles, whales, porpoises and dolphins (dependent on time of year).
 - Two self drive boats with tuition and safety gear for exploring the waters around the island.
 - Use of our wildlife watching hides
 - Any safety equipment required.
 - A certificate of completion and written reference for your efforts supporting the Carna Conservation Initiative and skills learnt.

What else do I need to know?

- Participants must be at least 18 years old upon arrival.
- Participants must make their own travel arrangements to Fort William in time for the collection time of 14:00 on the day of arrival. The best way to get there for participants travelling from the south of England is by sleeper train from London Euston. Participants may bring their own transport by arrangement.

- A reasonable level of fitness is required to participate in our conservation work. Activities will be designed around the capability of the group but you may be required to cover rough ground ascending to a maximum height of 190m and at times be asked to carry heavy objects in an appropriate number. You will not be forced to carry out any task given but a willing and positive attitude is expected throughout in order to complete the week successfully.
- We will issue you with a suggested kit list in advance to help you prepare to get the most out of it along with full joining instructions.
- Participants will be free to relax and entertain themselves during their free time on the island but there will be at least one staff member available on the island overnight and a 24 hour radio link to staff on the mainland.

We will contact you to confirm your Conservation Week booking, and will ask you to sign a declaration form and inform us of your travel plans. This information is vital for the smooth running of your week.

1. Conservation Experience Week participants must be 18 or over.
2. Cancellations or transfers made 8 weeks or more before the Conservation Experience Week start date will receive a full refund minus a £20 administration charge. Cancellations or transfers made between 6 and 4 weeks before the start date will receive a 50% refund minus a £20 administration charge. Transfers or refunds cannot usually be given for any cancellations made within 4 weeks of the start date. As there are only twelve places available on each week it is very important that we are notified of any cancellation or change in your booking as soon as possible, as we may be able to fill your place. If you pull out of the week without notifying us, the group's work will be affected by your absence.
3. We need to know if you have any medical condition or have any mental or physical disabilities or any previous injuries which may affect your ability to work, and whether you are taking medication. We may contact you to discuss this. Details are held in the strictest confidence. Please fill out the relevant section on the booking form and inform the office of any changes that occur in the period leading up to your Conservation Experience Week. The vast majority of people can be accommodated.

4. Volunteers are covered for public liability and limited personal accident cover. Our insurance does not cover your personal belongings nor cover your free time activities.
5. Please commit to the entire week, which runs from Sunday to Saturday. We have essential introductory briefings on the first day and a planned schedule for the week. If you arrive late or leave early it is very difficult for us and you to achieve our goals.
6. You can do as many Conservation Experience Weeks as you like but we don't accept bookings for more than 2 consecutive weeks. This is due to the nature of the physical work you will be involved in, as well as group dynamics. We may contact you to discuss consecutive bookings.
7. Although every effort is made to describe the details of each week accurately in our literature, it is occasionally necessary for Carna Conservation Initiative to make changes at short notice to the activities as some are weather and season dependent. If you have any questions please contact us. Rarely, weeks are cancelled due to low numbers or factors outside of our control. In such cases we will try to let you know beforehand and offer an alternative week or full refund.
8. Participants should act responsibly in both group and social settings throughout the week as you will be acting as representatives for Carna Conservation Initiative. Recreational drugs are illegal and any use during the Conservation Experience Week will not be tolerated. Alcohol is permitted at your own expense but must not be consumed at any point during the working day. Failure to comply with this will lead to removal from the island without refund and the loss of any certificate or reference entitlement.
9. The island and the waters around it are a potentially dangerous location if sensible behaviour is not followed. We reserve the right to refuse applications for Conservation Experience Weeks or to ask a volunteer to leave if his/her behaviour is affecting the safety or general performance of themselves or the team. Volunteers may be responsible for any costs incurred through negligence.
10. In the unlikely event of you having cause for complaint, you should first tell the Conservation Experience Week leader. If the problem remains unresolved you should write to Carna Conservation Initiative within 14 days of the end of the week and we will investigate further.
11. Sorry but we cannot allow dogs on Conservation Experience Weeks.
12. Data Protection Act 1998: By agreeing to these terms and conditions you are giving your consent for CCI to process any personal data that you provide.