

A hiker with a backpack and trekking poles is seen from behind, walking along a grassy mountain ridge. The scene is illuminated by the warm, golden light of sunset or sunrise, with long shadows and a clear blue sky. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a hazy sky. The overall mood is adventurous and inspiring.

# THE OUTDOORS FIX

Stories to inspire you to make the outdoors a bigger part of your life

LIV BOLTON





Ben Dolphin



Helen Iles



Becky Angel



Frit Tam



Emily Scott



Kenny Block



Rehna Yaseen



Debbie North



Zahrah Mahmood



Gilly McArthur



Oge Ejizu



Iona Andean



Jen Benson



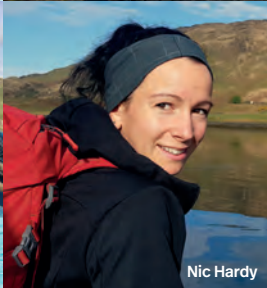
Harrison Ward



Suzanna Cruickshank



Laura Doling



Nic Hardy



Jack Williams



Jamie Neill



Rory Southworth



Kumbi Kariwo



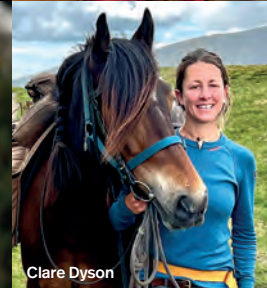
Jessica Mather



Sophie Pavelle



Tolga Aktas



Clare Dyson



Jo Moseley



James Forrest



Preet Chandi



Alex Staniforth



Elise Downing

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**LIV BOLTON**



Vertebrate Publishing, Sheffield  
[www.adventurebooks.com](http://www.adventurebooks.com)

**THE  
OUTDOORS  
FIX**  
**LIV BOLTON**

*For those who dream of fresh air  
and  
for the listeners of The Outdoors Fix,  
for starting this journey and inspiring me along the way.*

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**Vertebrate Publishing**



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# Introduction

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Have you felt it?

Maybe it was while you were walking under trees in summer, sunlight streaming through the leaves, turning them lime green. Or at the edge of a lake, dipping your toes in the icy water and feeling the pebbles massage your feet. Perhaps you were high up in the hills, looking at a beautiful view and watching birds surf on the wind as you caught your breath from the climb. Or maybe it was on a long bike ride in the countryside, when time seemed to pass as quickly as the fields.

It's that feeling of your mind emptying. Your body loosening and relaxing. The fizziness of excitement or joy in your stomach. Being in that moment in nature and not wanting it to end.

It's hard to know *exactly* how the outdoors makes each of us feel, and sometimes words can't describe it, but what we do know (and scientific research backs this up) is that being in green spaces can make us feel good, help our mental health, and leave us wanting more.

The cacophony of life, work, responsibilities and where you live, along with worries about skills, logistics and experience, can often seem like insurmountable barriers to getting outdoors more, having adventures and chasing that feeling. But what if you heard stories, experiences and advice from people who've found ways to work around

those hurdles, or in some cases climb over them? What could your life look like after that?

I grew up in the Chilterns in Hertfordshire, in a house next to a big wood full of beech and sweet-chestnut trees. My younger sister and I loved climbing amongst their branches and we'd come perilously close to the top of some of the younger trees, terrifying my mum when she came looking for us and we shouted down at her from the swaying canopy. My dad had grown up just north of the Lake District, so most years we'd spend a few days exploring and climbing the smaller fells, like Hallin or Cat Bells, meandering around Grasmere or taking the steamboat down Ullswater. All outdoors excursions had to be followed by cake.

I feel lucky to have had a fairly outdoorsy childhood. But in my late teens and twenties, the outdoors dropped out of my life. I went to university in Scotland and it pains me now to say that I didn't climb a single mountain or visit any of the islands or national parks during my four years studying there. When I moved to London to work as a news journalist, my career became my identity and all-consuming focus.

My total prioritisation of work was unquestionably to the detriment of my mental health. Swallowed into the newsroom for eleven- or twelve-hour days,

I'd be answering emails from 5.30 a.m. until 11 p.m. My phone never left my side and I'd feel adrenaline and fear rush through me each time I got a breaking news alert, knowing the long hours and exhaustion that would follow. I was consistently teary, anxious and all my self-worth was wrapped up in my career and gaining promotions, even though I knew it was making me miserable. By the time I was twenty-nine, I felt completely burnt out.

I'd let my twenties go by in an anxious, stressful blur, doing things I thought I 'should' do, rather than things I 'could' do. So, approaching thirty, and acknowledging the age cliché, I knew I had to make some big changes. When my school friend Ali asked if I wanted to join her on a long hike in New Zealand, there wasn't a heartbeat of hesitation before I said 'yes'. After my boss approved a five-month work sabbatical, the outdoors came unexpectedly barging back into my life.

For ten weeks in early 2018, Ali and I trekked 800 miles from Ship Cove at the top of the South Island of New Zealand to Bluff at the bottom on the Te Araroa long-distance hiking trail. Wild camping or sleeping in backcountry huts, we hiked with seventeen-kilogram backpacks through tropical forest, over mountain ranges and alongside turquoise lakes, wading across hundreds of streams and rivers in the process.

I'd gone on the trip for an adventure, respite and stories to tell, but I also gained things more unexpected. Walking for up to twelve hours each day, focusing on the astounding scenery, towering rimu trees, manuka bushes or snow-capped mountains, and with no phone signal, the weight of anxiety and stress dissipated and I felt a big improvement in my mental health. I came to realise that my self-worth didn't need to be wholly determined by my job title or salary, and that the *really* important things in life for me were creating memories and moments of joy, family, friends, time in nature, and purpose, not just work. I also gained

a fascination with the tales of the other hikers we met during our months of walking, asking them about their journey to the trail and hearing how the outdoors had changed their lives.

Returning to London, I was determined to bring the lessons I'd learnt on the sixty-eight-day journey back into my normal life. I moved away from working in news journalism and found a more enjoyable job without such long hours. I started a monthly walking group in London with friends and I made a conscious effort to get outside every day to help better manage my mental health. But I'd loved chatting to those fellow hikers in New Zealand and I wanted to know how I could fit even more of the outdoors into my life. So I decided to seek out people in the UK who'd done just that – to learn from them and get inspired by them. I couldn't keep those stories and conversations to myself, so in late 2018, I set up *The Outdoors Fix* podcast.

Over the next four years, I used my weekends and days off to travel all around the UK with my Zoom H5 hand-held recorder, hearing the tales of hikers, trail runners, rock climbers, wild swimmers, cyclists, outdoorsy families, a countryside ranger, a mountain rescue volunteer, conservationists, explorers, outdoors instructors and Mountain Leaders. We recorded the episodes sitting by lakes in Snowdonia, in sheep barns in the Lake District, on the sides of hills in the Peak District or, in one case, from a den in a wood in the Forest of Bowland, transporting listeners outdoors with us through the power of audio.

Stories ranged from those who fit in pockets of adventure and the outdoors around their jobs and personal lives, through to others who had made significant life changes, such as moving from cities to national parks, or completely changing their careers. They had buckets of advice and tips on how listeners could get outdoors more too. Their tales were unique and deeply personal, yet it was interesting to see similar themes crop up: how the



## INTRODUCTION

outdoors brought people a sense of freedom, purpose, a space to help their mental wellbeing and, fundamentally, a happier existence.

I'm incredibly grateful to the people who so generously shared their stories with me, and who have inspired, encouraged and given comfort to so many of the listeners.

What started out as a curiosity project has changed my life too. I was inspired to move to the countryside, relocating from London to the edge of the Chilterns; I've taken up wild swimming, rock climbing and paddleboarding; and, along with all the national parks and green spaces the podcast has taken me to, *The Outdoors Fix* has now become my part-time job.

This book shares some of the powerful outdoors stories that I've heard from my podcast guests since 2018, as told to me, along with their practical tips and advice for making the most of the outdoors in life. I've divided them into groups for ease and interest: the movers, the community-builders, the wildlife warriors, the career-changers, the after-work adventure seekers and the big-trip adventurers. But I recognise that many of the stories are multi-layered and could fit in more than one group. It highlights that there aren't solid, predefined routes to a more outdoorsy life; you can take whatever path that works best for you.

With the Covid-19 pandemic making many of us think hard about our jobs, where we live, what makes us happy and what's *truly* important, as well as helping us recognise the positive impact nature can have on our wellbeing, I hope these tales will inspire and encourage you on whatever wild and wondrous journey you choose in making the outdoors a bigger part of your life.









# THE CAREER-CHANGERS







# Helen Iles

## Life as a mountain rescue volunteer and landscape photographer

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Helen Iles has created a life and portfolio career in Snowdonia (Eryri) where she can be out in the mountains nearly every day, sharing her knowledge of the outdoors and photography, and helping her community. It's a lifestyle that many may aspire to. Helen took me on a summer's walk around the shimmering Llyn Cynwch with views of Cadair Idris, the highest mountain in the southern part of Snowdonia. She spoke to me about her journey to this point and why she wants more people to experience what nature has to offer. Her story shows that while the outdoors can give so much to someone's life, it can also be a place to give back.

### **Helen's story**

Living in Snowdonia, one of my favourite things to do is walk to the top of Y Llethr in the Rhinogydd mountains, put my tent up, make a brew and watch the sun go down. I might get up in the middle of the night to see the stars. The next morning, I'll get up before dawn to watch the sun rise over Wales.

My love of the mountains and outdoors keeps me going. It's where I seek comfort and put things in perspective. I've been through difficult times, like losing very close friends on the lifeboat, which have made me question everything. But that's life, isn't it? There's a lovely saying: 'Run if you can, walk if you have to, crawl if you must, but just keep moving forward'. Keep breathing. Chill. I look at the mountains and nature, and focus on what's in front of me.

Home is Dolgellau in southern Snowdonia. I'm a part-time teacher, landscape photographer, Mountain Leader and mountain rescue volunteer. Monday to Wednesday, I teach in the primary school in Barmouth, and then on a Wednesday night, I run training sessions for South Snowdonia Search and Rescue Team, where I'm the lead first aider. My routine between Thursday and Sunday varies. It could be that I'm writing for outdoors magazines, running photography workshops in the hills, taking a group to the summit of Cadair Idris, or bivvying on top of a mountain and capturing the landscape with my camera. Mountain rescue callouts can be anything from twice a week to every couple of months. My routine consistently takes me outdoors and changes from week to week, something that keeps me excited.



### **Giving back**

I grew up in a little village called Tal-y-bont on the north Welsh coast. I've always been outdoorsy and loved the spirit of being outside and camping. My parents nurtured me to be unafraid of giving things a go. After getting my teaching qualifications in Birmingham, I travelled around the world and then came back to settle in North Wales. Once my children had grown up, I found myself with spare time, so I went walking in the hills.

Before moving to Dolgellau, we lived on the coast in Barmouth and I volunteered with the RNLI for twenty-three years as a mechanic, navigator and first aider. I love the buzz of volunteering and being able to give something back. So when we moved inland to Dolgellau, I swapped the lifeboat for mountain rescue.

Our patch covers the Rhinogydd, the lesser known, remote mountains in Snowdonia. We've been called out for everything from anaphylactic shocks to heart attacks, cardiac arrests, slips, trips and falls. I seem to attract broken femurs and pelvises. If the injured or their party are lucky enough to have phone signal, they can phone 999 and it gets sent through to North Wales Police, who contact us. We have a structure where the information is then passed down to the team and we head to our base in Trawsfynydd, where the equipment is kept. We move out from there.

The nearest hospital is sixty miles away, so we're reliant on helicopters here. If the weather's good, the

Coastguard Rescue Helicopter 936 will help us move kit or people to the top of a mountain, or they'll assist us in getting a casualty to hospital quickly.

If weather stops the helicopter flying, it takes about twelve to fourteen people moving in and out of the stretcher to carry the person down the mountain and get them to the ambulance. So you're talking between four and ten hours in a situation like that. Mountain rescue volunteering is a big time commitment and obviously unpaid, but it's part of the community in Dolgellau and a lot of my friends come from it. Being in situations where we've had to work really closely as a team is a bonding moment, and we support each other if a callout doesn't end happily.

### **An outdoors portfolio**

Teaching part-time gives me some financial security and leaves me space to do the things I love. My Mountain Leader qualification was initially something to give me confidence, but in recent years it's enabled me to take groups out for landscape photography workshops or guided walks. It's wonderful to be able to show people places off the tourist map, like Llyn Bodlyn which has breathtaking views of Cardigan Bay. In my photography workshops, I encourage people to focus on the weather and light and capture its effects on the landscape.

My photography has been published in several outdoors magazines, and I was ecstatic when I captured the comet NEOWISE shooting over the





Rhinogydd for *The Great Outdoors*. I'd read that the comet would appear around midnight, so I wild camped on top of Y Llethr and set my alarm. As I emerged from my tent, NEOWISE was just there, right in front of me, blazing a trail across the night sky. My Nikon Z6 and 24-70-millimetre zoom lens captured the comet beautifully.

Many of the environments I'm in – like mountain leading and mountain rescue – are quite male-dominated, so it's been empowering being a female and encouraging other women to get involved. I took a group of local women up Cadair Idris a few months ago. They'd seen the mountain from their homes, and some of their families had gone up it, but they'd assumed, 'Oh no, I can't do that.' We took the whole day about it, walking, talking and laughing, but we eventually got to the top. It was an emotional moment for some of the women and rewarding to have helped them get up there. We live in an amazing place. If people don't get a chance to see these places, it's quite sad really, isn't it?

The outdoors has been such an important part of my life and it's so good for you. My friend used to say that she comes to Snowdonia to stretch her eyes, but I think it does more than stretch your eyes. It stretches you physically, stretches you mentally, but it also slows you down, makes you sit and appreciate where you are, and helps you put your problems aside. If I could inspire just one person to live outdoors a bit more, I'd be thrilled with that.



### Helen's tips for becoming a mountain rescue volunteer

- Get in touch with your local mountain rescue team. Information on what volunteering involves is on the Mountain Rescue England and Wales website.
- Some teams require a minimum qualification. Others don't. But you should at least have an interest in the mountains, a general level of fitness and community spirit.
- If you have a Mountain Leader qualification, you're a doctor or you have rope or navigation skills, we'll accept you with open arms.
- Be prepared to be on call 24/7 and react to a callout at a moment's notice. A big part of volunteering is also fundraising at events.

For more information and advice about being a Mountain Leader, see page 93. For more landscape photography advice, see page 26.



Oge Ejizu

## London walking with Black Girls Hike

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When you find something that brings you so much joy, there's a desire to share it. Oge Ejizu found a love for hiking and she now shares that passion as London regional leader for Black Girls Hike. I joined Oge on a nine-mile walk in London's Epping Forest on a sunny, autumnal afternoon to hear about how she found hiking and why diversity in the outdoors is so vital. Oge's story shows the positive ways in which the outdoors is changing, and the joy and purpose inclusivity brings.

### **Oge's story**

I didn't grow up with the outdoors and I never saw anybody like me going out hiking. So I didn't think it was something that I could do.

Discovering the joys of walking and being in nature in my twenties made me realise that this narrative was something that needed to change. And I wanted to be someone who would help change it.

I live in Enfield in north London and I'm a hiker and London regional leader for Black Girls Hike, a walking group and safe space for Black women to explore the outdoors.

The beautiful 6,000-acre ancient woodland of Epping Forest isn't far from my home, so I often wander on its paths under oak and beech trees and through meadows, getting my headspace, taking a break from the busyness of the city and feeling that sense of freedom that the outdoors gives me.

People don't often associate London with going hiking, but there are so many green spaces to explore. Some of my favourite places are Oxleas Woods,

Bostall Woods and Abbey Wood. London isn't just Hampstead Heath or Richmond Park, although they are lovely.

### **New adventures**

It was my friend Patrick who took me out for my first hiking trip. He loves the outdoors and would drag me out walking in Surrey at the weekends. Initially, I'd go reluctantly, until one day the tide turned and I started to take it all in. Appreciating a new landscape, having a chance to clear my head and slowing down the pace of life was really satisfying and surprisingly addictive. When we went to Dartmoor in December 2018 and I saw all the beauty there, I didn't want to stop.

On a trip up to the Lake District together, we climbed Helvellyn and Loughrigg Fell in hot, sunny, pinch-yourself weather. We even saw a cloud inversion - I'm completely in love with the Lake District now. We've also explored the Brecon Beacons and North Wales in a camper van.





I don't think I'd have started hiking if Patrick hadn't been there. Having somebody who had more experience to encourage me took away the fear of trying something new.

His guidance gave me the confidence to try solo hiking, so for one of my birthdays I took myself to the Gower Peninsula in Wales to go walking. I absolutely loved it. Going at my own pace, being able to change the route whenever I wanted, enjoying my own company and seeing what I was capable of was really empowering.

While I enjoyed solo hiking, I wanted to find more people to go walking with too. The visible absence of Black women out hiking also disappointed me, so I decided to search for groups or people out there who were encouraging diverse participation and showing how good the outdoors could make you feel. That's when I came across Black Girls Hike (BGH).

### **Empowering Black women**

Set up in 2019 by Rhiane Fatinikun in the Greater Manchester area, BGH is a non-profit hiking/outdoor group and safe space for Black women promoting inclusivity in the outdoors. I started following the group on Instagram and liking their posts. But their walks were only available around Greater Manchester at that point. Rhiane soon reached out to me and said, 'How would you feel

about leading some walks in London? A lot of people are asking if there are going to be walks there.' I jumped at the chance to get involved. So I became the BGH London regional leader and started planning group walks.

It was nerve-wracking to organise, but I was so excited about bringing Black women together to get involved in something that I loved. I planned a route in Epping Forest for our first walk and hoped that between fifteen and thirty people would join me. More than 100 women turned up.

The feedback was so positive, with lots of the women commenting on how needed the group was, how by encouraging Black women to go hiking as a group, we were providing a safe space to learn, enjoy the outdoors and show other Black women that it was something that was available to them too.

After the success of the first hike, I planned them monthly and we explored other green spaces in London or routes that were just a short train ride away.

Being a part of BGH has afforded me the opportunity to do hill skills and mountain training. They've put me on courses in the Peak District and the Lowland Leader course in Snowdonia. I've significantly improved my map and compass skills, and learnt more about safety and how to lead groups. It's helped me gain so much more confidence and skills that I can share.



There are now five regional leaders in London organising the monthly walks, showing how much BGH has grown. I've also become one of its directors because we're now a community interest company. Volunteering for the organisation does take up quite a lot of my life outside of my day job as a programme manager, but it's something that I'm passionate about, so it doesn't feel like hard work. I was buzzing after I was asked to give a TEDx talk about all the work BGH does and why representation in the outdoors is important. I'd love to become a Mountain Leader in the future and bring those skills to the group too.

BGH's mission is to empower Black women to explore the outdoors and I think that's exactly what we're doing. We're also a visible presence for all Black women from different generations to see that these things are out there for them, something that I wish had been more evident when I was younger.

Hiking has given me a space for joy, good mental health and it's pushed me out of my comfort zone. I've been able to experience things I never thought possible and it's opened my eyes to a different world that's out there. Being able to represent and encourage other Black women to experience those things has brought a sense of purpose and pride in what I do too.



### Oge's tips for getting involved in Black Girls Hike

- Black Girls Hike is a safe space for Black/Mixed-Race cis and trans women and non-binary people of Black African and/or Caribbean descent. It's open to those aged eighteen-plus.
- We have groups all over the UK, including London, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire. Just sign up to our Facebook community and Eventbrite for information about our outdoors hikes and events.
- We suggest you wear walking boots or trainers for our walks and bring warm clothing and a raincoat.
- Follow us on Instagram and Twitter to see what we get up to!

For more information and advice for beginner hikers, see page 43.





MONTANA

COY WOLF  
RURAL FOOTBALL

## Tolga Aktas

# Carving out a career in conservation

---

Changing careers takes guts. Especially when you don't have the qualifications you need to do it. But Tolga Aktas's love of nature has pulled him through the challenges and taken him to a happier place. I spoke to Tolga on a hot July day while walking around Highnam Woods in Gloucestershire. Sitting on a swallow-shaped bench surrounded by tall grasses, he told me about his extraordinary journey. His story shows that a career change into the outdoors world is possible, so long as you have the determination and passion to get you there.

### **Tolga's story**

I used to carry around a toolbox full of screwdrivers. Now I've got backpacks filled with cameras.

I live with my girlfriend in a cottage in the Cotswolds. We're woken up by the sound of buzzards and all kinds of songbirds. Every day is an outdoor life here and Highnam Woods Nature Reserve is just a few minutes' walk away. I wander under the canopy of trees and through the grassy openings. I might see wrens, robins or goldfinches, or hear the sound of a woodpecker reverberating across the wood. I often reflect on how much my life's changed in the last few years.

I'm an Animal Biology graduate and wildlife conservationist now, but a few years ago I was an electrical engineer living in London.

Electrical engineering had helped me get my life back on track after some difficult teenage years. I didn't do well at school in London and got involved

in gang culture. I ended up in a police cell for a weekend at one point. My parents' horrified faces when they picked me up stayed with me for a long time after that. I decided that I was going to make something of myself, to make them proud.

I signed up to an electrical engineering course, and after that Mum helped me get an apprenticeship at Harrods in Knightsbridge. That helped me financially and gave me time to mature. But it didn't make me happy and I wasn't that interested in it.

After a few years, I began thinking about what I really wanted in life.

### **The pull of nature**

I'd grown up in South London, but in the school holidays we'd visit my mum's family in Jamaica or my dad's family in northern Cyprus. My uncle was a farm clerk in Cyprus and I used to help him take his sheep and goats to graze near the mountains.



I was never inside with the other family members, but out in the wild, catching lizards in empty Nescafé jars.

I became obsessed with nature as a child and I used to watch Steve Irwin and Sir David Attenborough's wildlife programmes. Nature was also a way of fixing loneliness. My brothers are disabled and can't speak. My parents spent their time looking after them and weren't that interested in wildlife. So nature was where I found company and comfort.

At my job in Harrods, I started skipping lunch with the engineering team to go down to the pet floor and stroke the puppies and kittens. A realisation crept back in of how much I'd loved animals and nature when I was younger.

I thought to myself, 'Am I going to work hard for something I don't want to do, or ditch it for something I love that'll make a positive change?' After thinking for a while, I went to my manager and resigned. Telling my parents about swapping electrical engineering for conservation, they just stared at me and asked, 'Are you OK, Tolga?'

### **Starting again**

Regrettably, I hadn't made a proper plan, so, back at home and jobless, I researched how to make a career in conservation and saw that you needed qualifications. I found out about Capel Manor College in London, which has animal studies courses. They didn't demand high grades, but required volunteering experience.

I found a local city farm to volunteer at, where I cleaned animal pens. It was mucky, but much better than putting in electrical insulation. Each time I left the house in scrubby clothes, Mum would say, 'Tolga, are you volunteering again? You're not getting any money. Is it worth it?' It was hard to convince her that it was leading to something.

After volunteering at the farm, I enrolled at Capel Manor College on a level-two diploma in Animal Care. We were taught about animal health, zoonotic diseases, habitats and wildlife conservation. Alongside the course, I worked at the Children's

Zoo in Battersea Park and a monkey sanctuary in Cornwall. I volunteered at a wolf sanctuary in Reading and a sea turtle conservation project in northern Cyprus. All these experiences reassured me that leaving electrical engineering had been a good decision, despite being scary at the time.

I stayed at Capel Manor for another course in Animal Management, which got me enough credits to go to the University of Gloucestershire to read Animal Biology.

During my three-year degree, I went to some amazing places, including Borneo and South Africa. I volunteered in KwaZulu-Natal with a conservation organisation called Wildlife ACT. They help protect African wild dogs, lions, elephants, white and black rhinos, cheetahs and vultures. The following year, I went back to South Africa for nine weeks to do my dissertation on African wild dogs. It still doesn't feel real that I got to do things like that.

I graduated with my Animal Biology degree in the middle of the pandemic and then studied for a postgraduate certificate in Applied Ecology. From coming out of school without many qualifications, I'd managed to get through university and learn about subjects that I loved.

### **A new path**

Since studying, my conservation work has been varied and fits around my job in a farm shop which pays the bills. I'm an ambassador for the UK Wild Otter Trust in Devon, so I've spent time at their rehab centre watching how they care for injured otters and return them to the wild. I spread the message about their work through social media and blogs. I've written articles and taken photos for *BBC Countryfile Magazine* and I have a blog called 'Ways of the Natural World'. Recently, I set up a wildlife camera in local woods and recorded some great footage of a badger family by their sett. *BBC Springwatch* used it on their social media.

I'd like to be able to work in conservation full time in the future, but in the meantime I'm happy that I can help on nature projects around my farm-shop job.



The outdoors to me means life and connecting to nature. It gives me hope and it's opened up so many opportunities. I know when I'm out enjoying it, that's when I'm happiest.

Looking back at myself as a teenager and electrical engineer, the transformation has been insane. If I'd known back then of the happiness and good experiences in pursuing conservation, I'd have done it sooner. But sometimes you have to go through sticky situations and hardships to fully appreciate it.

### Tolga's tips for getting involved in conservation

- [www.conservation-careers.com](http://www.conservation-careers.com) is an invaluable resource for information on how to get into conservation.
- Volunteer! It can be a great opportunity to learn about nature and meet people. It will also boost your CV when looking to enrol in conservation courses or get jobs.
- [www.naturevolunteers.uk](http://www.naturevolunteers.uk) can match you up with conservation volunteering opportunities.
- Look at people in conservation who inspire you. See how they got to where they are.
- The RSPB has good resources and information about how to get into conservation.
- Be aware that there isn't much money in conservation and it can be hard to find a well-paid job.

For more information and advice about getting closer to nature, see page 121.