

Canopy Volume 2

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Interview with Louis 1 – Canopy Volume 10 Issue 2

What originally attracted you to the course?

I have been fascinated with primates since I was 14 years old. The fascination really started after I watched the movie Gorillas in the Mist, featuring the life story of Diane Fossey. I remember I turned to my mum halfway through the movie and told her I wanted to be just like Diane once I grew up. My mum of course almost lost it when at the end of the movie, Diane was murdered. She thought her only son was going to help animals and get killed. I remember telling her that this was my passion and what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, help protect animals. While pursuing my degree in Biology, I found out about the Masters in Primate Conservation course, which was a perfect opportunity for me to learn more about primates and most importantly to arm me with the knowledge needed to protect them. I remember feeling really excited about it and applied immediately!

What is your greatest accomplishment since graduating?

The MSc course laid the foundation for my work in Singapore, as the Executive Director of ACRES, a local animal protection charity. Last year, we opened Singapore's first dedicated wildlife rescue centre to provide sanctuary for animals confiscated from the illegal wildlife trade as well as injured native animals. Since graduation, I have also been surveying zoos as part of the ACRES Zoo Animal Welfare Programme and our efforts have led to vast improvements in the lives of captive animals in Asia.

What is your fondest memory of the course?

The fondest memory would have to be the project or thesis work. I really enjoyed the field work and applying all the things we have learnt in the classroom, in the field.

How do you think the course promotes the importance of conservation and primatology?

I think it arms us with vital knowledge and lays the foundation for any work in primate conservation and protection. The fact that there is a Masters course in this field shows the public and governments that it is an important field and one that requires more public and governmental support.

Have you any advice for present or potential students?

I think the most important thing is to have fun and enjoy what you are doing. Primate conservation work is really depressing at times and the first lesson I learnt was to never take this work too seriously, otherwise you will get burnt out very quickly.