

# Regan MacKinlay

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## PROFILE

I am an analytical, proactive, and hardworking PhD graduate with an interest in the role animal behaviour has in conservation. I am passionate about all kinds of conservation conducting post-graduate research in the field alongside volunteering on pest control programs, trapping at home and helping to educate undergraduate students alongside friends and family. I have a strong understanding of the need for stakeholder engagement and communication having conducted independent research at the intersection of academic, non-profit, governmental and community organisations.

My extensive research and volunteer experiences have fostered an ability to work independently when needed, while also learning how to collaborate effectively to solve problems at the planning, implementation, analysis, and communication stages to achieve desired goals. I have benefited greatly from mentorship and thrive in reciprocating mentorship roles to others.

Furthermore, my excellent analytical and communication skills have been crucial in publishing multiple scientific articles in leading biological journals, being awarded high grades, and a PhD Scholarship.

## EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

Victoria University of Wellington – PhD Ecology & Biodiversity 2021

I have just completed researching how animal behaviour, particularly animal cognition and personality, can be used in conservation biology. My study species is the toutouwai or North Island robin (*Petroica longipes*), and my leading study site was Zealandia. I have also worked in Polhill, Wrights Hill and Hawkins Hill reserves in Wellington as part of this project. I had to seek both animal ethics and Wildlife Act Authority to conduct this research, preparing and presenting my research aims to an academic committee, peers, and other stakeholders. This project involved the use of wildlife monitoring techniques, trail cameras, behavioural tests, and offtrack work.

Victoria University of Wellington - Master of Conservation Biology with Distinction 2017

I undertook this program better to understand conservation from both New Zealand and international perspectives, gaining experience and knowledge of various approaches to conservation from micro to macro scales. This program gave me a solid conservation foundation alongside a network of peers worldwide whom I completed the course. I gained experience in all aspects of conservation including wildlife monitoring techniques, trapping, baiting, wildlife telemetry, along with the scientific approach to conservation, an understanding of adaptive management frameworks, alongside the role and obligations of modern conservation.

Victoria University of Wellington – Bachelor of Science Maj: Ecology & Biodiversity Min: Biotechnology 2015

My undergraduate education focused on learning about macrobiology; however, I pursued a minor in Biotechnology as I was interested in the potential microbiological techniques could have for conservation biology. This program gave me a strong core knowledge of biology, alongside an insight into the tools that can come from microbiological processes.

## KEY SKILLS

- The ability to read, analyse, interpret, understand, apply, synthesise, and convey information independently across a broad range of levels.
- Strong theoretical and practical understanding of New Zealand ecological/conservation issues and tools.
- The ability to develop, collaborate on, and improve upon ideas to reach desired goals in research programs, study designs, reports or in communication with stakeholders.
- Extensive experience working for extended periods on my own in sub-optimal conditions following strict data collection and research methods.
- An affinity for being part of a team with a focus on maintaining physical, mental, and emotional health

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### Teaching Assistant | Victoria University of Wellington

Oct 2018 to June 2021

Assist lecturers at the university to convey lecture material, teach field research skills, laboratory skills and assess written reports. Teaching ranged from lab-based presentations, Zoom based question sessions to local and residential field courses.

- Discuss complex ideas and concepts tailoring the communication of information to students.
- Supervise fieldwork and maintain Health and Safety protocols.
- Work remotely with a team for up to two weeks on-site with students on several trips.

### Volunteer Research Assistant | Victoria University of Wellington

Oct 2017 to Dec 2017

Assist a PhD student on a remote offshore island, collect data on extremely vulnerable species in a culturally sensitive location, and maintain the island's biosecurity.

- Conduct visitation surveys during the day (check burrows for disturbance), camera checks of burrows.
- Assist in catching and banding of individuals at night.
- Maintain strict biosecurity protocols of the island (trap checking, sterilisation of incoming equipment).
- Helped with Kakapo recovery team to capture and refit transmitter

### Volunteer Research Assistant | Macquarie University

Mar 2017 to Jul 2017

Assist a PhD student with their research at a remote field station in the outback of Australia.

- Assist with banding chicks, PIT tag attachment, apparatus construction, alongside observational and behavioural tests.
- Gained experience working in challenging environmental conditions and maintain strict health and safety protocols in the presence of multiple dangerous species.
- Engaged with different conservation methodologies (active shooting, 1080 carcass trapping, boar traps).

### Research Assistant | Victoria University of Wellington

Nov 2014 to Feb 2016

Assist in collecting data for a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow working with tōtōuwaiti or North Island robin (*Petroica longipes*) in Zealandia.

- Independently collect breeding season, behaviour, and song data.
- Help collect data for other students and Research Fellow including trail camera information.
- Communicate with the public about research.
- Produced two scientific publications from data collected during this time.

## PUBLICATIONS

R.D.MacKinlay, R.C.Shaw A systematic review of personality in conservation science, *Conservation Biology* 2022 (In.press)

R.D.MacKinlay, R.C.Shaw [Male New Zealand robin \(\*Petroica longipes\*\) song repertoire size does not correlate with cognitive performance in the wild](#), *Intelligence* 2019

R.C.Shaw, R.D.MacKinlay, N.S.Clayton, K.C.Burns [Memory Performance Influences Male Reproductive Success in a Wild Bird](#), *Current Biology* 2019

R.C.Shaw, R.D.MacKinlay, N.S.Clayton, K.C.Burns [Male New Zealand robins \(\*Petroica longipes\*\) cater to their mate's desire when sharing food in the wild](#), *Scientific Reports* 2017

R.C.Shaw, R.D.MacKinlay, [Destruction of a North Island robin \(\*Petroica longipes\*\) nest by a little spotted kiwi \(\*Apteryx owenii\*\)](#), *Notornis* 2016

## ADDITIONAL INTERESTS

Besides animal behaviour, I'm also interested in hiking & birding and strategy games when I get the chance. I am also a member of a regular pub quiz team entitled 'The Bird Nerds', we regularly place in the top 3 at the Kelburn Village Pub.