



INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY
CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA • JULY 23-27, 2017



Insights for sustaining life on Earth

Dr. Sophie Williams Presents at ICCB 2017

Topic: Conservation in Latin America

Release

Two years ago Dr. Sophie Williams, a conservation scientist with Bangor University, fell ill with Japanese Encephalitis while on fieldwork in China. She suffered severe brain injury, was in a coma for six weeks and still relies on a wheel chair and artificial ventilation. However, Sophie has been determined to get back to her great passions: science and plant conservation. This week she has defied the odds and returned to the global conservation stage by presenting her research at the International Congress of Conservation Biology.

Sophie's presentation "[Would cultivation of a socio-economically important palm take pressure off wild populations](#)" will be presented by video as Sophie is still in hospital undergoing rehabilitation. Sophie will be able to attend virtually as the event is being live streamed and she will take questions from the international audience of conservation scientists.

Sophie says "I am so pleased to be presenting my work again. Thanks so much to the conference organisers for making this possible. I just wish I could be there in person".

Sophie is an honorary lecturer in the School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography at Bangor University. Her colleague Prof Julia Jones worked with Sophie on the presentation. "When Sophie was invited to present at ICCB she was delighted and immediately determined to make it happen. Thanks so much to Rondo, a local production company, for taking our very unprofessional recording and producing the video".

The International Congress of Conservation Biology is held every two years. This year, it is being held in *Cartagena*, Colombia from the 23rd to 27th July. Sophie was meant to present at the last meeting in Montpellier, France but at the time her life hung in the balance. During her timetabled slot in the programme, many friends and colleagues met in Montpellier's beautiful botanic garden to share stories about Sophie and wish her well. Her friend and colleague Prof E.J. Milner-Gulland who is giving a plenary at the conference in Colombia says "Sophie has always been a huge inspiration to everyone she meets; including her classmates, professors and fellow conservationists. It is wonderful that through this talk, she can reach out to a whole new group of people, and once again extend her positive influence and share her knowledge on a global scale".

At the conference opening Dr Diogo was awarded the prestigious early career conservationist award. He paid tribute to the huge influence Sophie has had in his career.

Sophie's family and friends have established a trust to help support Sophie. If you would like to make a donation please send cheques to The Sophie Williams Trust, co/Sarah Edgar, Tan y Felin Wen, Rhosbodrual, Caenarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 2BB.

Contact: Julia Jones, School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography, julia.jones@bangor.ac.uk, 00447792509474 for higher quality images.

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