

Biography – Vanessa Kilburn, M.Sc.

For the past 10 years, Vanessa has been active in the field of conservation biology and herpetology both in Canada and in Central America. Throughout her career she has gained extensive experience in field methodology techniques used for fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, including electrofishing and minnow trapping, audio-visual encounter surveys for amphibians and reptiles and hoop-trapping for turtles, mist netting and point count surveys for birds, and track counts for mammals. Vanessa has designed and conducted habitat assessments and habitat characterization work in various temperate and tropical habitats, in particular freshwater habitats such as wetlands, lakes, and streams. Throughout her academic career, Vanessa has also had the opportunity to teach numerous undergraduate biology laboratory and field courses.

Most recently Vanessa has concentrated on endangered species recovery, leading an endangered species funding program review in British Columbia, a hands-on habitat restoration and public education recovery project for an endangered turtle in B.C., and an endangered frog habitat compensation project in the Dominican Republic. Through time spent on these projects, Vanessa gained experience working with all levels of government and non-government organizations, the private sector, industry, academia, and the general public. A primary focus of all of these projects was on outreach and education, which Vanessa considers to be the most essential component to natural resource conservation. Teaching comes naturally to Vanessa and she imparts her knowledge with passion.

Currently Vanessa is working in Belize, Central America, establishing a field station in the Maya Mountains for a not-for-profit ecology and education society aimed at conserving Belize's diverse ecology through providing local educational opportunities and conducting ecological research. She holds a B.Sc. Honours in biology from the University of New Brunswick and an M.Sc. in conservation biology from McGill University.