

Matt Bell



Matt is a Senior Lecturer in the Institute of Ecology and Evolution (School of Biological Sciences). Prior to that, he obtained his PhD from the University of Cambridge, after conducting field work on conflict and cooperation in banded mongooses in Uganda. He then spent 4 years as a Junior Research Fellow and Director of Studies at Magdalene College, Cambridge, while conducting field work on meerkats and pied babblers in the Kalahari Desert of South Africa. He came to Edinburgh in 2011 as a Lecturer in Behaviour and Evolution.

Matt's research has been the empirical investigation of animal societies, using them as simple model systems to understand what mechanisms resolve the underlying conflicts between individual self-interest and group level objectives. He has conducted observations and experiments on wild animals in natural habitats (including on humans in the street!), all aiming to understand how complex societies can remain stable in the presence of selfish cheats who would exploit the public good. At the same time, Matt has developed a deep interest in Scottish conservation and restoration ecology, and has become involved in a range of projects undertaking woodland restoration in upland areas across Scotland (including the University's own Forest and Peatlands Project).

Matt has a passion for teaching, and has been running a popular course in the Evolution of Social Behaviour for 14 years. He completely transformed the Ecology Honours Programme in the School of Biological Sciences, and runs the Honours field course at Glenprosen in the Angus Glens. He has also helped deliver the UK's largest undergraduate Ecology Field Course every summer for 13 years, based here in Edinburgh. Finally, he has been the College Academic Misconduct Officer for Science and Engineering since 2021, and has been at the forefront of understanding the impact of AI on learning, teaching and assessment.

[Register of Interests](#)

Committee Memberships

- University Court