



Freddie Mckendrick – ACCE DTP

2021-22 cohort

My placement with Rewilding Europe focused on producing an automated workflow that translated raw GPS data into outputs describing the movement of reintroduced herbivores within Rewilding Europe landscapes. Outputs would be in the shape of a monthly report that put current behavioural trends in the scope of historical movement to identify how space use and behaviour is changing over time, helping to show the success of reintroductions and the feasibility of tagging studies.

Most of my work was done in R and involved linking cloud data sources such as Movebank and Copernicus, into Markdown style reports. Throughout the project I vastly improved my technical skills. Whilst I had a reasonable amount of experience integrating software like Github and Markdown into my work I had only used them for relatively basic needs. Throughout the project I learnt a lot more about the breadth of utilities they have for facilitating automated analysis and production of industry standard reports. Also, I never previously had any experience utilising the terminal/cmd line to create scheduled reports. This required learning the coding structure and ins and outs of what could be possible. My written communication has improved from using specific language in reports, and my time management has vastly improved from working towards strict deadlines.

I had good support from my line manager who was always willing to fit me in if I requested a meeting. This benefitted from us having a good structure in place from the start and setting certain milestones so that we could plan bigger meetings with the wider team in advance. The organisation itself was really friendly and supportive and interested in what I was doing there and could be a good spot for a range of different type of placements.

Longer-term, this placement has focused my goals in where I would like to end up. While I found the work very enjoyable and the data I was working with was excellent, with the potential for some great science, I certainly saw the restrictions there are in place for conducting research outside of academic settings. Whilst I would ideally like to work in academia, I am definitely less opposed to working within an NGO than I may have been previously.