

THOMAS KURT LAND

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BIOGRAPHY

I am a zoologist, writer, and science researcher, having recently completed working on a cutting-edge CGI series at Silverback Films. I have a background in animal-behaviour, palaeontology, storytelling, expeditions, and CGI; worked on scripts for Sir David Attenborough and Morgan Freeman. I have planned, and worked, on large budget international and studio shoots for Silverback Films, and the BBC Natural History Unit.

I completed my MRes. in Evolutionary Biology at the University of Southampton and have since produced short films, given seminar's and lectures, and hosted/produced a 'Highly Commended' science podcast.

With my ambition to tell exciting, global stories, I was part of Silverback's development team. I aspire to actively participate in inclusive and authentic storytelling, currently working as a freelance developer I am in a funding period for a personal project focussing on non-traditional funding models; working with eco-investors and venture capital funds. I will be working with an influential First Nation group in British Columbia, who have agreed to work with me after a year of discussion, to tell their indigenous experience and stories.

KEY CREDITS

- ◆ **Silverback Films + Whitley Fund for Nature | Award Short-Film | Edit-Producer** (February-May 2025)
1 x 4 min; Writer and Producer for Whitley Award Winner; Dr Yara Barros, in a film celebrating her successes in South Brazil, bringing the Jaguar back from extinction.
- ◆ **Silverback Films | Development Researcher** (April 2023-May 2025)
I worked through the entire pipeline from pitching innovative new ideas for Netflix and National Geographic; creating clean, creative, and eye-catching pitch decks, with stories, funding ideas, and market research.
- ◆ **Silverback Films + Netflix | Life on Our Planet 2 | Science Researcher** (October 2022-May 2025)
4 x 40min; I was responsible for researching and creating engaging sequences for a landmark CGI dinosaur documentary narrated by Morgan Freeman, telling the story of 'the rise and fall of the dinosaurs'. I supported producers across the whole series, from sequence development, script writing, and advising on animal behaviour for our partners at Industrial Light & Magic. I built relationships between editorial and scientific consultants, archive acquisition, as well as constant science fact checking on script and screen. I took a lead role in the sound design for the dinosaurs and environmental soundscapes for the series. I additionally helped set up international shoots to South Africa/ USA, as well as UK studio shoots; with set design, and live animal handling.
- ◆ **BBC Natural History Unit + AppleTV+ | Prehistoric Planet: Uncovered | Science Researcher** (2021-2022)
7 x 10 min; I co-write and fact checked scripts, and conducted interviews with experts for the behind-the-scenes series. I organised shoots at the Natural History Museum (NHM) coordinating lead scientists, scripted the interview questions, and was an on-site researcher assisting the team for Sir David Attenborough's pieces-to-camera.
- ◆ **BBC Natural History Unit + AppleTV+ | Prehistoric Planet (Series 1 & 2) | Science Researcher** (2020-2022)
10 x 45 min; Reporting to Dr Darren Naish, I was a science researcher across series 1 & 2 both narrated by Sir David Attenborough; my focus was advising on animal behaviour, and forming working relationships between the BBC and leading palaeontologists across the globe. I helped storyboard sequences, writing my own sequence in the *Islands* episode, set up multiple international shoots (Formentera & Grand Cayman) during the pandemic, as well as helped identify key contemporary species. I communicated complex science to our animator partners at MPC Ltd through every stage of production; from concept art, to finished series.
- ◆ **Pioneer Productions + National Geographic | In the Womb | Researcher Intern** (February 2020)
2 x 45 min; A researcher helping with CGI, logistics, archive permissions, and factchecking.

SHORT FILMS

- Solitary Bees | Writer / Producer / Presenter** | (August 2020 - *Student Film*)
A short documentary looking into the lives of a lesser known species of bee.
- A Step into the Ocean | Writer / Producer / Presenter** | (February 2020 - *Student Film*)
An assessed short film on the evolution of the whale; With no budget I negotiated rarely granted pre-public access, and presented to camera, in the Hintze hall in the Natural History Museum in a high pressure, time limited slot.

RADIO EXPERIENCE

- Darwin's Black Book | Writer / Co-Presenter/ Co-Producer / Editor** | (2020-2023)
'Highly Commended' podcast by the British Ecological Society. I was the co-creator and co-host for a podcast busting misconceptions in evolution and biology, in an entertaining but educational format for a broad audience. Series 1 saw over 1000 independent listeners.
- Matryoshka Radio | Natural Planet Series 1 & 2 | Writer / Presenter** | (2018)
Researched, wrote, and presented 26 episodes of a commissioned Natural History radio programme for the London based Matryoshka Radio. This children's programme ran for 2 series.

AWARDS

- Waterstones Regional Short Fiction Award | 3rd Place** | (2025)
- Society for Experimental Biology Outreach Grant Award | Darwin's Black Book** | (2022)
- British Ecological Society: Public Engagement Working Group Fund Award | Darwin's Black Book** | (2020)
- University of Southampton: Dean's Award for Academic Excellence** | (2020)
- Caterham School: Moncrieff-Jones Award for Services to Science** | (2016)

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- ◆ **Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour | Workshop Lead** (April 2025)
Rated as ‘one of the best workshops in recent memory’, with colleague Dr Tom Fletcher, I developed and led and full day workshop; ‘*From Science to Screen: The Context of Natural History Storytelling*’ for PhDs and academics at the ASAB annual conference. It covered all aspects of natural history filmmaking; including how to tell visual stories and connect with an audience.
- ◆ **WildScreen Festival | Preselector Judge** (2022 / 2024)
An award preselector judge for two consecutive festivals, reviewing tens of hours of footage for progression to the judges.
- ◆ **Lizzie Daly’s Earth Live Lessons | Darwin’s Galapagos | Speaker** (2020)
A lockdown speaker for Lizzie Daly’s live online science speaker series, on the topic of Darwin’s research in the Galapagos.
- ◆ **Bath Geological Society | Speaker** (2020)
- ◆ **Berkshire College of Agriculture | Speaker** (2020)
- ◆ **Museum of Natural History, Oxford | Speaker** (2019)
- ◆ **Wildlife Society, University of Southampton | President** (2018) & **Vice President** (2019)
- ◆ **Biodiversity Hub for Education & Research, University of Southampton | Public Engagement Intern** (2018-2019)

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

- MRes. Evolutionary Biology | University of Southampton |** Distinction with Dean’s Award (2019-2020)
Thesis: *On the analysis and reconstruction of the evolution of primate brain expansion focussing on ecological adaptations of neurology - specifically in the sensory regions of the brain.* (With Dr Stephen Montgomery, University of Bristol)
- BSc. Zoology | University of Southampton |** 1st Class (2016-2019)
Thesis: *Using micro-CT to recreate and investigate the structure of the braincase of new Baryonychine material from the Isle of Wight.*

SKILLS

- Science Communication**
- As an experienced researcher, I specialise in the quick, accurate, and deep curation of complex information for editorial.
 - I have given lectures, podcast interviews, presented to camera in the Natural History Museum, and behind-the-scenes interview for an upcoming Netflix show, and hosted interviews with world famous scientists.
- Editorial**
- In-depth, recent experience across producing, directing, and editing, working closely with producers across Blue-Chip natural history, in the field, in studios, and in the edit.
 - Edit-producer for the Whitley Fund for Nature; and have produced a highly commended internationally regarded podcast.
- Script writing & Storytelling**
- A strong non-fiction script writer, with an organic, collaborative approach to storytelling; with factchecking being a vital part of that process to allow the truth to tell a more authentic story.
 - Good experience working with storyboard artists to layout sequence stories, and develop interesting ways to shoot sequences.
 - I am a fiction author of short stories, recently coming 3rd in a Waterstones writing short story competition; with a novel due for completion in 2026.
 - I am developing my skills as an author to tell emotionally engaging stories, learning how to translate the rules of fictional character-led storytelling into natural history and factual documentary stories.
- Development**
- Being involved with Silverback Films’ development team for over 2 years, I have a thorough understanding and proficiency of the process and of what commissioners want. I come up with original, fascinating ideas, and build engaging pitches for heads of company and commissioners; especially in this new and hostile climate for natural history filmmaking.
 - I am confident and can sell a story, approaching and forming relationships with potential contributors enabling further development.
 - I focus on understanding the story that is there to be told, not recycling or forcing stories into place.
 - I am a problem solver; understanding how to get access to hard-to-reach locations, as well as creating connections for non-traditional funding solutions.
- Organisation & Logistics**
- Experience setting up high-end foreign and domestic blue-chip shoots; included access, kit prep, accommodation, and travel.
 - Thrives managing several projects in parallel; recently leading the sound design for a project, balanced with other responsibilities.
 - I excel at making lasting relationships; with scientists, editors, composers, artists, and contributors. Recently, for example, I have formed good connections with the First Nations in British Columbia, the Māori, and NASA’s Jet Propulsion Lab.
 - I am a trained negotiator.
- Location Work**
- Great experience working on dive shoots (Grand Cayman/ Formentera), expeditions (Belize), studio shoots, and CGI heavy shoots.
 - Excels at working under pressure in tough conditions, ensuring organisation, and moral, is high.
- Post Production**
- Experienced with Adobe Premiere Pro/ Audition/ InDesign/ Lightroom; Canva; Avid Media Composer, DaVinci Resolve, Avid, Audacity.

INTERESTS

- A voracious reader of a diversity of genres; from exploration, history, zoology, and science fiction. I am influenced by; David Attenborough’s *Life on Air*, Wilfred Thesiger’s *Arabian Sands*, and Lucy Cooke’s *Unexpected Truth about Animals*.
- In my spare time I focus on figure drawing, writing nature essays, and am writing and fictional novel.

REFERENCES (Contact available on request)

- Dan Tapster** x8 Emmy-nominated exec producer. **Amber Eames** Award winning director and producer.
Dr Paul Stewart Multiple Emmy & BAFTA winning cinematographer and producer. **Michael Pitts** x2 Emmy, and BAFTA winning DoP.