



WILD LABS.NET

[The conservation technology network]

Content Guidelines

WILD LABS.NET is an online community that connects 3,500+ conservationists and technology experts from around the world to find technology solutions for a wide variety of environmental challenges. This is a space where members can share experiences, explore ongoing projects, identify major questions and needs, and collaborate to develop new technology prototypes. **WILD LABS.NET** is also a resource for people who want to learn more about technology or conservation and join forward-thinking conversations. [Learn more here](#)

WILD LABS.NET has a wide range of member-generated content that serves as a resource for the conservation technology community. These include thought pieces, case studies, how-to guides, technology reviews, and member interviews. This content gives authors the chance to share their work and ask for feedback from our experienced global community. While our members welcome the chance to learn more about conservation challenges, technology options, recent advances in the tech field, and how technology is currently being used on the ground by other conservationists. Our goal is to help generate discussion, break down silos of information and inspire collaborative efforts to develop new technology solutions amongst members.

Before You Begin

Before you get started, we have some general guidelines which pertain to all content. *For more detailed information, please refer to our website [Terms of Use](#).*

- To submit a piece of content, email our editorial team at community@wildlabs.net. We may reach out to you to invite you to write something, but we also welcome unsolicited submissions from our community.
- **WILD LABS** editorial staff will review and, if required, work with you to edit pieces to make them appropriate for our audience
- Content should be no more than 1000 words (*NB: this is flexible – if you are sharing an in-depth, how-to write up that needs more room, our members prefer you dig into the detail rather than skimming through it*).
- Include a short (2-3 sentence), engaging summary at the start of your article (see [this piece](#) for a good example)
- Include a brief bio of yourself and a profile photo.
- Twitter: Please include your twitter handle so we can tag you when we share your piece on [@wildlabsnet](#). If you have other relevant hashtags or accounts we should use, please make note of these for us.
- Please include photos, maps, or videos with your piece
- Write in terms that everyone will understand (e.g. spell out acronyms, explain difficult terms, etc.)
- Cite publications and reports, and link to other websites where needed.
- All resources are accessible to the public and should not contain any private or proprietary information
- Please remember to be respectful of other community members and be mindful that some members may hold differing opinions

There are several different types of content with varying objectives and formats. Please make sure your piece incorporates the information outlined below.

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If you have an idea for something that doesn't easily fit into the content forms we suggest in the list above, please do still get in touch (community@wildlabs.net). Maybe you want to host (or ask us to) a podcast where or start a DIY hardware how-to series on YouTube - we love new ideas and will enthusiastically explore new ways to bring together our community to share information and collaborate. WILDLABS also organises virtual meetups, hosts a YouTube channel for conservation technology, and facilitates in-person workshops, hackathons and other events, so your idea may be a better fit for another format we already have, otherwise we'll work with you to develop your idea into something that will be of value to the conservation tech community.

News, Events, Funding and Job Opportunities

We welcome the submission of general content that may be of interest to our community. If you are interested in sharing your news, events, funding opportunities and job postings, please send them to community@wildlabs.net. General content should be no more than 500 words, include a short summary (1-2 sentences) and relevant images, links or videos. The **WILDLABS.NET** editorial team will determine what articles are published on the site and reserves the right to not publish all articles submitted.

Examples:

- **News:** [Spacewalk for ICARUS](#)
- **Jobs:** [Job Opportunity: Conservation Technology Programme Manager with ZSL](#)
- **Funding:** [Funding Opportunity: AI for Earth / National Geographic Innovation Grants](#)
- **Events:** [Event: Ocean Hack, San Francisco, 10-11 September](#)

Commentary

Examples:

- [Listening to Nature: The Emerging Field of Bioacoustics](#)
- [How do we get better at failure?](#)
- [Viral Bear Video shows how drones threaten wildlife – and what to do about it](#)
- [ICCB 2019: 5 Key Discussions about the Future of Conservation Tech](#)
- [Camera traps designed for animals are now invading human privacy](#)
- [From drone swarms to tree batteries, new tech is revolutionising ecology and conservation](#)

These articles can address a wide range of topics, including introducing emerging technologies that could play a role that conservationists, outlining novel applications for technology in conservation, opinions on the state of play within a field, or a call to action. These pieces should be no more than 1000 words, include a short summary and relevant images, links and videos.

These essays provide an overview of the topic (e.g. a conservation challenge or technology) and should contain some opinions or open-ended questions that will prompt discussion by the community. These pieces should not focus too much on one organization's work, but rather give a neutral overview of the field.

With these articles, we want to make it easy to grasp:

1. Emerging technologies - what's on the horizon that conservationists should be aware of but not necessarily be looking to use in their work yet?
2. What is possible right now? Cut through the hype - what novel tools or new applications of established tech are being deployed right now, how do they perform in the field and where are the gaps/challenges that still need to be addressed?
3. Who is doing what? Mapping the landscape about what different tools are out there, how they fit together (or don't), who are the key players, where are the gaps?
4. What are the big issues and debates that live at the moment? Ethical questions, best practice approaches, and where is the consensus about what direction we need to be going as field?

Case Study

Examples:

- [Naturewatch: Lessons from the field of app development](#)
- [Thermal imaging, drones, and sea turtles: a case study using FLIR's new Duo Pro R camera](#)
- [The unexpected difficulty of getting videos from the field](#)
- [Is Google's Cloud Vision useful for identifying animals from camera-trap photos?](#)

Our case studies are standalone articles that offer an in-depth look at how technology is being used to address a conservation challenge. The case study can look at just one location or project where the technology is being used, or it can compare uses in different landscapes or projects. When writing a case study, you should clearly describe the technology (/ies) you are using or testing and give feedback on successes, challenges, failures and signpost where future development is needed.

Keep in mind that we want to hear the behind-the-scenes reality of deploying tech – the good and the bad. The articles we feature differ from the conservation tech pieces that are generally available because we don't just want the polished story about your project – these articles are great in that they give an idea about what is possible to do, but they don't tend to hold much tangible information that could help someone else looking to do similar sorts of work. We're interested in featuring pieces that share what went right, but also what went wrong or what they wish they'd known before getting started, so we (as a community) can avoid making the same mistakes! It's also interesting to hear about where field users would like to see technology developing – what's missing, what could be done better? If you're a tool or technology developer, we'd love to see you consider partnering with a field user to co-write a piece that combines both of your experiences.

Project Log

We're also interested in documenting the iterative process you go through as you develop, test or deploy a new technology. Like the case study, we want to hear about the reality and the lessons you learn along the way. We're interested in tracking projects from both a tech development perspective (folks building and testing new tech for conservation applications) and from the conservation perspective (folks have a challenge that are assessing a variety of existing technologies to find the right solution).

By sharing regular updates as you progress, it also gives you an opportunity to ask our community for help to solving problems as they come up, connect to new collaborators who could contribute to the project (e.g. conservationists who are willing to beta test tech, engineers/developers who want to contribute to conservation focused tech projects, or funders looking for innovative projects to support), build a community of potential end users around a tool your developing, and build a profile about your personal expertise in this space by sharing out the lessons you're learning along the way so we can all benefit from your experiences.

As with all our articles, our members tend to respond well to honest accounts, so please don't hesitate to also mention drawbacks or areas in need of more development - this can open up discussion and give members an opportunity to contribute feedback. And feel free to explicitly flag what you need help with - we've seen lots of members pair up and start working together off the back of discovering complementary needs + skills. Photos and instructional videos are really helpful, so please include them where possible. If necessary, include links to further information, discussion threads in the WILDLABS community, or repositories like [github](#).

Examples:

- **HWC Tech Challenge update: Thermopile Sensor Project**
 - [HWC Tech Challenge Update: Comparing thermopile and microbolometer thermal sensors](#)
 - [HWC Tech Challenge Update: Thermal Elephant Alert System](#)

From the Field: Interviews with Conservationists using Tech

We understand sitting down and finding time to write an article or a case study from scratch can be a big barrier, and sometimes just having some questions to run through can help it feel a little less daunting. We've found the information we hear from this type of article is hugely valuable as it often exposes the realities of using tech under field conditions offering our tech members insights in to what they need to contend with when designing/adapting tech for conservation use. It also gives conservation practitioners the opportunity to highlight the shortcoming they're seeing in tech currently available in their work and direct development efforts to meet their actual needs.

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself, what do you work on?

Q: What technology are you using in your work?

Q: What challenge has this technology helped you overcome? For example, would the data you can collect with the technology be able to tell you something that would be hard or impossible to obtain otherwise?

Q: How did you first get the idea to use this technology for your work?

Q: Do you use specific criteria to select the technology or model you use?

Q: Did the technology work as you expected? If it worked, what worked?

Q: What were some of the biggest challenges you faced using this technology in your location?

Q: Is there anything you would do differently if you could do it again?

Q: What are some of the shortcomings of the technology you're using for your work that you'd like to see addressed?

Q: Have there been any unexpected positives of using this technology? (e.g. What are the most surprising findings that the technology has helped you to discover?)

Q: What advice would you give other groups such as yours that might be thinking about using this technology in their work?

Q: Any other final points you want to share?

Please include any photos, diagrams or videos you've created to demonstrate your work, and a link to where readers can find out more information.

Examples:

- [Eric Becker and designing sensors for wildlife](#)
- [Paul Millhouser and tracking migrating kestrels with low cost, light based geolocators](#)
- [The highs and lows of camera traps for rapid inventories in the rainforest canopy](#)
- [Snotbots: can drones transform whale conservation?](#)

How-to Instructional

This is your chance to introduce a tool, what it does and how to use it. Share your expertise and walk us step-by-step through building or fixing a DIY piece of hardware (we've had lots of requests for this), running an analysis, setting up a database or app, setting up tech in the field correctly. Consider whether creating a video (or including lots of photos) might be the best way to demonstrate your process. Make sure you flag when things can go wrong and whether there are things you've learnt to do differently based on earlier mistakes.

- COMING SOON: Youtube series demonstrating fixes for broken hardware (e.g. camera traps)

Explain like I'm Five

We've found that part of the challenge of running a conservation tech community is that different parts of our community have completely different assumed knowledge and language. We have content aimed at getting tech members up to speed on the challenges conservationists need help with (and the field conditions tech needs to be able to perform under). This content type aims to do the same for conservationists - making the tech jargon a little more accessible. Based on the [reddit forum](#) - the aim is simply to collate layperson-friendly explanations for terms we often see getting blank looks. Our question list currently includes:

What is an API? What is Blockchain? What is LoRA? What is Machine Learning?

For this section, we want to hear from you if you:

- Have a term or question you want us to explain, or
- Can explain something

You ask the question, we'll go find the expert who can explain it, get them on zoom and record their answer.

Helpful Lists

WILDLABS aims to create a centralised repository of information so that it becomes easier to find out information about conservation technology. Collating lists so that information scattered across different repositories, journals, sites and systems is easy to access is a simple way we can help bring down the obvious barriers for collaboration and developing expertise in conservation technology. We want to hear from you if you are already maintaining a list of useful resources and want us to publish it (we'll give you admin access to continue owning that list), if there is an existing list you want to add your resource to, or if there is a list you would find helpful for us to collate and maintain. Topics idea include:

- Data Repositories
- Helpful resources for a topic (e.g. [Camera Trapping: Incredibly Useful Resources List](#))
- Upcoming events or workshops for a topic
- Projects (e.g. Machine learning projects or Apps for citizen sciences)
- Early career resources (places to find jobs, funding, masters projects, supervisors, mentors)

Journal Club

Staying on top of the latest peer reviewed literature from across the broad conservation ecosystem is a significant challenge, even for our team. In our journal club, we select one publication each week, offer a brief overview of the paper and then open the discussion up for conversation with our community. We're open to experimentation here - if you have a paper you want to discuss (i.e. you'd like to introduce it and host the discussion), please get in touch at community@wildlabs.net. Alternatively, if you've published or read an article you want us to consider featuring, please also let us know.

I need help (Challenge Statement)

Do you have a challenge - small (e.g. I need an app to do x) or large (e.g. how do we tackle battery waste?) - that you want to throw out to our community? This is your chance. By sharing your challenge, you'll find tech people who are looking for projects/ issues to get involved in, funders looking for issues to support, and conservationists who share your challenge and have ideas for solving it or want to know about viable solutions. When articulating your challenge, we recommend writing up a challenge statement that holds all the information that sets the scene for the challenge you need addressing, what's been tried before and other relevant information that tech companies/workshop participants/engineers will need to know so they can come up with useful ideas/solutions.

Think about answering:

- What is the challenge? (what do they need deliver)
- Why? (what would change if a solution was found)
- Background info:
 - Who
 - Where
 - What is causing the underlying issue (e.g. human-wildlife conflict)
 - Are there any exacerbating circumstances that make this challenge more difficult or the issue worse?
 - Specifics of the issue (For example, human-elephant conflicts happen at night; cropping season is sept-feb; 100 elephants may be involved in crop raiding incidences)
 - Socio-economic details of the region
 - Environmental details of the region (i.e. terrain, weather considerations etc)
 - Other key info
 - What are the present solutions?
 - Info on interventions that are currently being used but require improvement or new solutions
 - Examples of successful mechanisms used elsewhere
- How do people help? How can they get involved?

These are more guiding questions rather than ones you MUST answer. Please adapt them to your needs as appropriate, but use them as a guide to the sort of information that can be useful to set the scene for productive solution ideation.

Examples:

- Full challenge statements:
 - [Human Wildlife Conflict Tech Challenge: Asian Elephant Case](#)
 - [Human Wildlife Conflict Tech Challenge: Polar Bear Case](#)
 - [Human Wildlife Conflict Tech Challenge: Tiger Case](#)
- Other examples:
 - [The battery challenge - how to reduce battery waste](#)
 - [extending battery life with solar panels](#)