

Trust me, I'm a Scientist

Abstract

Experience has shown me that trust has been central to whether I have been able to engage well as a scientist. Having tracked attitude changes in local children towards forests and the role they play and interviewed communities involved in many types of activities seen as essential to do by some yet essential to stop by others, from illegal hunting to selling bushmeat. I will be reflecting on these kinds of experiences while exploring ways in which we can bring science to a wider audience and consider how best to achieve that (and also how not to do that). These have ranged from working with local and international communities, collaborating with Sir David Attenborough, and even presenting scientific content underwater next to sharks. This will help me address an important question for today about why there is a disconnect between the public and the scientific community and what needs to be done to resolve this.

Biography

Ben is fascinated by evolution and is passionate about conservation, often linking the two together. He is an evolutionary biologist and primate conservationist as well as being a broadcaster for television and radio and author of several books, over a range of subjects from evolution and anatomy to animal behaviour and natural history. He began broadcasting in 2014 with his award-winning BBC4 series *Secrets of Bones*. His subsequent television programmes and series include *Secrets of Bones* (2014), *Attenborough and the Giant Dinosaur* (2016), *The Day the Dinosaurs Died* (2017), *Hyper-evolution: the Rise of Robots* (2017), *Secrets of Skin* (2019) and *Baby Chimp Rescue* (2020). He has presented *A Grown-Up Guide to Dinosaurs* (an Audible Original) and *Bone Stories* and *The Human Hive* on BBC Radio 4.