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POWERHOUSE WOMEN BAND TOGETHER TO TACKLE EQUALITY AND INTERSECTIONAL DIVERSITY IN SCIENCE, FILMMAKING AND CONSERVATION

The lack of intersectional diversity in STEM, filmmaking and conversation has been well documented over the last 10 years, and the stats are staggering. A 2019 UNESCO women in science report found that women in STEM publish less, are paid less for their research, and do not progress as far as men in their careers. A separate study states that 45% of women in STEM leave their jobs because of feeling underpaid and underrepresented. Although women make up 47% of the current workforce, only 28% of the current science and engineering workforce. Of this percentage, women of colour comprise about 5%. The stats are similar in the media, filmmaking and conservation space. Twelve successful diverse women in science, tv and wildlife filmmaking have come together to co-found the club 'Nature and Wildlife' on the new, free and rapidly expanding platform Clubhouse with the aim to provide a supportive and motivational network, and expand this outside of Clubhouse. These women are fierce, focussed and on a mission to promote an inclusive, diverse and equitable environment in these historically white and male dominated industries.

The women will be using Nature and Wildlife to host a range of talks including topics like ocean exploration, careers, behind the scenes on wildlife documentaries, ethical travel and intersectional diversity across all fields. Clubhouse is interactive so people can come up on 'stage', connect with the professionals, and be part of the conversation. The club logo reflects the founders' passion for diverse representation in science, encompassing a sea urchin in the design: a nod to Roger Arliner Young, the first African-American woman to receive a doctorate degree in zoology and publish in her field. Young contributed a great deal to science but didn't receive much recognition at the time due to her sex and race. There is now the Roger Arliner Young (RAY) Fellowship aimed at increasing racial diversity conservation and clean energy fields.

The club formed off the back of a talk together for International Day for Women and Girls in Science. The club is still in its early stages but is expected to grow rapidly, as this group of women have a combined following of almost half a million people on social media. The club has accumulated over 1000 members in its first week.

More can be read about the club and it's members at: www.natureandwildlife.club

Join the club: <https://www.joinclubhouse.com/club/nature-and-wildlife>

Quotes:

"Representation is key when challenging the lack of diversity seen in STEM and wildlife filmmaking fields. These amazing women are role models, showing the next generation that they're able to fill up space in places that have historically excluded them." – Carlee Jackson, Co-Founder of Minorities In Shark Science.

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Notes to the editor

The Co-Founders of the club:



Danni Washington – Co-founder of the non-profit Big Blue & You, marine biologist and the first African-American woman to host a nationally broadcast syndicated science television series, Danni is a staunch advocate for STEM education, particularly among historically underrepresented communities within science. She has served as the spokesperson for the US's largest STEM celebration at the USA Science & Engineering Festival in Washington D.C. and has served as a correspondent on CBS's Mission Unstoppable, a weekly program highlighting fascinating female innovators thriving on the cutting edge of science. Since Danni Co-Founded Big Blue & You at age 21, it has educated over 30,000 young people over the last 12 years, virtually and in person. As EarthX's 2018 Emerging Female Leader of the Year, Danni continues to educate international youth on the importance of ocean conservation and environmentalism using mediums that acutely connect: science, arts and media, and is launching 2 new podcasts reflecting this including The Genius Generation from Seeker and Tax.



Lizzie Daly – Lizzie is a wildlife biologist, broadcaster and conservation filmmaker. From BBC Earth to co-hosting the Blue Planet Live Lessons at just age 24, and producing and hosting National Geographic Live YouTube series - Lizzie has a lot of experience in the broadcasting world and has a real passion for connecting others with the natural world. She recently produced and hosted an online series to support the conservation of Skomer Island with the Wildlife Trust during lockdown, reaching a quarter of a million viewers and fundraising £100,000 for conservation. She is also the Founder of the Youtube series Earth Live Lessons featuring 120+ speakers, filmmakers and wildlife producers and reaching an audience of over 65,000. On top of all this, Lizzie is also an Academic Teaching and Outreach fellow at Swansea University and is studying for her PhD, continuing to bridge the gap between science and the public.



Megan McCubbin - Megan is a zoologist, author and wildlife TV presenter with a background in animal behaviour and the illegal wildlife trade. In 2017, she presented 'Undercover Tourist' on BBC3 to highlight the bear bile farming industry and has hosted the award winning series 'Earthrise' on Al Jazeera. Most recently in 2020 Megan joined as co-presenter for BBC Springwatch, Autumnwatch and Winterwatch and is a presenter for the new CBBC show 'Planet Defenders'. Her first book 'Back To Nature' was published in 2020 and she is currently working towards her second publication.



Inka Cresswell – Wildlife filmmaker and photographer, Inka uses her skills to educate the general public about marine conservation issues, reconnect people with nature, and change people's perspectives of some of our most misunderstood species. Her film 'MY25: The Ocean Between Us' was officially selected for Wildscreen Festival, which HRH Prince Philip and Sir David Attenborough are both patrons of, and was a finalist at many film festivals across the globe. Inka is a proud Ambassador for the Marine Conservation Society and Partner photographer and mentor for Girls Who Click. Inka has reached thousands through her work and talks and she hopes it will not only educate and inspire a new generation of conservationists but arm them with the tools they need to educate others and drive real conservation impact.



Melissa Cristina Márquez – Melissa is a Latina marine biologist, explorer, Scholastic author, freelance writer, and TV presenter known for translating complex scientific concepts and jargon into language accessible to the general public. An avid diver and ocean activist, Melissa travels all over the world promoting intersectional environmentalism and ocean justice and did her first TEDx talk at just age 23 about demanding more diverse and inclusive representation of women scientists on TV. That TEDx talk received over 28,000 views. Melissa is currently doing her Ph.D. at Curtin University, studying human-wildlife conflict and long-term changes in the habitat use of sharks and rays. She was recently selected as a Forbes "30 under 30" honouree as a leader in the science community and will be doing her second TEDx talk this week looking at our relationship with wild spaces and animals. Melissa is keen to break down myths around shark attacks, with her video for GQ doing exactly that, and reaching an audience of almost 2 million people. Now aged 27, Melissa has just published her first book, with the second due out in July this year, about an Afro Latinx family starring in their own TV show that highlights their wildlife and conservation work. The book is based on her own wildlife experience.



Sarah Roberts – Author of the international best-selling children's marine education book 'Somebody Swallowed Stanley', Sarah is also an eco-journalist and wildlife presenter. Sarah wrote Somebody Swallowed Stanley aged 24 to support the UK's science national curriculum and her work has educated over 20,000 children, with the book to be featured on the 18th of March on CBEEBIES Bedtime Stories and read by the actor Tom Hardy. Not only focussing on children, Sarah's latest documentary 'Iceland's Green Machine' highlights the potential of carbon capturing technology and storage. Sarah's work with LADBible, CBBC, Blue Peter, Newsround, Scouts and The Wildlife Trust continues to inspire the next generation of environmental advocates.



Francesca Trotman – Francesca is a marine biologist, underwater photographer, and the Managing Director of the Mozambique marine conservation charity Love The Oceans, which she founded when she was just 21. Love The Oceans is a pioneering NGO taking a holistic approach to conservation, doing a range of scientific research, paired with community-led outreach projects and conservation solutions. The non-profit was recognised as 1 of 15 global forces for change by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex and was further highlighted for their work by the couple. Love The Oceans has just launched a project that will protect approximately 16,444 football pitches of ocean from net use on project completion and successfully established their area as a Hope Spot under Mission Blue, Sylvia Earle, the renowned ocean explorer's organisation. The micro charity has collected over a tonne of trash from beaches, surveyed over 9km of reef, enabled free education for 1500+ children in Mozambique, and taught over 800 children how to swim. 2 of the recent documentaries made on Love The Oceans have been shown around the globe at film festivals and reached an audience of over well over 120,000 people. Francesca is a passionate conservationist, and is determined to create an inclusive and ethical environment in marine science.



Mads St Clair Baker - Mads St Clair has been smashing down gender barriers since 2018, when at just 22, she founded Women in Ocean Science - a non-profit organisation and female empowerment movement, that aims to celebrate women working in marine science industries. Now hosting an online, global community of over 50,000 across social channels, the Women in Ocean Science network promotes utilising effective science communication to address global challenges. Fusing her tropical marine biology background with her creative expertise, Mads also hosts Ocean Poddy, an ocean-savvy podcast has 5000 RSS subscribers in under a year.



Bryce Corbett – A coral biologist, Bryce is passionate about coral reef habitats and the communities that depend on them. She recently made history by spawning two species of endangered coral, that once thrived in shallow Caribbean reefs, in captivity for the first time ever, with her colleagues at University of North Carolina-Wilmington where she's currently finishing her Masters. This could help ongoing reef restoration efforts globally. Having worked with organisations like NOAA and The Ocean Exploration Trust around the world when she was just 22 years old, Bryce is pursuing a career in educational outreach and fieldwork. Often found somewhere in the sea, she makes time to foster meaningful connections with fellow women in science and continues to fight to make the STEM field more inclusive.



Charlie Young – Charlie is a marine scientist, diver, expedition leader and science communicator based in the UK. Passionate about inspiring people to care for the ocean, Charlie uses her skills as a scientist and presenter to champion change for our big blue. Charlie was lead scientist on an Indonesian expedition investigating marine plastic and presented a documentary on her work. It was screened in a four-part symposium across Asia led by Nat Geo photographers David Doublet and Jennifer Hayes and ocean legend Dr Sylvia Earle. It was also chosen for the Melbourne Zoo Film Festival and screened alongside documentaries such as the Netflix documentary Chasing Coral. Shortly after this Charlie rescued a green sea turtle in Oman, the video of which went viral with over 100,000 million views, and was also featured on ITV, helping spread the message of the plight of our marine life. As well as this, Charlie was named one of Glasgow Universities Future World Changer in 2019 and is currently working on a landmark paper with renowned marine scientist Prof Carlos Duarte on closing the gap in our knowledge about the ultimate sink of plastic pollution in our oceans, which is currently in review with Nature.



Carlee Jackson – Carlee is a marine turtle specialist and co-founder of Minorities in Shark Science (MISS), an organization dedicated to amplifying the minority voices in the field of shark science. She currently works as a marine turtle specialist, helping to protect sea turtles in Florida and her previous research has been on shark tourism in Belize. Carlee is passionate about the field of shark science, working to increase diversity in this field through environmental education, fieldtrips all across Florida and her organisation MISS. MISS was founded by four of Black female shark researchers who strive to be seen and take up space in a discipline which has been largely inaccessible to people of colour. MISS strives to be positive role models for the next generation and seek to promote diversity and inclusion in shark science while encouraging women of colour to push through barriers and contribute knowledge in marine science. MISS and it's Founders has been highlighted for their incredibly important work by the likes of UNESCO, The Explorers Club and Discovery.



Rebecca Daniel – Rebecca is a tropical marine biologist, science communicator, and Director of the non-profit organisation The Marine Diaries. Passionate about spreading awareness of the ocean, Rebecca has spoken at numerous events, won prizes and scholarships for excellence, presented her research at conferences and run campaigns raising awareness about plastics and our oceans. She is currently working on an ongoing project for The Marine Diaries which is creating educational materials for the public, schools, and conservation organisations, expected to reach thousands of young children. The Marine Diaries is a global network of volunteers and collaborators and with a background in environmental and climate change communications, Rebecca and her team apply their skills to communicate science to the wider public.