

Bethany Woodworth Shares Her Journey Through Environmental Studies

University of New England Professor Bethany Woodworth talks about her many experiences with environmental research.

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In March 2025, Bethany Woodworth is currently in her last semester as a professor at UNE and plans to retire in May of this year. Teaching environmental studies classes at UNE fulfilled a passion she had for teaching.

Professor Woodworth started her journey at UNE in the fall of 2007 and has been teaching classes in environmental studies, climate change, biodiversity preservation, and environmental pollution.

“When I was nine, we had our first earth day in 1970, and I had this great awakening of environmental awareness during my youth.” Woodworth added that she always wanted to be able to study the ecology of animals of some kind no matter the species.

Woodworth graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1985 at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where her love of wildlife conservation started. “When I went to college, I took a class in field zoology where we were catching bats. And I said, Wow, this is so cool. So I decided I wanted to conserve wildlife at that point, and I went to work for it, for a land trust for three years after college.” After her journey working for a land trust she decided to go back to graduate school and learn to do the research that informed conservation.

Woodworth’s love for the environment took her to many places, like Africa, and Central America, But she also spent a lot of time living in Puerto Rico. “I actually created a project for myself in Puerto Rico, in part because my soon to be husband was studying tropical fish, and we needed to find a place where we could both live. So we went to Puerto Rico, and I studied the ecology and conservation of a bird that's only found in Puerto Rico.” Studying the ecology of birds added a passion to study and research birds.

In 1993-96 Woodworth served as monitoring ecologist for Frankfurt Zoological Society, flying extensive aerial surveys for wildlife in the remote areas of Tanzania. “Eventually, that research and that experience took my husband and I to Africa to work for what's called the Tanzania wildlife conservation monitor, which is a project of the Frankfurt Zoological Society.” This job

enlisted her to do aerial surveys for things like buffalo, elephant, wildebeest and all the other things that are there.