



Job Description

Veterinary Surgeon (Weekend Cover)

Grade: 9

Directorate: Operations

Location: Slimbridge

Reporting to: Head of Living Collections

Main function of post: To support the WWT Animal Health Team by providing clinical advice and support to WWT's zoological collections at the weekend regarding animal health management by conducting veterinary work to ensure WWT's compliance with the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 and Modern Zoo Standards 2027. In addition, when required, to conduct post-mortem examinations and provide diagnostic investigations for WWT's animal collections.

To create, preventative medicine protocols and play a primary role in managing disease outbreaks by liaising with all stakeholders

Supervisory responsibilities: Volunteers, placements, vet & research students.

Responsibilities of the post

1. In conjunction with the Animal Health Team, be responsible for the weekend healthcare of all the WWT animal collections and the treatment of sick and injured wild animals, including liaising where appropriate with local veterinary practices Undertaking the training and certification of on-site animal care staff to administer the appropriate medicines in order to best manage their animals.
2. Undertake clinical investigations and post-mortem examinations for the living collections at WWT Slimbridge pathology facilities; submitting the appropriate samples for further laboratory analysis as necessary. Consulting with animal care staff over the causes of illness/death and advising them of the appropriate courses of action to ensure optimal animal welfare.
3. Support the development of new veterinary protocols and SOP's with the appropriate training for the animal care teams to maintain future licence compliance.
4. Maintain comprehensive and accurate animal health records including management of WWT's postmortem database and ZIM's in order to allow a comprehensive annual report and ensure periodic reviews of health data to help direct preventative health management measures.

5. As part of the Animal Health Team, ensure that all prophylactic treatments of captive animals are carried out annually at Slimbridge e.g. vaccination of susceptible species against duck virus enteritis (DVE) and anthelmintic treatment.
6. As part of the Animal Health Team, oversee the translocation of animals to other WWT centres or external collections by advising on the health management pre and post move protocols.
7. Whilst on duty, be responsible for the management of the veterinary laboratory including the safe legal disposal of clinical waste, animal by-products and used laboratory chemicals and equipment from the Slimbridge site.
8. Supporting the work of the conservation science department by supporting research and surveillance projects as and when required e.g. conducting post mortem examinations, taking clinical samples or radiographing wild birds during catch events. To also liaise with researchers, collaborating in research projects for the benefit of welfare/conservation/ education, collecting required samples, publishing and presenting work/research at centres and within the wider community, including peer-reviewed articles
9. To comply with WWT's Safety Management processes and procedures at all times and contribute to WWT's positive safety management culture.
10. At weekends, provide veterinary advice and support to the Conservation Breeding Unit, Balai resources and translocation projects (Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew etc).
11. Communicate with government bodies and local stakeholders as required during notifiable disease outbreaks, to maintain business continuity. Responsibilities will also include:
 - Play a role in managing concerns about dead birds..
 - Liaising with DEFRA appointed vets during AI issues
 - Perform any sampling of birds required by APHA
 - Advise on biosecurity needs and changes in AI outbreaks
 - Guiding on epidemiological units and collating medical information for APHA
 - Liaising with and accompanying APHA vets with on-site inspection

In addition to the duties and responsibilities listed, the post holder is required to perform any other reasonable duties that may be assigned by the supervisor shown above, from time to time.

Date raised: March 2016

Amended: July 2026

Person Specification

1. Qualifications

Essential:

- Veterinary Degree
- Membership of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
- A post graduate qualification in veterinary pathology, and/or a post graduate qualification in the health of zoo/wildlife/exotic animals, or appropriate proven experience.
- Current driving license

Desirable

- Official Veterinarian for Avian/Zoo Animal Exports (AX/ZX)

2. Experience

Essential:

- Demonstrable experience of work in a busy veterinary environment, including clinical experience with zoo, wild and/or exotic animals
- Knowledge of disease conditions which may impact on the health of captive and wild populations
- Pathology and laboratory diagnostic skills
- Skilled in the use of medical ZIMS
- Knowledge of Zoo Licensing and current animal health and medication legislation

Desirable

- Knowledge of Balai legislation
- Interest, knowledge and experience in conservation issues and management technique

3. Managerial & Supervisory

Essential:

- Ability to supervise the implementation of the preventative health care management programme..
- Support post-mortem health screening programs
- Supervise and facilitate the treatment of collection animals as necessary
- Ability to supervise the work of volunteers, placement & research students
- Communicate to the animal care teams via any relevant platform to ensure the correct medication is administered accordingly

Type of staff	Number managed	Number supervised
Employed Staff	0	0-4

Volunteers / Casual Workers	0-4	0
Contractors/Stakeholders	0	2-4

4. Responsibility

Essential:

- To communicate clearly and concisely to the other members of WWT's animal health and animal care teams to enable consistency of care and advice regarding animal treatments.
- When required, be able to work safely and manage the appropriate paperwork for zoo licence and RVC compliance.
- Have undertaken Radiation Protection Supervisor training to ensure safety of staff in and around the veterinary department, and when working with the x-ray machine
- Ability to attend and represent professional views clearly at internal WWT meetings including the animal welfare and ethics committee, the pest management panel and the avian influenza taskforce group

Levels of Responsibility:

Type of Responsibility	Level (£'s)
Expenditure (exc. payroll)	£0K
Cash Handling	N/A
Assets (required for job, exc. buildings, animal stock)	£100K in assets Over £500,000 in animal stock
Visitors (per annum)	N/A

5. Creative Ability

Essential:

- Ability to use animal health and welfare knowledge to make quick decisions in fast-paced, challenging situations where the health and welfare of animals or people may be at risk
- A creative thinker who researches, develops and implements innovative methods and ideas depending on the situation
- Ability to find the most appropriate and financially responsible solution to challenging situations
- Ability to research in order to resolve animal health issues. Ability to understand the health and welfare implications of new developments and projects including the environmental needs of the proposed taxa

6. Contact

Essential:

- Ability to communicate veterinary diagnoses and treatment plans/or other requirements to the animal care staff and conservation teams
 - Ability to communicate with staff at all levels both internally and externally using verbal and written and digital mediums
 - Communicate with external agencies including government veterinary officers and scientific organisations regarding new legislation, animal health issues or zoo licensing compliance
 - Good networking skills at both national and international veterinary level
 - Represent the WWT at external or internal meetings as an ambassador for the WWT
 - Communicate the latest veterinary and husbandry techniques to WWT centre teams
 - Have the knowledge and ability to engage with government agencies during notifiable disease outbreaks in order to protect the businesses continuity.
 - Communicate with the media in a variety of situations
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General Notes

This position will work mainly Saturday and Sunday but can include variable hours, bank holiday as part of the operational veterinary team. There is a requirement to be part of the 7.5 hour on-call rota on bank holidays.