

Assistant Director of Operations

Grade: 11b

Directorate: Operations

Location: Flexible with regular travel to sites and HQ

Reporting to: Director of Operations

Main function of post: To lead the operations of our Wetland Discovery sites across the UK, driving measurable outcomes and constant improvement in line with WWT's overall UK strategy and ambitions, business plan and KPIs. To ensure the operation of sites runs with legality and conformity to established regulation both internally and externally. To provide inspiring and professional leadership to your team and to proactively collaborate with and inspire senior matrix managers across the organisation.

Supervisory responsibilities: Management and support of WWT's Wetland Discovery sites across the UK. Direct line management of two Heads of Operations, the Head of Catering and the Head of Retail

Responsibilities of the post

1. Directing the effective and efficient site management of the WWT Wetland Discovery sites in the UK, delivering measurable outcomes and constant improvement in line with WWT's strategy, business plan and KPIs across Restore, Inspire and Thrive.
2. To direct the development, monitoring and adjustment of operating budgets to achieve profitability targets, including meeting income generation targets through visitation, recruitment of members and supporters, gift aid, trading, agri-environment grants, restricted legacies and donations, in addition to cost control – within the context of the wider corporate income generation plan and working closely with Fundraising, Marketing and Communications (FMC).
3. Working with the Director of Operations, support the development of a core product and experiences matrix which will drive visitation and form the basis of our future investment plans across all ten of our wetland sites, including Wetland discovery sites and Wetland reserves.
4. With the support from other WWT central Operations teams, work as sponsor on the development of site masterplans, and associated 5-year investment plans, for your sites.
5. To direct the implementation of masterplans, ensuring effective use of Capex funding to deliver exceptional experiences for visitors, across a spectrum of motivations, and which drives visitation and inspires visitors to take action for WWT and wetlands.

6. To work with the Operations Director and Living Collections leadership and veterinary teams to ensure high standards of animal welfare and compliance with Zoo Licensing across our Living Collections
7. To develop strong working relationships with members of the Conservation leadership team, working to ensure that our wetland reserves meet and exceed conservation targets for your sites, and are compliant with leases and all regulations.
8. To work with the Conservation team and Reserve Management teams to develop new ways of engaging our visitors with our reserves and their superpowers.
9. To drive operational efficiency across all areas of sites, including trading operations, regularly evaluating business performance and procedures and applying improvements, and to report regularly to the Director of Operations and Executive Leadership Team on performance and improvements made.
10. To act as Operational lead for Health & Safety compliance at your sites. To lead on incident management plans and activation, and to ensure a culture of safety across the Operations Directorate.
11. To work closely with the Fundraising, Marketing and Communications teams to provide strong marketing insights to your teams and to develop outstanding visitor marketing campaigns, as well as plans for supporter development (including membership recruitment).
12. To work closely with the WWT Communications teams to ensure proactive and regular communication of WWT's achievements, projects and topical issues internally and to the outside world.
13. Working with the Director of Operations and central Experience and Events teams, develop plans for key seasonal events, new products and branding across all sites and execute these to a high standard.
14. To provide inspiring leadership to your direct reports, supporting them in their development and ensuring high standards of performance and delivery of KPIs.
15. To provide inspiring leadership to Centre Managers and their teams, being a role model for our Values and Behaviours: We Lead the Way; We Bring Life; We Inspire Connection.
16. To develop strong relationships with external stakeholders pertinent to your sites, such as landlords, potential funders, and local authorities.
17. To ensure the delivery of monitoring and measurement of the core day to day visitor experience at all sites, ensuring standards of presentation and repair, brand identification, customer care and WWT values are upheld at all times.
18. Work with the Heads of Operations and central teams to ensure that site physical assets are managed effectively and efficiently, and that they are compliant with all statutory regulations
19. To work with the conservation team to be the flag-bearer for sustainability, including improving water quality, energy efficiency and reducing sites carbon footprints

20. To ensure the operation of sites run with legality and conformity to established regulation both externally and internally.

In addition to the duties and responsibilities listed the post holder is required to perform any other reasonable duties which may be assigned by the Director of Operations

Date raised: July 2025

Amended:

Person Specification

1. Qualifications

Essential:

- Degree or equivalent professional standard in a relevant subject.
- Valid UK Driving Licence

Desirable:

- A further degree or professional qualification in a relevant subject.

2. Experience

Essential:

- Proven background in delivering exceptional and innovative visitor experiences and events that inspire visitors to engage with and to support the organisation's cause
- Site leadership experience within a comparable visitation-focused organisation
- Demonstrable experience in leading, inspiring and developing multi-disciplinary teams.
- Proven experience in business planning, financial management, budget setting and control with multi-million pound budgets
- Experience in significant (£250k+) capital projects planning, implementation and ROI analysis.
- Experience of working closely with marketing and communications teams to drive visitation/footfall.

Desirable:

- A passion for developing and delivering brilliant visitor experiences, in particular wildlife experiences.
- Experience of, and a keen interest in, working in the environmental and/or charity sector.
- Experience of a trading operation as part of wider attraction management.
- Experience of developing outstanding visitor marketing campaigns
- Experience in working with sustainability teams

3. Managerial & Supervisory

Essential:

- Experience in managing the life cycle of team members in accordance with established frameworks to include recruitment of senior and skilled team members, appraising and providing regular feedback and support, managing the performance and development of a multi-skilled team and addressing issues when they arise.
- Experience in the allocation of resources to fulfil priority projects, identifying when team structures need to be re-organised and identifying the need for new or alternative resources as and when required.
- Excellent collaboration skills, with demonstrable experience of bringing diverse teams together
- Evidence of an empathetic and supportive coaching style, to provide clear and inspiring leadership and direction, to value all team members and to encourage everyone to be at their best within a large team of diverse people.

Type of staff	Number directly managed	Number supervised
Employed Staff	4	230 employees
Volunteers / Casual Workers	0	35 casual workers 120 volunteers

4. Responsibility

Essential:

- Demonstrable ability to develop and deliver strategic plans engaging a team of people to deliver these plans.
- Demonstrable ability to make decisions and to prioritise according to the needs of the business as a whole.
- Demonstrable ability to lead by example displaying the highest levels of personal integrity and commitment, promoting a positive environment based on WWT's values and leadership culture.
- Demonstrate strong cultural values, taking personal accountability for issues as well as successes, celebrating team achievements and being a flag-bearer for individual and team success across your sites

Levels of Responsibility:

Type of Responsibility	Level (£'s)
Income	£12,500,000
Expenditure (exc. payroll)	£12,000,000
Assets (required for job, exc. buildings)	£10,000

5. Creative Ability

Essential:

- Evidence of a visionary mindset with the ability to turn site vision into reality
- Demonstrable creativity with a flair for innovative problem solving, thinking outside of the box and developing test & learn experiences and programs.
- Demonstrable ability to be resilient in overcoming barriers, recovering from setbacks and identifying lessons learnt.
- Evidence of an ability to gather, analyse and apply market intelligence to lead on the strategic development of our visitor experience.

6. Contact

Essential:

- Evidence of strong emotional intelligence and the ability to develop positive relationships both inside and outside the organisation.
- Demonstrable ability to represent WWT at the highest level.
- Evidence of effectively influencing and persuading others at senior levels.

- Demonstrable excellent oral and written communication and presentation skills including the ability to present in public.
- Effective team-working and collaboration skills.

General Notes

This position will from time to time require work during some evenings, weekends and public holidays to meet the needs of the post.

A considerable amount of travel is necessary therefore a current driving licence is essential as is a willingness to travel to other WWT Wetland Centres with overnight stays as appropriate.