



Job Description

Principal Research Officer, Wetland Science

Grade: 9

Directorate: Conservation

Location: Slimbridge (or outposted in some circumstances)

Reporting to: Wetland BioScience Manager

Main function of post: To develop, deliver and communicate science to inform the conservation of wetland nature.

Supervisory responsibilities: Senior Research Officers, Research Officers, Researchers, other project staff, students and volunteers.

Responsibilities of the post

1. To provide technical leadership of scientific work areas agreed under the WWT Programmes, including conception, experimental/study design, supervision of data collection, data analysis, and scientific reporting, to an international standard.
2. To play a leadership role in ensuring that WWT scientific outputs have maximum impact, for the benefit of wetland conservation and WWT, by pro-actively communicating to:
 - Scientific audiences via peer-reviewed papers, presentations at scientific meetings and technical reports;
 - Staff of other WWT departments needing technical advice;
 - External decision-makers including other NGO's, academic institutions and governmental institutions, and international forums such as multilateral environmental agreements;
 - WWT supporters and the wider public, including features and news items for WWT's Waterlife magazine, articles for the WWT website, public talks and presentations; and
 - Other WWT staff, via the intranet, talks and presentations.
3. To support the successful development of the Conservation Evidence Department through pro-actively sharing ideas, skills and working practices; building collaborations with academia, NGO's and government agencies in the UK and overseas, and representing WWT on appropriate national/international research and conservation fora where this meets WWT objectives.
4. To actively maintain existing and develop new scientific skills, and stay abreast of relevant scientific developments.

5. To be responsible for the Project Management of some small/medium projects within WWT Programmes, from concept to completion, including budget, resource and time management, planning and fundraising, communications and logistics, and reporting, in accordance with the WWT Project Management Framework.
6. To participate as a technical expert in project teams as requested, including supporting decision-making by the Project Manager and delivery of project communications.
7. To support the conservation and engagement work of WWT more widely, by responding in timely fashion to requests for input to casework, policy & advocacy, and engagement with members and supporters.
8. To provide leadership to all staff and volunteers working within a project team, enabling every team member's contribution to be maximised by ensuring that the appropriate levels of direction and support are provided through professional line management in line with WWT's people frameworks.
9. To work alongside volunteers encouraging, developing and supporting them in their work for WWT, ensuring that they have a positive volunteering experience.
10. To be responsible for working within the WWT health and safety policy and guidelines ensuring that the health, safety and wellbeing of yourself and others is an integral part of how you work.
11. To engage with the WWT Sustainability Statement being aware of negative environmental impacts and incorporating sustainable ways of working within your role.
12. To interact with our visitors and supporters in a positive way, shaping unforgettable experiences and helping them understand and connect to wetlands.

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: September 2021

Amended: May 2026

Person Specification

1. Qualifications

Essential:

- Degree or equivalent experience in a relevant subject.
- PhD, or equivalent experience, in natural sciences, physical geography, biology
- Current driving licence and passport.

2. Experience

Essential:

- Post-doctoral or equivalent experience of study conception and design, supervision of data collection, data analysis, and scientific reporting in relevant subject(s).
- Specialist skills in entomology and/or trophic interactions and/or saltmarsh ecology and/or ecological connectivity modelling and/or isotope analysis
- Extensive experience in data gathering /data management methods
- Substantial current knowledge of wetlands ecology
- Substantial current experience and knowledge of national and international biodiversity, conservation issues, especially as they relate to wetlands.
- Substantial record of publishing in international scientific journals.
- Experience in the supervision of postgraduate student projects.
- Experience of supervision of other researchers.
- Experience of working with and managing citizen scientists and volunteers

Desirable:

- Experience of project design using logical frameworks or similar methods.
- Experience of developing and implementing novel/innovative wetland monitoring techniques
- Experience of advanced data analysis, for instance General Linear Modelling (GLM)
- Geographic information system (GIS) skills.

3. Managerial & Supervisory

Essential:

- Ability to manage scientific staff, research students and volunteers, including those that are out-posted.
- Ability to oversee and co-ordinate a scientific programme that is delivered by multiple organizational partners

Type of team member	Number managed (No. of direct reports)	Number supervised
Employed staff	0 - 2	0

Volunteers	0 - 4	0 - 20+ (citizen science projects)
Casual Workers	0 - 4	0

4. Responsibility

Essential:

- Ability to lead significant WWT work areas that have national and international impact and profile.
- Ability to manage and implement national and international conservation projects effectively, including budget management.
- Ability to manage a large project budget and substantial assets efficiently ensuring compliance with all WWT policies and procedures.

Levels of Responsibility:

Type of Responsibility	Level (£'s)
Budget Responsibility	Up to £1,000
Income	£0
Project Size (normally managed)	Small/medium
Assets (required for job, exc. buildings)	Up to £10,000
Visitors (number per annum)	N/A

5. Creative Ability

Essential:

- Able to negotiate with, persuade and influence a wide range of stakeholders, both internally and externally, nationally and internationally.
- A creative and strategic thinker, able to devise and develop WWT work areas and contribute to the development of WWT strategy.
- An excellent problem-solver, able to resolve significant issues and challenges that arise in WWT projects.
- An ability and resilience to work under pressure and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, including when representing WWT externally.
- Intellectually able and curious, with an ability to stay abreast of cutting-edge developments in wetland science
- Some degree of autonomy over work areas, including as they relate to external influence and impact.
- High degree of autonomy over day-to-day work programme.

6. Contact

Essential:

- Experience of working in partnership with external organizations and individuals
 - Ability to collaborate with and influence personnel from external stakeholders, demonstrating advocacy and communication skills to ensure WWT objectives are met.
 - Ability to maintain a network of external national and/or international scientific contacts, in-country statutory agencies, academia and/or NGO's.
 - Ability to work closely with Managers and Sponsors of WWT's conservation projects, ensuring effective delivery.
 - Excellent communication and media skills – verbally, visually and in writing.
 - Ability to represent WWT both nationally and internationally.
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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.