
Principal Research Officer, Wetland Landscapes and Processes Team

Grade: 9

Directorate: Wetland Conservation

Location: WWT Slimbridge

Reporting to: Wetland Landscapes and Processes 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.

Main duties 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 Wetland 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 provide guidance and support for colleagues working on UK- and internationally- based wetland conservation across WWT.
5. To actively maintain existing and develop new scientific skills, and stay abreast of relevant scientific developments.
6. 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.
7. To participate as a technical expert in project teams as requested, including supporting decision-making by the Project Manager and delivery of project communications.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. To work alongside volunteers encouraging, developing and supporting them in their work for WWT, ensuring that they have a positive volunteering experience.
11. 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.
12. To engage with the WWT Sustainability Statement being aware of negative environmental impacts and incorporating sustainable ways of working within your role.
13. To interact with our visitors and supporters in a positive way, shaping unforgettable experiences and helping them understand and connect to wetlands.
14. To ensure that in the course of your work you adhere to the WWT Data Protection policy and standards.

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: Jan 2026

Amended:

Person Specification

1. Qualifications

Essential:

- Degree or equivalent experience in a relevant subject.
- PhD, or equivalent experience, in a relevant scientific subject.
- Current driving license.

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).
- Extensive experience in data gathering /data management methods.
- Experience of supervision of other researchers.
- Substantial current experience and knowledge of national and international biodiversity, conservation issues, especially as they relate to wetlands.
- Record of publishing in international scientific journals.
- Extensive experience of developing and maintaining successful professional relationships with external stakeholders and non-scientific colleagues.
- Specialist skills in spatial analysis.
- Experience of using widely used GIS software (e.g. Arc GIS Pro, Arc GIS online, QGIS).
- Specialist skills in field-based collection of hydrological data and analysis of these data.
- Specialist skills in computer coding particularly R statistical software.

Desirable:

- Experience of using environmental sensors.
- Experience in the production or/and application of science outside of academia (e.g. in industry, NGO sector, government agencies).
- Experience of delivering science that has resulted in positive outcomes for the environment.

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 scientific programmes that include multiple organizational partners

Type of staff	Number managed	Number supervised
Employed Staff	0 - 2	0

Volunteers / Casual Workers	0 – 4	0-20+ (citizen science projects)
Contractors	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)
Expenditure (sign off level)	Up to £1,000
Project Size (normally managed)	Medium
Cash Handling	£0
Assets (required for job, exc. buildings)	Up to £100,000
Visitors (per annum)	N/A

5. Creative Ability

Essential:

- 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.

Contact

Essential:

- Able to negotiate with, persuade and influence a wide range of stakeholders, both internally and externally, nationally and internationally.
- 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.

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.

Diversity & equal opportunities - WWT is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in employment. Accordingly, we will ensure that recruitment, selection, training, development and promotions are seen to be fair by all workers, employees and job applicants and result in no job applicant or employee receiving less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, age (known as protected characteristics in England, Wales, Scotland) or on the grounds of political opinion (Northern Ireland), trade union membership or non-membership, being a part-time or fixed term worker. The Trust's objective is to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and otherwise treated solely on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities.