

## Water Vole Project Officer

**Title:** Water Vole Project Officer

**Contract:** Fixed term, full-time 18-month contract. Some evening/weekend work may be required (flexible hours, according to the needs of the volunteers/communities).

**Reports to:** Evidence Manager

**Responsible for:** Volunteers

**Location:** Working on the Gwent Levels. Working flexibly from home and any GWT (Gwent Wildlife Trust) Office.

**Salary:** £25,827 – £28,414 pro rata (depending on experience)

### Overall purpose

- Work on the Gwent Levels, undertaking a Feasibility Study that will help to inform the need for a licence application for the reintroduction of Water Voles to the Wentloog side of the Gwent Levels.
- Baseline survey work establishing Water Vole population and Mink distribution, as well as habitat condition to inform water vole re-introduction study
- Expand and coordinate strategic American Mink eradication on the Gwent Levels and beyond
- Seeking educational opportunities for the local communities of the Gwent Levels about the success of the Caldicot Water Vole reintroduction, their importance in the nationally important ecosystem and their current status on the Wentloog Levels
- Recruitment of volunteers and training provision to support monitoring and survey work

### Main responsibilities

- Lead on work to establish the feasibility of re-introducing Water Voles to the Wentloog side of the Gwent Levels
- Build on GWT's existing relationships with landowners, and establish new ones, to secure water vole survey permissions and a potential release site on the western side of the Gwent Levels.
- Expand the American Mink control area from Magor and establish strategic Mink control on the western Gwent Levels and beyond. Coordinate volunteers and contractors, and utilise technologies such as remote devices on traps to ensure efficiency, efficacy, and animal welfare. Liaise with local landowners and partners to achieve necessary geographic coverage. A willingness to undertake mink dispatch is desirable.
- Undertaking publicity and training events relating to water vole survey.
- Undertaking Water Vole and American Mink surveys, as well as habitat condition assessments on the Gwent Levels, to inform study.
- Co-ordinating new and existing volunteers to assist with survey work and establish a good foundation of enthusiastic and trained volunteers to carry out survey/monitoring work
- Resurrect and Chair the Gwent Water Vole Steering Group, reaching out to previous partners and new contacts, to invite collaboration from a wide range of stakeholders.
- If found appropriate through the study, submit a re-introduction licence application to Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

- Work with the other members of the Nature Recovery team to ensure the smooth and timely running of the project.
- Maintain accurate records of timesheets, feedback etc., including any Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), to meet project reporting requirements.
- Read and abide by all of GWT's Policies, Processes and Practices with particular reference to the Staff and Organisational Handbooks, HR Policies and Health and Safety Management System
- Develop and maintain good relationships with partners, neighbours, landowners, volunteers and community champions and groups.
- Attend meetings of the Trust including but not limited to All Staff and One to Ones.
- Promote membership of GWT and represent your work and GWT's projects and campaigns in the media, as required.
- Carry out any other varied duties that may be required, appropriate to the nature of the post.

### **The Post**

The Water Vole Project Officer sits within the Nature Recovery Team, which oversees the management and monitoring of GWT's network of Nature Reserves, as well as surveying and providing advice relating to wildlife across the whole of Gwent. The team works with volunteers and engages with the public and landowners to increase species diversity, populations, and habitat resilience, with a particular focus on expanding our largest, most impactful nature reserves, advocating the conservation of protected sites, most notably the Gwent Levels, and advising an extensive network of landowners.

The Water Vole Project Officer will undertake a range of survey work on the Gwent Levels, in order to establish the current status of Water Voles on the Wentloog Levels. It will also be necessary to establish the population density of American Mink in the area and expand our established mink control from the Caldicot Levels. The role will require the development of good relationships with landowners, and also engage, enthuse, and empower a diverse audience to become involved in the project. The role will ultimately assess whether a Water Vole reintroduction is feasible, or necessary, and if so, complete the licensing requirements for that to take place. It is the intention that upon completion of this project everything will be in place to seamlessly undertake the next phases (reintroduction and subsequent monitoring).

This role works alongside our Senior Evidence Officer (previously involved in the successful Magor Marsh water vole reintroduction) as well as liaising with our Volunteer Officer, and will be reporting to the Evidence Manager. Together this team will deliver an exemplary study, with volunteers and local communities forming an integral part in the delivery.

**This post has received funding through the Nature Networks Fund (round 3) delivered by the Heritage Fund, on behalf of the Welsh Government and in partnership with NRW.**

To discuss this post informally, please contact Andy Karran on 01600 740600 or 07413 963661, or email [akarran@gwentwildlife.org](mailto:akarran@gwentwildlife.org)

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

The qualities needed for this post are listed below.

**(E – Essential; D – Desirable)**

### **Experience**

- Experience of Water Vole Surveying (E)
- Community/Landowner engagement and liaison (E)
- Experience of undertaking ecological surveys (E)
- Experience of partnership working (E)
- Recruiting, managing and leading diverse volunteer groups in ecological surveys (E)
- Experience of Ecological Licence applications (D)
- Experience of undertaking and/or coordinating American Mink monitoring and control – including trapping and dispatch (D)
- Experience of managing contractors (D)
- Planning and delivering high quality, well organised, inclusive activities, and training events (D)
- Ability to follow Health and Safety Codes of Practice and Risk Assessments (E)

### **Skills**

- Good communication skills - written and oral (E)
- Excellent interpersonal skills (E)
- Full, clean driving licence and access to own vehicle (E)
- Ability to work in a busy environment to deadlines, and manage multiple priorities (E)
- IT literate (E) - Microsoft Office including Excel (E)
- Confident using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) mapping tools to gather and analyse data (D)

### **Knowledge and Qualifications**

- Knowledge of Water Vole ecology (E)
- Knowledge of UK habitats and species (E)
- Knowledge of nature conservation principles and practices, with experience of providing advice in relation to these (E)
- Knowledge of the Gwent Levels wetland landscape (D)
- Welsh language (D)

### **Personal Qualities**

- A commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion (E)
- A great team player, comfortable following and supporting others, or leading the group (E)
- Creative and pragmatic in problem solving (E)
- Responsible attitude with good organisational and time management skills (E)
- Eager to learn and implement new skills for the role (E)

**The position is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.**

Candidates should be able to demonstrate commitment to equal opportunities, be able to work out-of-office hours occasionally, and to hold a full, clean driving licence. The post holder will be required to attend other meetings elsewhere in Gwent and occasionally elsewhere in the UK.