

Volunteering

Volunteers are essential for this project to succeed. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Sheila.algeo@rspb.org.uk

When: Spring and summer each year (generally mid-May to early August)

Commitment: Minimum three 4-hour shifts per month (on average). No maximum limit! Shifts are conducted between 0600h and 2200h.

Duration: 3 months

Why We Want You: This is an exciting and successful project! Chesil Beach has the only little tern colony in South West England and the colony was in steady decline from the late 1990s until 2010. Predation and to a lesser extent, disturbance, are real problems at Chesil. This project has successfully increased breeding success by protecting the terns from foxes and other predators. The project started in 2009 and the colony is increasing in size and producing good numbers of fledged young. But we need lots of help to maintain this success! A seasonal Project Officer (RSPB staff) runs the project between April and August each year, overseeing 24-hour wardening at the site, but they can't be at the colony all the time, so help from a team of volunteers is vital. We also have residential volunteer opportunities as part of this project, primarily to undertake the night shifts but also to gain wider experience of the project through the season. These will be advertised in March or April. This volunteer role includes looking out for and chasing away predators, involving running on the pebbles, shouting and waving. The role also involves preventing disturbance from people and dogs by talking to people as situations arise. Full training is given.

What's In It For You: You will be part of a vital team making a direct contribution to conserving this important species and working on the glorious Chesil Beach at Portland, near Weymouth. This is an excellent chance to make a genuine contribution to wildlife conservation and experience these amazing birds at their colony.

Requirements: You will need to be at least 18 yrs old with a good level of fitness and able to walk on rough ground. Enthusiasm and an interest in conservation is important, and you must be prepared to work unsupervised for at least four hours at a time. We generally have only one person on shift during daylight hours, though you will be accompanied by a core member of the project team on your first shift. If there is a lot predator activity, the Project Officer will try to have two people on shift together depending on the availability of volunteers. Wardening operates during all weathers but we do have a hide for shelter. Your own binoculars are useful but not essential and you need reasonable bird identification skills.