

## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>JOB TITLE</b>	Assistant Conservation Officer (Rivers and Wetlands, Citizen Science)
<b>TEAM</b>	Nature Based Solutions
<b>GRADE</b>	C
<b>RESPONSIBLE TO</b>	River Catchment Manager
<b>RESPONSIBLE FOR</b>	Contractors, volunteers and trainees

### OVERALL ROLE

The postholder will play a key role in delivering more space for nature in Dorset by leading and growing Dorset Wildlife Trust's citizen science programmes for rivers and wetlands. A core part of the role is building trusted relationships and maintaining strong, consistent communication with volunteers, communities, land managers and delivery partners, enabling people to collect high-quality ecological data that informs conservation action.

You will be responsible for coordinating established monitoring schemes (including Dorset Water Guardians and Riverfly monitoring) and for designing and piloting new citizen science initiatives to address priority evidence gaps (e.g., invasive species, wetland condition, species recovery and restoration outcomes). Working within the River Catchment Team and project teams, you will ensure data standards, safe delivery in the field, effective volunteer support, and clear reporting to internal teams, funders and partners.

### Key responsibilities

#### **Lead and develop citizen science schemes**

Lead delivery of existing monitoring programmes (e.g., Dorset Water Guardians, Riverfly Monitoring) to agreed plans and budgets, ensuring consistent standards, safe working and a positive volunteer experience. Identify opportunities to expand scheme coverage, improve methodology and increase participation.

#### **Design and pilot new monitoring approaches**

Work with colleagues and partners to define monitoring questions, select appropriate methods, and develop clear protocols, training materials and data workflows. Pilot new schemes, evaluate what works, and scale successful approaches.

#### **Volunteer recruitment, training and support**

Recruit, induct, train and support volunteers and trainees, including producing role descriptions, running training sessions and providing ongoing coaching. Build an inclusive, welcoming culture and ensure volunteering opportunities are well-organised, meaningful and safe. Support volunteers to explore and develop citizen science questions and contribute to collaborative investigations of local evidence gaps.

### **Data quality, management and reporting**

Ensure monitoring data are accurate, well-documented and stored appropriately, in line with relevant data protection and GDPR requirements. Maintain databases and records, carry out basic analysis and produce clear updates and reports that inform project delivery, partner discussions, funding requirements, and monitoring and evaluation of project outputs and impacts.

### **Community engagement and partnership working**

Work with river interest groups, community organisations, land managers and partner bodies to promote citizen science and share findings. Represent DWT at relevant meetings and events, help run guided walks and volunteer task days, and support colleagues to use monitoring evidence in conservation planning. Produce regular updates and engagement materials for volunteers, partners and wider audiences, including newsletters, presentations, web content, case studies and other communications outputs.

### **Evidence-led conservation support**

Support DWT's river and wetland projects (e.g. Dorset Beavers, Frome Headwaters Chalkstream Restoration Project and Stour Clay Vales and Chalkstreams Project), by helping specify monitoring for restoration outcomes and priority species, and by feeding results into site management and catchment planning. Where appropriate, assist with field delivery linked to monitoring (e.g., restoration aftercare checks, invasive species recording, beaver activity monitoring), support the maintenance, calibration and deployment of monitoring equipment, commission and manage external contractors where required, and signpost landowners/communities to further advice and funding.

### **Other Duties**

All staff are expected to:

- Undertake any other duties appropriate to the post as delegated by the line manager;
- Contribute to other Dorset Wildlife Trust activities when required, to deliver the aims of the Strategic Plan;
- Engender a culture of public engagement and membership recruitment within the team;
- Abide by organisational policies and procedures laid down in the Staff Handbook, including promoting equal opportunities particularly with regard to volunteer work.
- Ensure that Health and Safety policies and procedures are met in all aspects of the role, including undertaking and reviewing risk assessments for fieldwork and volunteer activities.

Some evening and occasional weekend working may be required with time off in lieu. There also may be periodic travelling within the county with occasional journeys further afield; DWT pool cars are available but own vehicle may be needed. A valid driving licence is a requirement of this position. Overnight stays are only rarely required.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Area A Experience

You will be able to demonstrate relevant experience in the following:

- Coordinating and supporting volunteers, including recruitment, training and ongoing engagement (essential)
- Delivering citizen science and/or community monitoring programmes (freshwater, wetlands or wider biodiversity) (essential)
- Developing or improving monitoring methods, protocols and training resources, and/or piloting new approaches (desirable)
- Collecting field data safely and consistently (e.g., invertebrates, water quality, habitat condition, invasive species) and applying quality assurance (essential)
- Managing and maintaining datasets (e.g., spreadsheets/databases), and producing clear summaries and reports for non-technical audiences (essential)
- Working with partners and stakeholders (e.g., NGOs, statutory agencies, community groups, land managers) to deliver shared outcomes (essential)
- Supporting conservation delivery linked to monitoring outcomes (e.g., restoration aftercare, wetland management, species projects) (desirable)
- Developing practical and costed work plans, and commissioning or managing contractors or external suppliers where required (desirable)

### Area B Knowledge

You will have knowledge and understanding of:

- How river and wetland ecosystems function, including key pressures and the evidence base for nature-based solutions (essential)
- Principles of ecological survey and monitoring, including sampling design, repeatability, bias and quality assurance (essential)
- Citizen science best practice, including volunteer motivation, safeguarding appropriate boundaries, and inclusive engagement (essential)
- Health and safety requirements for fieldwork, lone working, and supervising volunteers and contractors (essential)
- Relevant policy/legislation and good practice relating to freshwater habitats, access and data sharing where applicable (desirable)
- Experience of Riverfly monitoring and/or freshwater invertebrate ID (desirable)
- Understanding of water quality, hydrology and catchment management (desirable)
- Understanding of species recording systems and standards (e.g., data verification, metadata, GIS) (essential)
- Data protection and GDPR principles relevant to volunteer, survey and species data management (essential)

### Area C Skills/Qualifications

You will have the following skills and qualifications:

- Excellent verbal communication and active listening skills, with the ability to engage and motivate volunteers and community audiences (essential)
- Strong written communication skills, including clear instructions/protocols and high-quality reports and updates (essential)
- Practical fieldwork skills, including safe working near water and the ability to demonstrate survey techniques (essential)
- Data handling skills (Microsoft 365), including maintaining accurate records and producing simple summaries/visualisations (essential)
- Ability to plan, prioritise and deliver work programmes to deadlines, including coordinating multiple sites and people, and contributing to practical costed project plans where required (essential)
- GIS skills and/or experience using mapping tools to support survey planning and reporting (desirable)
- Full UK driving licence and willingness to travel across Dorset (essential)
- First aid qualification (desirable)

**Area D      Personal qualities**

- Relationship-led and approachable, able to build trust with volunteers, communities, land managers and partners (essential)
- Proactive and self-motivated, comfortable working independently and as part of a team (essential)
- Organised and reliable, able to plan ahead, manage competing priorities and meet deadlines (essential)
- Pragmatic and solutions-focused, able to turn monitoring needs into practical approaches that work for volunteers and conservation outcomes (essential)
- Resilient and adaptable, confident working in changeable outdoor and partnership environments (essential)
- Committed to the aims and values of Dorset Wildlife Trust and to improving access to nature and wellbeing (essential)

Director signature:

Date:

Postholder signature:..... Date.....