

Job Description

Conservation Manager: species and habitats

Location:	Penrith, Cumbria.
Contract:	Full time – initial term of 3 years
Reports to:	Head of Operations (Conservation)
Direct reports:	Volunteers and contractors
Salary range:	£32,000 - £35,000 per annum, plus contributory pension.

Purpose of job

To lead efforts to enhance and increase high-quality riparian habitat in the Eden catchment in Cumbria, that will facilitate the reintroduction of native Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*); through both the control of North American Mink (*Neogale vison*) and the improvement of wetland habitat.

The post holder will work with partners beyond the Eden catchment (across Cumbria, Northumberland, County Durham and the Scottish Borders) to produce a continuous mink free zone where water voles can thrive alongside other native species that will benefit from the control of invasive mink.

They will also monitor populations of another of Eden's endangered species, White-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobious pallipes*) by mapping crayfish waterbodies and improving the management of riparian and in-river habitats.

Key Responsibilities

Programme Delivery

- Plan and prioritise mink trapping priority areas of the Eden catchment in coordination with partners (the Environment Agency, Cumbria Connect/RSPB) and with the support of Eden Rivers Trust's (ERT's) Head of Operations.

- Manage and grow the mink monitoring and dispatch network across the Eden catchment working out from a core area in the River Lowther sub-catchment, specifically:
 - Work through an existing network of volunteers (including landowners and tenants) to service a network of up to 50 mink traps (checking, cleaning, setting remote trap alarms, humane dispatch) on a regular cycle.
 - Recruit new volunteers (from landowners, tenants and other stakeholders) to support an expanding programme of American mink monitoring and control and undertake water vole surveys.
 - Ensure all mink control elements within ERT's projects is in line with best practice / ERT policy, including arranging training as required.
- Manage ERT's water vole reintroduction programme in the Eden catchment, specifically:
 - Identify suitable habitat for water vole releases and manage the species release and monitoring programme - working with consultants and volunteers.
 - Identify suitable riparian sites for small-scale wetland habitat creation with landowners and relevant agencies and design and implement projects, including securing appropriate permissions, management agreements and working with contractors to execute ground works as needed.
 - Work closely with Eden Rivers Trust's Volunteer Coordinator to enable appropriate training for all volunteers associated with this work (trapping and dispatch, water vole survey and monitoring etc.)
- Monitor populations of White-clawed crayfish using a hand search method and identify previously unknown populations through eDNA sampling.
- Identify opportunities for riparian habitat improvement that will benefit White-clawed crayfish and deliver projects that can be integrated the overall programme of habitat work.
- Ensure that all programme activities are completed on time and to budget.
- Support the Head of Operations in identifying small grants/funding to contribute to the programme's work and write applications to secure these funds.

Liaison and Partnership working

- Work with stakeholders across the North of England to contribute to the development of the Water vole conservation strategy, including monitoring and control of invasive American mink, habitat suitability assessments and preparation of habitat restoration plans.
- Share information and experience on riparian habitat management for water voles with Eden Rivers Trust's Conservation Officer for the Upper Irthing (PRISM Landscape Recovery project).
- Contribute to reporting on the Eden Catchment plan and the CaBA programme and update the Eden Catchment Partnership on your work when required.

Technical

- Provide technical support on riparian habitat and species management across the organisation, including fish and crayfish rescue.
- Develop your own knowledge (theory and practice) of agricultural practices in the Eden and relevant agri-environment schemes, particularly in relation to riparian zone management in order to strengthen the organisation's knowledge and ability to advise farmers and landowners.
- Work with the Head of Operations and other senior conservation team members to improve ERT's collective knowledge (across the team) on key emerging initiatives such as the implementing of Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality.

Organisational responsibilities

- Adhere to the Trust's policies and procedures with reference to Health & Safety and Safeguarding and support all team members and volunteers to do the same.
- Work to deliver all project activities on time, to budget, and to a high quality.
- Ensure claims are submitted on time with high quality reports and clear financial statements, working closely with the Finance Manager.
- Work closely with the Marketing and Communications Manager to ensure promotion of your project work through all communications channels (newsletter, social media, press etc). Ensure that communications resource is accounted for in new project proposals.

- Work with the Volunteer Coordinator and Outdoor Learning Manager to identify opportunities for integrating engagement activities with your programme (schools, community groups etc.)
- Actively participate in team meetings and other Trust meetings/events as required and support the Head of Operations in reporting to the board on the team's work.
- Contribute to the continual improvement of ERTS policies, procedures and ways of working.
- Maintain an efficient filing system.
- From time to time undertake other duties that may be required by Eden Rivers Trust's Chief Executive.

Person Specification

Essential

Skills and qualifications:

- Degree or equivalent relevant work experience e.g. a degree in conservation biology, environmental science or similar and 3+years' of relevant experience, or 5 years' relevant work experience.
- Comprehensive understanding of the impact of invasive non-native species and appropriate ways to manage their populations and spread for the benefit of native wildlife.
- Knowledge of legal and practical requirements for ensuring health and safety of staff and volunteers working in challenging field conditions.
- Practical field skills appropriate to the post (e.g. animal trapping, tracking, navigation, and map reading).
- Good practical software skills and understanding of Microsoft Office packages, basic GIS skills.

Experience

- Successfully managed habitat improvement projects from inception to completion: planning, budgeting, execution, reporting and monitoring.

- Have worked closely with land practitioners to deliver conservation projects that involve supervising site ground works.
- Managed volunteers (support, led and developed them) to deliver funded projects.

Personal attributes

- Excellent Interpersonal skills with the tact, diplomacy and negotiating skills to develop and maintain good relations with the owners/managers of land on which you are working.
- Ability to work in challenging field conditions.
- Willingness to use air rifles to dispatch invasive mink.
- Strong organisational skills, including the ability to be self-motivated, work efficiently within a defined work plan, and have the flexibility to adapt to changing work practices as required.
- High degree of professionalism, initiative and self-reliance.
- Willingness to undergo training towards obtaining protected species licences required for crayfish survey and crayfish rescue work.

Desirable

- Knowledge of agri-environment schemes that benefit riparian habitats.
- Technical knowledge of natural flood management and buffers.
- Experience in the use of an air rifles to dispatch vertebrates.
- Experience of leading teams of volunteers in the field.
- Experience of securing small grants for conservation work.
- Experience of working within a conservation charity.
- Experience and knowledge of Water vole, American mink and White-clawed crayfish ecology.
- Other relevant field skills appropriate to the post (i.e. use of trail cameras, knowledge and identification of field signs, use of conservation detection dogs, 4x4 driving experience, use of Police traps, firearms).

Looking after our staff

Annual leave Full-time employees are entitled to **33 days of paid leave per year** which includes Bank Holidays and Statutory Holidays. This entitlement will increase by two days after three years' service and another one day after five years of continuous employment to a maximum of 36 days. This entitlement will be pro rata if you join/leave within the current holiday year or work part-time.

Pension Employees may join either The Rivers Trust pension scheme or the NEST pension scheme. Employees can decide to dis-enrol from the pension scheme if they choose. If you join The Rivers Trust pension scheme, you contribute a minimum of 6% (of your salary) and we contribute 9%.

Life Assurance is also included in The Rivers Trust Scheme. We pay three times your pensionable salary if you die.

Tools for the job We'll provide the essentials you'll need to carry out your role – laptop, mobile phone and personal protective equipment (PPE) plus other equipment as necessary.

Time off in lieu You may be required to work additional hours e.g. in the evening or at weekends for which time off in lieu (TOIL) will be available. These additional hours must be agreed and approved by your manager in advance.

Free parking at ERT's office in Penrith.

Mileage expenses This post will involve travelling around the county and mileage expenses will be paid at 45p per mile (private vehicle). ERT also has two vehicles that you may be able to use.

The post will involve travelling around the county. **A full UK driving licence is essential.**

Additional information about the role

Contract This post is initially offered as a full-time (5 days a week) role for three years.

Working hours Normal working hours are 9 am to 5 pm (with a 30-minute meal break).

Location The usual place of work will be ERT's office in Penrith.

Criminal records check the successful applicant will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) and provide satisfactory references. Please read the guidance for completing the application form about our policy regarding the employment of ex-offenders and DBS checks before you complete the application form.